EU–IOM KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT HUB

Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Bites Series

Knowledge Bite #2 | March 2021

Sustainable Reintegration Outcomes Following Referrals for Reintegration Support

Rationale of the Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Bites Series

The *Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS)* was developed in 2017 with the aim of measuring reintegration sustainability. Designed to be easily deployed in IOM's reintegration programming, the RSS and related scoring system generate a composite reintegration score and three-dimensional scores measuring economic, social and psychosocial reintegration.

The Sustainable Reintegration Knowledge Bites Series aims to present findings pertaining to sustainable reintegration outcomes emerging from analyses based on RSS data and other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data centrally available on the IOM's institutional case management system. This series is designed to bring such findings to the attention of reintegration practitioners and policymakers worldwide, as well as to inform and disseminate good practices, lessons learned and recommendations. The data presented in the series has been collected in the framework of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative and other EU-IOM Actions supporting migrant protection and sustainable reintegration.

Specifically, this series of Knowledge Bites attempts to: (i) empirically explain cross-country, cross-regional and cross-programme patterns on sustainable reintegration outcomes, (ii) assess the effectiveness of reintegration assistance in terms of achieving reintegration sustainability, (iii) determine which type(s) of reintegration support measures have proven to be the most impactful on each of the three dimensions of reintegration – economic, social and psychosocial, and (iv) investigate which are the external/ structural factors affecting sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Knowledge Management Hub

The development and production of this series is supported by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub (KMH), which was established in September 2017 under the EU-funded Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration in Southern Africa. The KMH aims at supporting the implementation of the EU-IOM Actions addressing migrant protection and sustainable reintegration in Africa and Asia by ensuring coherent voluntary return and reintegration approaches, harmonising M&E activities, setting up knowledge management tools, and producing knowledge products.

IOM UN MIGRATION
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Summary

The first Knowledge Bite, published in October 2020, gave a first indication of some of the factors that can contribute to or hamper sustainable reintegration outcomes. Notably, the results revealed that returnees benefiting from economic reintegration activities have on average higher sustainable reintegration scores compared to returnees not benefiting from them, and that a context-specific approach to sustainable reintegration is necessary for returnees' sustainable reintegration in their country of origin.[1]

Building on these findings, this second Knowledge Bite aims at exploring additional factors that contribute to higher levels of sustainable reintegration. Specifically, the analysis in this report focuses on investigating sustainable reintegration outcomes following referrals and understanding the effect of referrals on returnees' satisfaction with the reintegration assistance received.

The main results suggest that returnees benefiting from at least one reintegration activity through referrals, have on average lower sustainable reintegration scores across the economic and social dimensions,[2] compared to returnees benefiting from direct assistance uniquely across these two dimensions. Similarly, the results suggest that returnees benefiting from reintegration assistance through referrals display lower levels of satisfaction with the reintegration programme.

The results presented in this report point toward the need for in-depth qualitative analysis to further investigate the observed trends and patterns.

[1] More detailed information on measuring sustainable reintegration information can be also found on IOM - Migration Policy Practice special issue on Return and Reintegration, "Measuring sustainable reintegration" N. Nozarian and N. Majidi – Page 30. This article provides the background of IOM's definition of sustainable reintegration, as well as detailed information on the standardization of the measurement of reintegration.

[2] The analysis does not display significant and conclusive results for the psychosocial dimension.

1. Background and methodology

1.1 Direct assistance versus referral

Reintegration assistance to returning migrants can be delivered through two main modalities: *direct assistance or referral*. **Direct assistance** to returnees is specifically designed and implemented under a reintegration programme and can be provided directly by IOM or be delegated by IOM to third parties such as implementing partners and service providers. **Referral** is the process led by IOM or its partners consisting of directing beneficiaries to appropriate services or programmes i) addressing the needs and preferences identified during the reintegration counselling sessions and ii) provided to returnees through already existing services outside of the IOM reintegration programme, i.e. not designed or implemented in the framework of the EU–IOM Actions.[3]

The choice of the delivery modality under a reintegration programme usually depends on two factors: 1) the presence of implementing partners and service providers in the country of origin that can provide effective economic, social and psychosocial reintegration support services; and 2) key considerations of the most efficient use of available resources.

The process of identifying the interventions that can be implemented, as well as all those services available locally through referrals, are key steps in the development of a reintegration assistance programme. These steps usually result in the creation of one or more referral mechanisms.[4] Having a referral mechanism in place is crucial to addressing the various needs of returnees, recognizing that rarely a single organization will be capable to meet all of the needs identified.[5] During the reintegration process, returnees can benefit from different types[6] of reintegration support measures. Each beneficiary can benefit from several support measures delivered through direct assistance only, referrals only or a combination of both.

While some anecdotal evidence exists of good practices, obstacles and challenges to delivering reintegration assistance through referrals under the EU–IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad (SLC) region,[7] there is a lack of evidence about the effect of referrals on returnees' reintegration outcomes. Moreover, existing research presents a knowledge gap on returnees' satisfaction with reintegration assistance provided through direct assistance versus referrals.

1.2 Methodology

The main goal of the research presented in this Knowledge Bite is to ascertain whether receiving reintegration assistance through referral fosters or hampers sustainable reintegration outcomes and to uncover the effect of referrals on returnee's satisfaction with the reintegration assistance received. This research builds on a global level analysis with the aim of identifying evidence and generating lessons learned from comparisons of the two modes of assistance delivery across the different geographical regions covered under the EU–IOM Actions. The analysis is divided into three main parts. Part one (Section 2.1) focuses on a descriptive investigation of the occurrence of reintegration support measures delivered through referrals versus direct assistance across countries of origin, host countries, demographic groups and different types of reintegration assistance.

[3] In line with the EU external policy and migration priorities, IOM and the EU have jointly developed the following programmes focusing on migrant protection, dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration: Joint Initiative in Sahel and Lake Chad, North Africa and Horn of Africa; Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration in Southern Africa; Improving Reintegration of Returnees in Afghanistan (RADA) and Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance in Bangladesh (Prottasha).

[4] A referral mechanism for returnees can be defined as a formal or informal process of cooperation between multiple stakeholders to provide assistance and protection services to returning migrants. See IOM (2019)– Reintegration Handbook.

[5] See IOM (2019)– Reintegration Handbook – Module 4.

[6] According to IOM (2019)– Reintegration Handbook, Reintegration support can be Economic (Job Placement, Microbusiness, Training, Financial Services), Social (Social Protection Schemes, Housing, Education, Medical Support, Child Care, Legal Services) and Psychosocial (Psychosocial Support, Special Security Measures).

[7] See IOM (2020) – Biannual Reintegration Report #3.

This section also provides insights on the referral process in terms of whether respondents found it easy to contact the service provider(s) after referral by IOM and if they received the expected support from them. Part two of the analysis (Section 2.2) explores differences in satisfaction levels between beneficiaries that were assisted only through direct assistance versus those that received at least one reintegration support measure through referral. Finally, part three of the analysis (Section 2.3) attempts to relate changes in the sustainable reintegration composite score and those on the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of sustainable reintegration to the reception of reintegration support measures through referrals, all other factors being equal.[8] Statistical tests and a cross-country regression analysis are used to investigate the effect of being referred to support services outside the Actions on reintegration outcomes.

1.3 Data

The data used for this analysis encompasses four different datasets available centrally and accessible through IOM's institutional case management system, MiMOSA (Migrant Management and Operational Systems Application). Namely, for this study, IOM used the *Reintegration Module* dataset, the *Reintegration Programme Monitoring* dataset, the *Reintegration Programme Satisfaction* dataset and the *Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS)* dataset.

The larger dataset used in the analysis is the *Reintegration Module* dataset, which covers information on 118,485[9] reintegration support measures delivered to 62,252 individuals in 16 countries of origin across four different geographical regions covered under the EU–IOM Actions between 2017 and 2020 (see Annex 1, Table 1 for the country and regional breakdown). The *Reintegration Module* dataset provides information compiled by case managers on the number and type of reintegration assistance each individual returnee benefited from, the delivery mode of assistance – direct or referred, the level[10] of each reintegration support, and basic demographic information (age, sex, country of origin and country from which the return took place – hereafter *Host Country*).

The *Reintegration Programme Monitoring* dataset used in this analysis covers 5,827 respondents that received reintegration assistance in 17 countries of origin[11] across four different geographical regions covered under the EU–IOM Actions (see Annex 1, Table 2) between 2017 and 2020. The data is collected through the *Reintegration Programme Monitoring Survey*, designed to assess performance of reintegration assistance components. The survey, which is administered through a structured interview with the returnee, can serve for interim monitoring while reintegration assistance is being provided, and for final programme monitoring, shortly after the provision of reintegration assistance is concluded. Only seven countries in this dataset have a sample that is representative.[12]

The *Reintegration Programme Satisfaction* dataset, on the other hand, covers 4,712 respondents that received reintegration assistance in 13 countries of origin across three different geographical regions covered under the EU–IOM Actions (see Annex 1, Table 3) between 2017 and 2020. The data is collected through the *Reintegration Programme Satisfaction Survey* which is designed to assess beneficiaries' satisfaction with the reintegration programme and its components. This survey is administered shortly after the provision of reintegration assistance is concluded. Similar to the *Reintegration Programme Monitoring* dataset, only seven countries in this dataset have a sample that is representative of the EU–IOM Actions' returnees' caseload.

Finally, the *RSS* dataset covers 5,374 respondents that received reintegration assistance in 16 countries of origin across three geographical regions covered under the EU–IOM Actions (see Annex 1, Table 4) between 2018 and 2020.

[8] This assumption allows to isolate the effect of one variable on another, by holding all other factors constant.

[9] This figure refers to the available observation for EU-IOM Actions only. Almost 185,000 observations are globally available in the system.

[10] Individual (assistance provided individually to returning migrants), Collective (assistance provided to several returning migrants as a group) and Community (individual or collective reintegration assistance directly involving local communities and/ or directly addressing their needs).

[11] For the purpose of this study, countries with at least 45 Unique Respondents were selected for the analysis.

[12] The sample representativeness is computed using a 95 per cent confidence level and 5 per cent margin of error.

The *RSS* takes the form of a self-assessment of the returnee and measures their reintegration sustainability along the three dimensions (economic, social and psychosocial). This survey can serve as a baseline assessment before reintegration assistance is provided, as a progress assessment, as well as a final evaluation of returnees' sustainability after the provision of reintegration assistance is concluded.

2. Analysis

2.1 Data overview of direct assistance and referrals

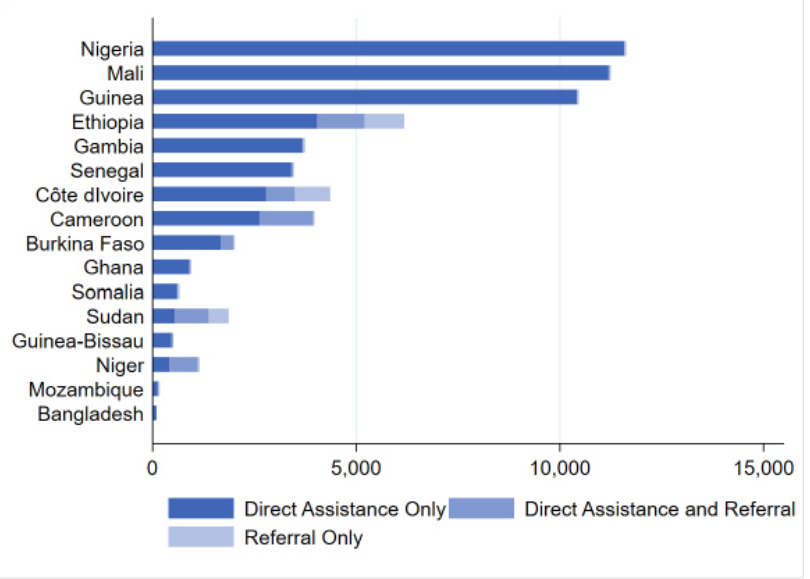
The exploratory and descriptive analysis in this study is first carried out using the *Reintegration Module* dataset, followed by the *Reintegration Programme Monitoring* dataset.

The Reintegration Module dataset allows us to investigate which delivery modality is most used and how many returnees in the sample have benefited from at least one reintegration support measure through referral across sex, age, country of origin and host country.

In total, slightly over 12 per cent (7,702) of the returnees in the dataset received at least one reintegration support measure through referral. Among this, 32 per cent (2,475) benefited only from reintegration support measures through referrals while 68 per cent (5,227) benefited from a combination of reintegration support measures delivered through direct assistance and referral. On the other hand, almost 88 per cent (54,550) of the returnees in the sample benefited from reintegration support measures through direct assistance only.

Overall, across the entire dataset, 87 per cent of returnees were identified as male and 13 per cent identified as female. This figure is representative of the sex breakdown of the overall caseload of migrants assisted to return and having received at least one type of assistance through the EU–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.[13] In proportion, more women than men in the dataset have been assisted through referral. In fact, among the 7,702 returnees that received at least one reintegration support measure through referral, 85 per cent were identified as male and 15 per cent as female. The share and sex breakdown of returnees being referred vary across countries of origin. Sudan and Niger register the highest shares of total referrals, with 71 and 65 per cent of reintegration beneficiaries, respectively, being referred for at least one reintegration support measure (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Bar graph of returnees' numbers per country of origin and by modalities of reintegration assistance delivery



[13] As per the EU-IOM Joint Initiative Flash Report and the Results Database – September 2020, 98,064 migrants received at least one type of reintegration assistance among which 13 per cent female.

Among all countries of origin in the sample, Sudan has the highest share of referrals for female returnees, with over 74 per cent of female returnees having benefited from at least one reintegration support measure through referral (see Chart 2).

Among the 118,485 reintegration support measures covered in the *Reintegration Module* dataset, almost 9 per cent were delivered through referrals. Chart 3 provides a breakdown of the number of reintegration support measures per type and delivery modality.

Overall, Job Placement[14] is the reintegration support measure with the highest share of referrals – 35 per cent of job placement services were delivered through referred service providers, although this service was provided only 279 times. Social Protection Schemes and Trainings follow with 29 and 21 per cent, respectively (see Chart 4).

Chart 5 displays the share of reintegration support measures within referrals. **The most frequent service for which referral was made for are Trainings**, which account for almost 43 per cent of the total referrals, followed by Microbusiness (23%) and Medical Support (13%). Less frequent services for which referrals were made for are Job Placement and Education – less than 1 per cent of the total referrals respectively. Very few referrals were made for Financial Services, Special Security Measures and Legal Services. It is important to note, however, that these types of services are not frequently provided overall.

The *Reintegration Programme Monitoring* dataset is used in this study to find out beneficiaries' perceived performance of the reintegration through referrals. As part of the 1,502 beneficiaries assisted with referrals and monitored, the vast majority (95%) found it easy to contact the service provider(s) after referral.

Chart 2. Bar graph of percentage of female returnees having benefited from at least one reintegration support measure through referral

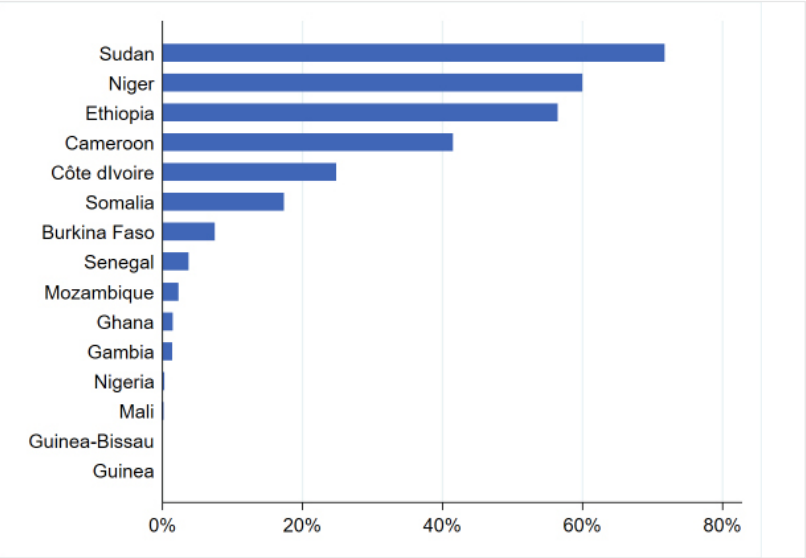
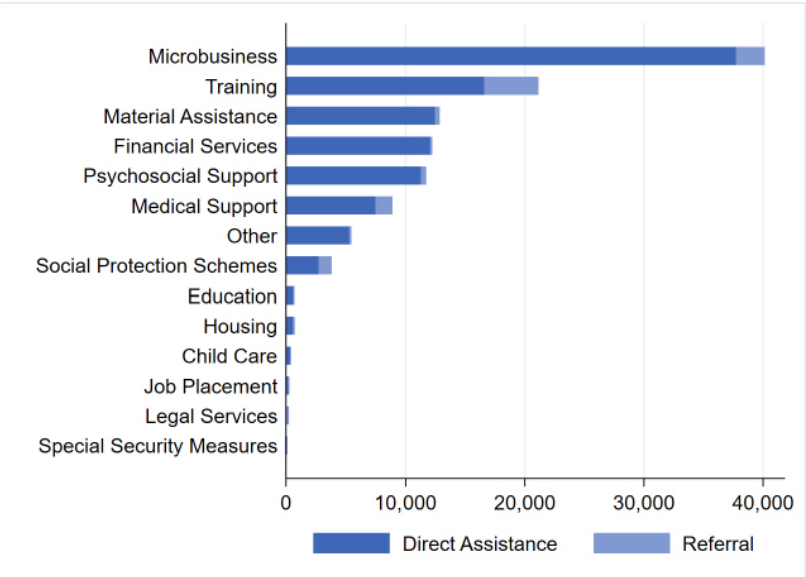


Chart 3. Bar graph of number of reintegration support measure per type and delivery modality



[14] Services covered under Job Placement include apprenticeships, job referral and job matching activities, including job fairs, CV/interview skills trainings and certification of prior work experiences/ skills.

Among the 3 per cent[15] of respondents that reported to not have been able to easily contact the service provider(s), 44 per cent are from Cameroon – corresponding to 6 per cent of the respondents located in this country.

Moreover, proportionally more women than men found it difficult to contact the service providers – 5 per cent versus 3 per cent, respectively. Additional qualitative data would be essential to further investigate the reasons behind this result. A large portion of beneficiaries (86%) assisted with referral and monitored, reported to have received the expected support from the service provider(s). Among the respondents that reported to not have received the expected support from the service providers, the majority were from West and Central Africa – corresponding to 14 per cent of respondents in this region. However, it is important to note that respondents from this region account for 98 per cent of the total sample.

Chart 4. Bar graph of percentage of referrals per type of reintegration support measure

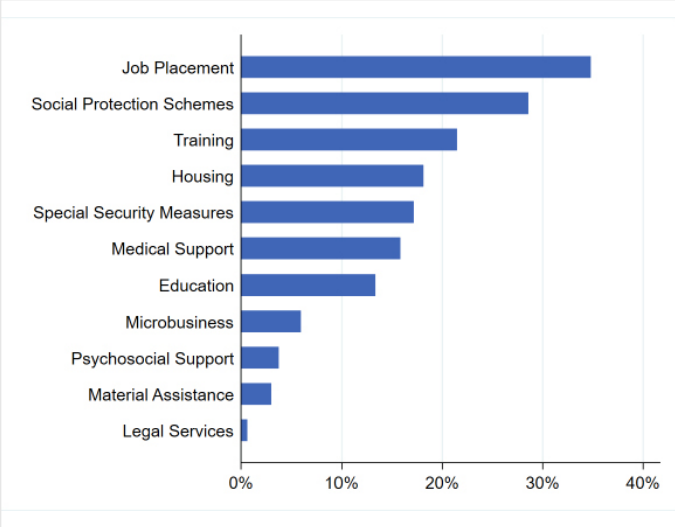
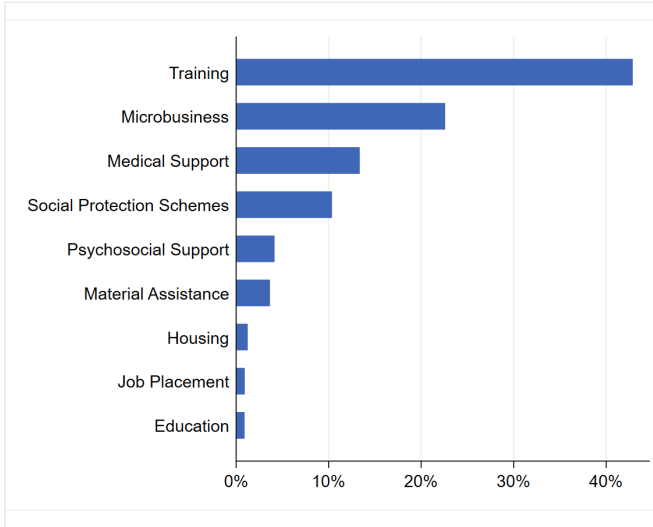


Chart 5. Bar graph of percentage of reintegration support measure within referrals



2.2 Returnee satisfaction with direct assistance versus referrals

For the purpose of this study, the *Reintegration Programme Satisfaction* dataset is merged with the *Reintegration Module* dataset to compare satisfaction levels between beneficiaries assisted through direct assistance only versus beneficiaries that received at least one reintegration support measure through referral.

This dataset stems from the *Reintegration Programmes Satisfaction Survey*, which asks returnees to rate their level of satisfaction with the overall reintegration assistance as well as its components. 85 per cent of respondents in the survey received reintegration support through direct assistance only, 4 per cent received reintegration support through referral only and 11 per cent received a combination of both.

[15] Two per cent of respondents didn't wish to answer this question.

The survey's results show that **returnees that benefited only from direct assistance, reported higher levels of satisfaction with the overall reintegration support compared to those that received at least one referral for assistance** (see Chart 6). In fact, most of the respondents having only benefited from reintegration support through direct assistance report being satisfied or very satisfied with the overall support (80%). In contrast, 58 per cent of respondents that received at least one reintegration support measure through referral reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the support. Among the 16 per cent of respondents that were referred and reported to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, over 51 per cent are from Côte d'Ivoire – corresponding to almost 21 per cent of the respondents located in this country. Among respondents that benefited from reintegration support through referrals only, just 42 per cent reported to be satisfied or very satisfied with the reintegration support overall.

When asked if the reintegration assistance matched their expectations and whether they received the reintegration support they were expecting, **only 51 per cent of respondents who were referred for at least one reintegration service reported that the reintegration assistance matched their expectations** compared to 79 per cent for those who received only direct assistance (see Chart 7). This figure decreases further to 39 per cent when looking at respondents that received reintegration support uniquely through referrals.[16] This could be explained by the perceived mismatch between reintegration assistance activities and returnees' profile, interest or location, for example activities being offered in a language not spoken by the returnees, or reintegration activities perceived as feminine being offered to male returnees.

Chart 6. How satisfied were you with the reintegration support overall?

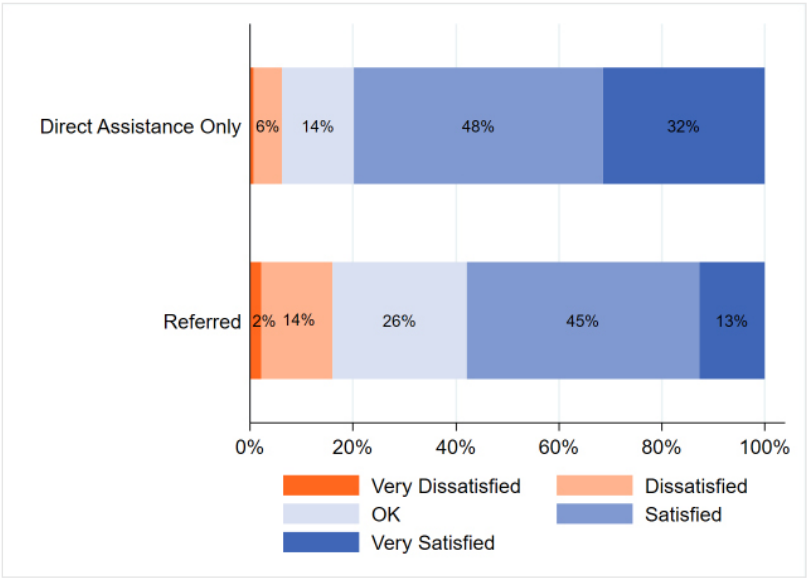
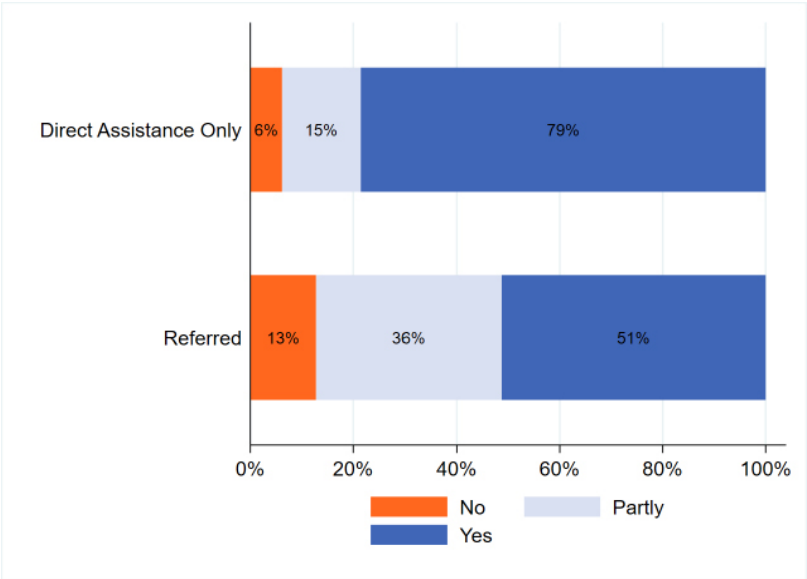


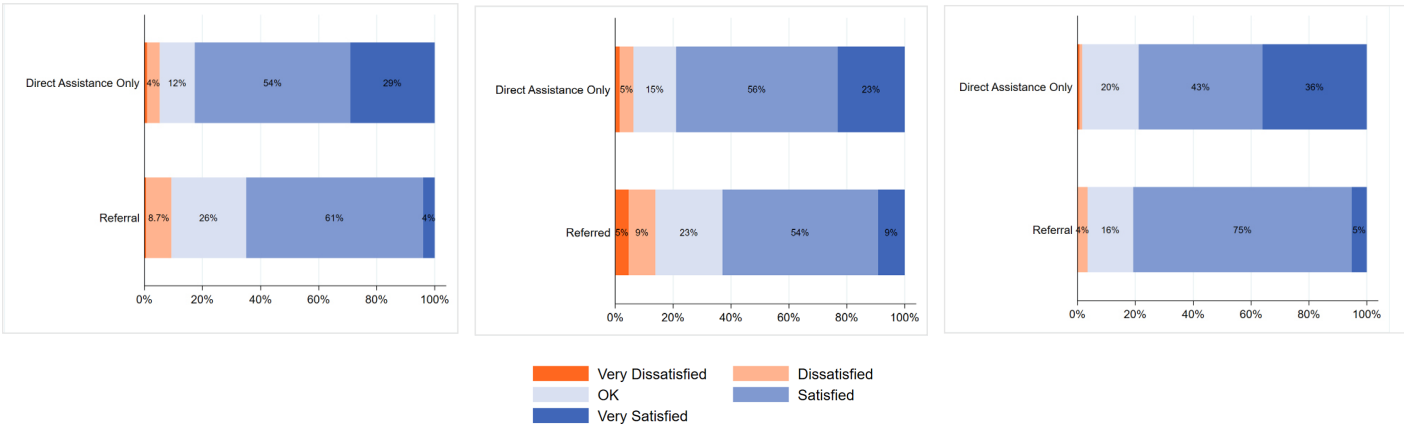
Chart 7. Did the reintegration assistance match your expectations? Did you receive the support you were expecting?



[16] 142 out of the 626 respondents in the sample that were referred and responded to this question.

These results vary, although not significantly, across the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions (see Chart 8). Out of the 4,712 respondents in the sample, 91 per cent benefited from economic reintegration assistance, 35 per cent from social reintegration assistance and 25 per cent from psychosocial reintegration assistance.[17] Among the respondents that benefited from economic reintegration through direct assistance only, 83 per cent reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received in contrast to 65 per cent of respondents that received at least one economic reintegration activity through referral. This figure is slightly higher (69%) when filtering on respondents that benefited from economic reintegration support uniquely through referral(s).[18] Similarly, 82 per cent of respondents that benefited from social assistance through direct assistance only reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the reintegration support in contrast to 63 per cent of respondents that benefited from at least one social reintegration support measure through referral. Almost 14 per cent of respondents that received at least one social assistance through referral, reported to be dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the assistance received. Finally, when looking at the satisfaction with the psychosocial assistance received, 79 per cent of the respondents that benefited from direct assistance only, reported to be satisfied or very satisfied, whereas over 80 per cent of respondents that benefited from at least one psychosocial assistance service through referral reported to be satisfied or very satisfied with the reintegration support received.

Chart 8. How satisfied are you with the economic (left) / social (middle) / psychosocial (right) assistance received?



The levels of satisfaction vary across the level of the reintegration assistance as well. Respondents that received reintegration support through direct assistance only reported the highest level of satisfaction with the community level reintegration assistance followed by that at the individual level – with 84 and 82 per cent, respectively, reporting to be satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received. Scoring slightly lower, 72 per cent of respondents that received assistance at the collective level through direct assistance reported to be satisfied or very satisfied. Among the respondents that benefited from at least one reintegration support measure through referral, the highest level of satisfaction is reported for the individual level assistance – 58 per cent, followed by collective level – 55 per cent. Whereas only 36 per cent of respondents that received at least one type of assistance at community level through referral reported to be satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received, another 34 per cent of respondents reported to be very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

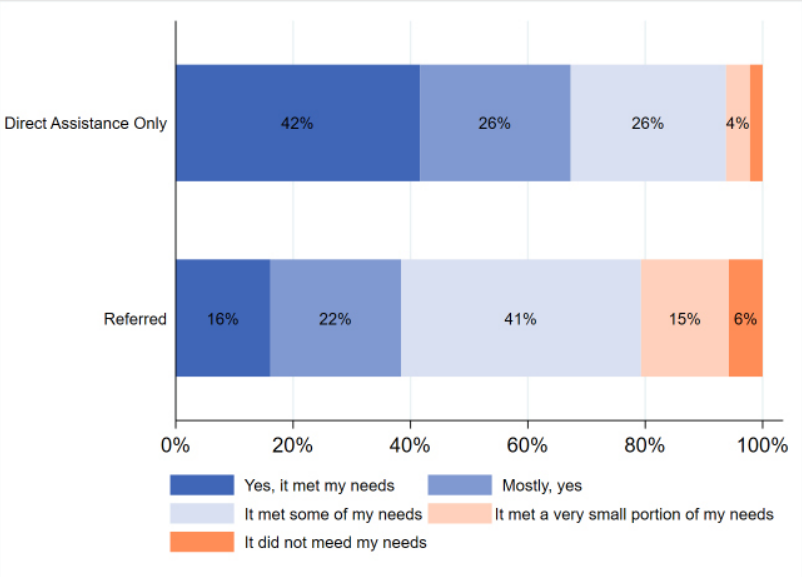
Finally, when asked whether the reintegration assistance met their needs, 68 per cent of respondents that benefited from reintegration assistance uniquely through direct assistance, reported that this met their needs.

[17] Respondents could be referred to multiple types of service, and therefore overall figures do not add up to 100 per cent.

[18] 123 out of the 323 respondents referred for economic reintegration support measures.

In contrast, only 38 per cent of respondents that received at least one type of reintegration assistance through referral reported that the received assistance met their needs, while 21 per cent reported that the reintegration support met only a small portion of their need or not at all (see Chart 9).

Chart 9. Did reintegration assistance meet your needs?



From these results, it appears that **when rating the components of the reintegration programme that refer to each separate dimension (economic, social and psychosocial), the levels of satisfaction of respondents that were referred for at least one reintegration support measure are in general higher compared to the satisfaction with the overall reintegration programme**. However, it is also noticeable that an important share of these respondents reported that i) the reintegration programme met only a small portion of their needs or did not meet their needs at all and ii) the reintegration programme met only partly their expectations or not at all. These could indicate that while the respondents were satisfied with the individual reintegration activities they benefited from, these may not have been enough to meet their needs and did not meet fully their expectations, translating, in turn, into lower, overall levels of satisfaction. In fact, when isolating respondents that were referred and reported to be very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the overall reintegration programme, the results show that i) only 4 per cent reported that the assistance met their needs or most of their needs and ii) a mere 17 per cent reported that their expectations were met.

Qualitative research, for example focus group discussions with returnees that were referred for at least one type of reintegration support measure would be needed to better understand the underlying reasons behind these divergences in satisfaction levels.

2.3 Referrals and sustainable reintegration outcomes (regression analysis)

This last section of the study attempts to formally relate changes in the sustainable reintegration outcomes across the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions to the delivery modality of reintegration support measures. To achieve this, several statistical tests and cross-country regressions are used to investigate whether being referred predicts changes (either positive or negative) in the reintegration outcomes. The analysis is based on a merged dataset of the *Reintegration Sustainability Survey* dataset and the *Reintegration Module* dataset which includes information on 5,374 returnees, among which 77 per cent benefited from reintegration support measures only through direct assistance and 23 per cent received at least one type of reintegration support measure through referrals.

When looking at the difference in means on the reintegration scores of the respondents that benefited from at least one type of reintegration assistance delivered through referrals, compared to those benefiting only from direct assistance, the results show that, **on average, returnees benefiting from direct assistance only display higher RSS scores across all the three dimensions** (see Chart 10).

This difference in means is statistically significant across all the dimensions, except the psychosocial one, where the average score of returnees benefiting from reintegration support measures through direct assistance only (0.78) is statistically not different from the one of those that benefited from at least one referral assistance (0.77). This finding aligns with the results presented in section 2.2 where the psychosocial dimension displayed the highest level of satisfaction among returnees that were referred for at least one reintegration support measure.

The biggest difference is noticeable for the economic dimension, where the average RSS economic scores diverge by more than 12 percentage points: 0.57 for returnees benefiting only from direct assistance versus 0.45 for those receiving at least one support measure through referrals (see Chart 11).

Chart 10. Average RSS Scores across delivery modality

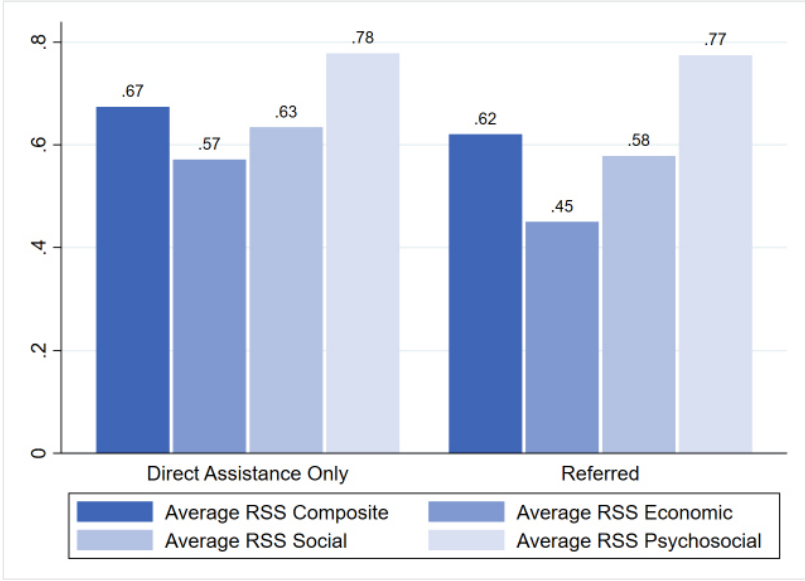


Chart 11. Average RSS Economic Score

The results of the regressions are based on four multivariate analyses – one for each RSS Scores – controlling for key respondent background characteristics such as *Age, Sex, Months since return, Country of Origin, Type of Return, Reintegration Activities, Level of Reintegration Activities and Within or Outside region moment information*. The results of regressions analysis (see Annex 2, Charts 12–15) display negative and significant relationships between referrals[19] and sustainable reintegration outcomes across all dimensions, except the psychosocial one. The strength of the negative effect of referrals on reintegration outcomes is relatively more evident for the economic dimension: **returnees being referred for at least one reintegration support measure have, on average, an RSS Economic score that is approximately six percentage points lower than to those benefiting from reintegration assistance through direct assistance only.** While additional analysis is needed to further investigate and corroborate these findings, some anecdotal evidence from West and Central Africa shows that service providers' assistance may be more limited compared to IOM's assistance. This could mean for example, that the reintegration support assistance received through referrals is not as effective as direct assistance in supporting income generating activities or finding employment, thus translating into less sustainable economic reintegration. Qualitative analysis and insights would be crucial to triangulate and complement this result.

[19] Referral is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the returnee was referred for at least one reintegration support measure and 0 if the returnee benefited from direct assistance only.

This is further confirmed when the effect of having been referred for at least one economic reintegration assistance[20] on reintegration outcomes is investigated. In fact, economic reintegration referrals in addition to having a significant and negative effect across all the RSS Scores – including on the RSS Psychosocial Score, display also a higher magnitude on the outcomes compared to being referred in general: **returnees being referred for at least one economic reintegration support measure have, on average, an RSS Economic score that is over eight percentage points lower than to those benefiting from reintegration assistance through direct assistance only**.

In line with the results of the first Knowledge Bite, the analysis shows that **returning migrants benefiting from economic support activities – especially microbusiness and training – display on average higher RSS Scores compared to those returnees who did not benefit from them**. This finding may show that economic support activities have higher positive effect on RSS scores compared to other type of support activities. This effect is however disproportionally lower when the economic support measures are provided through referrals compared to when provided through direct assistance.

To substantiate this assumption, it is critical to assess the dichotomous effect of being referred for each type of reintegration assistance activity. This is achieved through the use of a dummy variable for each type of reintegration assistance for which the returnee was referred to[21] in the regression analysis.

The results of the regression analysis suggest that **returnees that received microbusiness support through referrals display on average more than seven percentage points decrease in the RSS Economic score compared to those not benefiting from microbusiness support, while, on average, benefiting from microbusiness assistance through direct assistance results in eight percentage points higher RSS Economic score** (see Annex 2, Charts 16–17). Similarly, returnees benefiting from trainings provided through referrals, display on average an RSS Economic Score that is three percentage points lower compared to those not benefiting from training assistance, while on average benefiting from training through direct assistance results in five percentage points higher RSS Economic Score. (see Annex 2, Charts 18–19).

On the other hand, **returnees having been referred for medical assistance display on average a higher RSS Economic score[22] compared to returnees that were not referred for medical assistance** (see Annex 2, Charts 20–21). This result suggest that medical assistance received through specialized service providers impact positively returnees' reintegration outcomes.

Finally, in line with the results from previous analysis, returnees benefiting from psychosocial support display lower reintegration outcomes across all dimensions compared to returnees not benefiting from this type of support. This holds true for both delivery modalities - direct assistance and referrals. However, the magnitude of the effect on the RSS Social score increases when the psychosocial support is received through referrals. In fact, receiving psychosocial support through referral results in an average five percentage points decrease in the RSS Social score compared to not receiving psychosocial support, while on average receiving the psychosocial support through direct assistance results in two percentage points decrease in the RSS Social score (see Annex 2, Charts 22-23). However, this result could also suggest the presence of simultaneity bias[23] between the reintegration scores and the psychosocial support rather than a causal relationship: returnees in need of and assisted with psychosocial support are more likely to have lower reintegration scores.

[20] Economic referral is a binary variable that takes value 1 if the returnee was referred for at least one economic reintegration support measure and 0 if the returnee benefited from direct assistance only.

[21] The dummy variable takes the value 1 if the returnees benefited from the reintegration assistance service through referral and 0 if the returnee benefited from the reintegration assistance through direct assistance or did not benefit from the reintegration assistance.

[22] The coefficients for the RSS Composite score, RSS Social score and RSS Psychosocial score do not display any statistical significance.

[23] Simultaneity bias occurs when the outcome variable causes change in the explanatory variable and at the same time the explanatory variable causes change in the outcome variable.

The results also confirm the statistically significant role of country of origin – context and specificities – on sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Moreover, the results suggest that the list of explanatory factors included in this analysis is non-exhaustive and predict only partly[24] the changes in the *RSS* scores, highlighting the importance of further analysis and investigation of the drivers of sustainable reintegration outcomes.

2.4 Limitations

This study's main limitations is the data availability on the central institutional information management system as i) it affects the extent to which the data is representative of the EU-IOM Actions' returnees caseload and ii) hinders the degree of generalization of the results to the overall returns, consistently across each EU-IOM Action. In fact, not all EU-IOM Actions are represented across the datasets used for this analysis.

Data quality and completeness are further limitations of the data used in this study: information on the situation of vulnerability and demographic categories such as the country and the region from which return took place, the length of absence from the country of origin, and whether the community of return is the same as the origin community have not been gathered consistently across the observations, calling for increased training and capacity building of staff, implementing partners and other key stakeholders that support IOM with the collection of monitoring and evaluation data.

Data quality is further affected by possible misalignments from the agreed upon definition of referrals. This can happen, for example, when data collectors mislabel reintegration assistance provided through direct assistance as referral, due to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the definition. This could be mitigated through regular data checks and triangulation.

Similarly, the lack of qualitative data and insights to complement and confirm the findings represent another significant limitation in terms of the robustness of the results.

Moreover, as most beneficiary monitoring tools, the Reintegration Programme Monitoring Survey, the Reintegration Programme Satisfaction Survey and the RSS take the form of self-evaluations by the returnee. This type of assessment could be susceptible to *self-reporting bias*[25] and *social desirability bias*.[26]

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This study contributes to existing research by providing some evidence on the effect of referrals on returnees' sustainable reintegration outcomes, as well as on comparative levels of satisfaction with the reintegration programme among beneficiaries that were assisted through direct assistance only versus those that received at least one reintegration support measure through referrals. The results have demonstrated that returnees benefiting from at least one reintegration activity through referrals, have on average lower sustainable reintegration scores across the economic and social dimensions, compared to returnees benefiting from direct assistance uniquely. Moreover, the results suggest that returnees benefiting from reintegration assistance through referrals display lower levels of satisfaction with the reintegration programme.

This analysis identifies a knowledge gap regarding the reasons behind the negative effect of referrals on sustainable reintegration

[24] As per r-square coefficients – 21 per for the RSS Composite, 23 per cent for the RSS Economic, 17 per cent for the RSS Social and 19 per cent for the RSS Psychosocial when using general referral or economic referral as a predictor. The r-square represent a measure of the goodness of fit of the model used.

[25] Response bias that occurs when the participant self-reported answers deviate from the true.

[26] Response bias that influences a participant to choose responses that reflect what they believe is more socially desirable or acceptable rather than their true thoughts and feelings.

scores and the levels of satisfaction among returnees. These findings highlight the need for qualitative information to triangulate and complement these results and provide detailed recommendations to reintegration practitioners for ensuring that returnees are able to reintegrate sustainably – across the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions - regardless of the delivery modality of the reintegration support they benefited from. Such additional qualitative data could also inform future capacity building activities intended for external reintegration service providers to improve beneficiary satisfaction levels and in fine their sustainable reintegration in their communities of return.

Building on these results, the recommended way forward consists of three consecutive steps:

(i) Design a qualitative research plan to collect, consolidate and analyse returnees' insights and feedback on there integration process through referrals.

(ii) Carry-out individual interviews with returnees and key informant interviews (KIIs) with partners and reintegration service providers.

(iii) Analyse the information gathered and produce a report showcasing the findings and formulating recommendations and lessons learned.

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4. Annex 1

Table 1. Reintegration Module Dataset – number of observations broken down by country and region

Region of Origin	Country of Origin	No. of observations	Per cent
Asia and the Pacific	Bangladesh	90	0.14
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	2 002	3.22
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	3 966	6.37
West and Central Africa	Côte d'Ivoire	4 356	7.00
East and Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	6 175	9.92
West and Central Africa	The Gambia	3 717	5.97
West and Central Africa	Ghana	914	1.47
West and Central Africa	Guinea	10 448	16.78
West and Central Africa	Guinea-Bissau	477	0.77
West and Central Africa	Mali	11 247	18.07
Southern Africa	Mozambique	159	0.26
West and Central Africa	Niger	1 147	1.84
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	11 604	18.64
West and Central Africa	Senegal	3 454	5.55
East and Horn of Africa	Somalia	634	1.02
East and Horn of Africa	Sudan	1 862	2.99
	TOTAL:	**62 252**	**100.00**

Table 2. Reintegration Programme Monitoring Dataset – number of observations broken down by country and region

Region of origin	Country of origin	No. of observations	Per cent
Asia and the Pacific	Bangladesh	45	0.77
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	212	3.64
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	427	7.33
West and Central Africa	Côte d'Ivoire	457	7.84
East and Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	647	11.10
West and Central Africa	The Gambia	485	8.32
West and Central Africa	Ghana	183	4.14
West and Central Africa	Guinea	447	7.67
West and Central Africa	Guinea-Bissau	206	3.54

Region of origin	Country of origin	No. of observations	Per cent
Southern Africa	Malawi	61	1.05
West and Central Africa	Mali	340	5.83
Southern Africa	Mozambique	117	2.01
West and Central Africa	Niger	374	6.42
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	1 090	18.71
West and Central Africa	Senegal	260	4.46
East and Horn of Africa	Somalia	297	5.10
East and Horn of Africa	Sudan	179	3.07
	TOTAL:	**5 827**	**100.00**

Table 3. Reintegration Programme Satisfaction Dataset – number of observations broken down by country and region

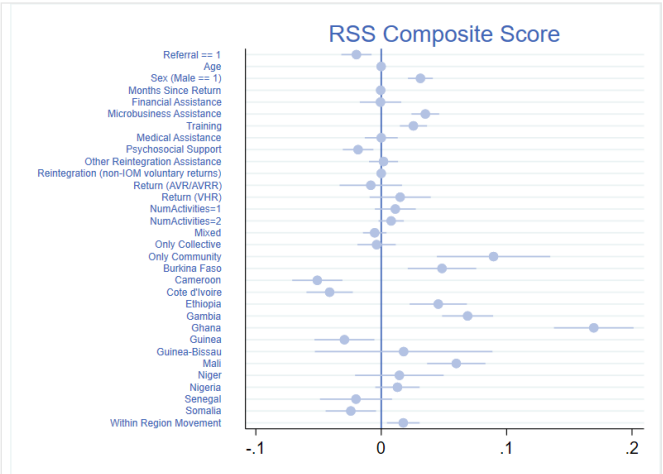
Region of origin	Country of origin	No. of observations	Per cent
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	189	4.01
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	426	9.04
West and Central Africa	Côte d'Ivoire	431	9.15
East and Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	555	11.78
West and Central Africa	The Gambia	417	8.85
West and Central Africa	Ghana	174	3.69
West and Central Africa	Guinea	374	7.94
West and Central Africa	Guinea-Bissau	141	2.99
West and Central Africa	Mali	371	7.87
Southern Africa	Mozambique	56	1.19
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	1 047	22.22
West and Central Africa	Senegal	256	5.43
East and Horn of Africa	Somalia	275	5.84
	TOTAL:	**4 712**	**100.00**

Table 4. Reintegration Sustainability Survey Dataset – number of observations broken down by country and region

Region of origin	Country of origin	No. of observations	Per cent
West and Central Africa	Burkina Faso	220	4.09
West and Central Africa	Cameroon	390	7.26
West and Central Africa	Côte d'Ivoire	364	6.77
East and Horn of Africa	Ethiopia	433	8.06
West and Central Africa	The Gambia	415	7.72
West and Central Africa	Ghana	176	3.28
West and Central Africa	Guinea	371	6.90
West and Central Africa	Guinea-Bissau	181	3.37
West and Central Africa	Mali	228	4.24
Southern Africa	Mozambique	81	1.51
West and Central Africa	Niger	47	0.87
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	1 160	21.59
West and Central Africa	Senegal	221	4.11
East and Horn of Africa	Somalia	404	7.52
East and Horn of Africa	Sudan	683	12.71
	TOTAL:	**5 374**	**100.00**

5. Annex 2

Chart 12. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score, using general referral (left) and economic referral (right)



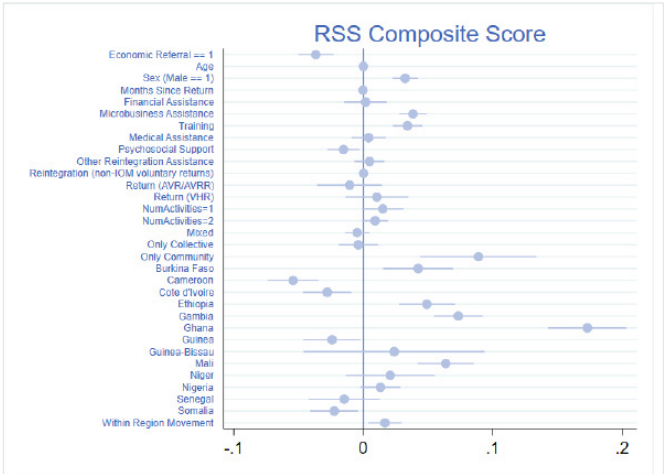
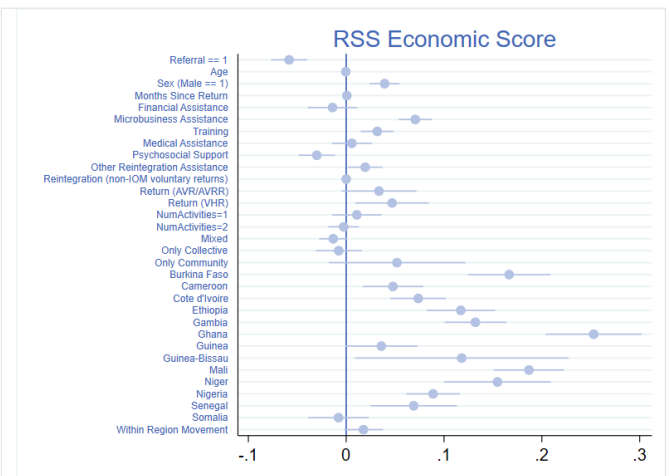


Chart 13. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Economic score, using general referral (left) and economic referral (right)



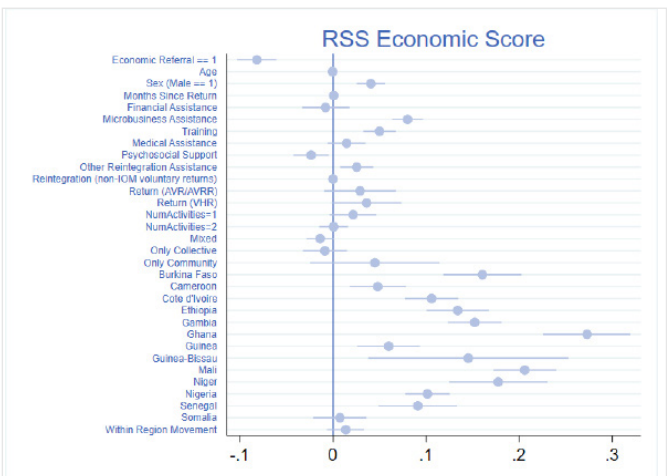


Chart 14. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score, using general referral (left) and economic referral (right)

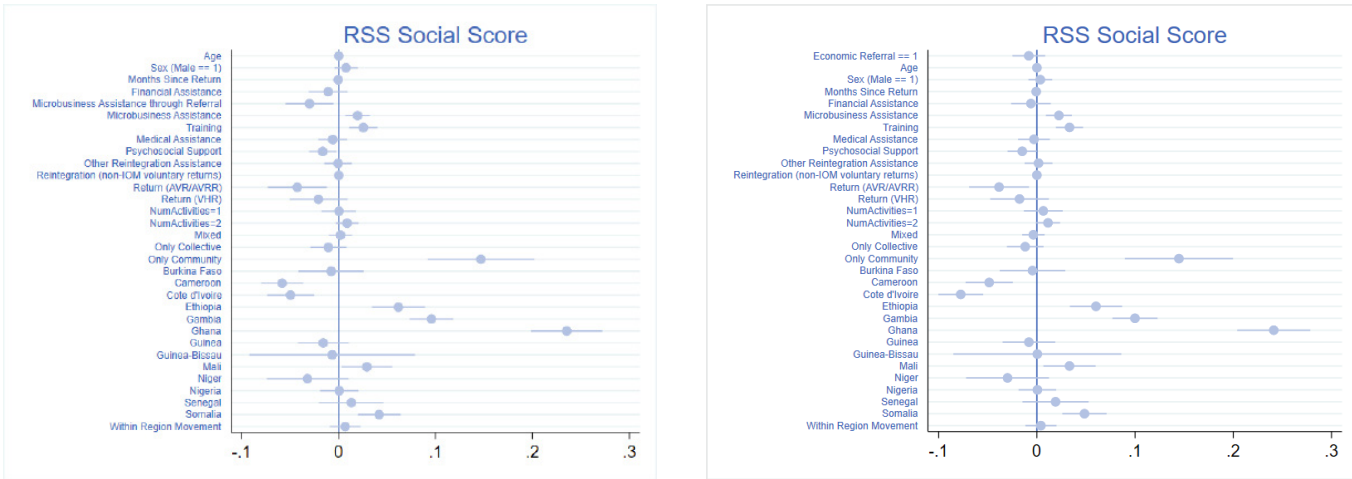


Chart 15. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Psychosocial score, using general referral (left) and economic referral (right)

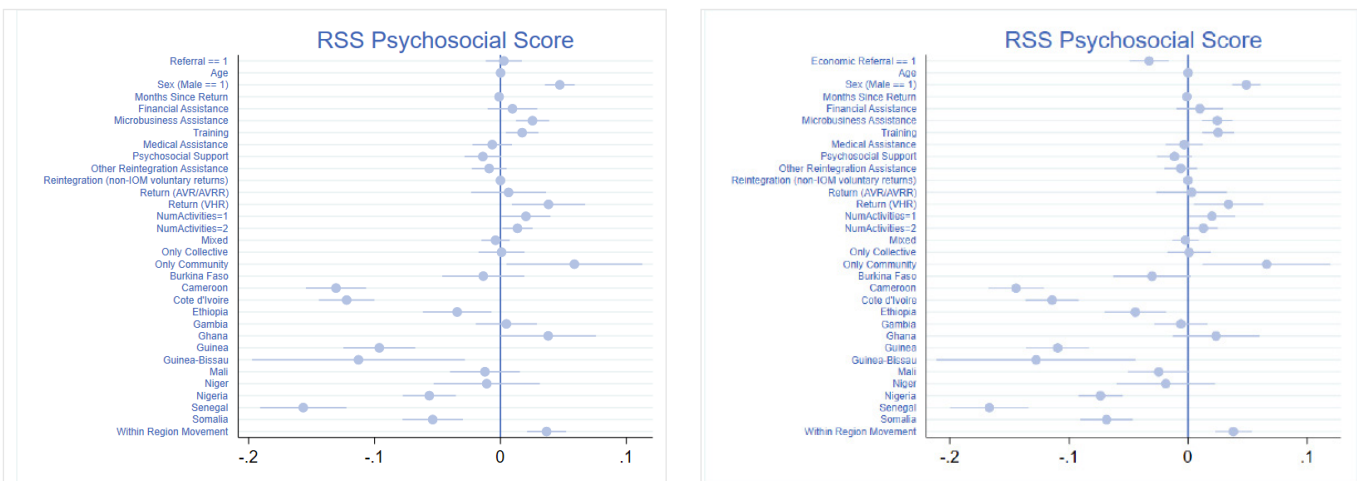
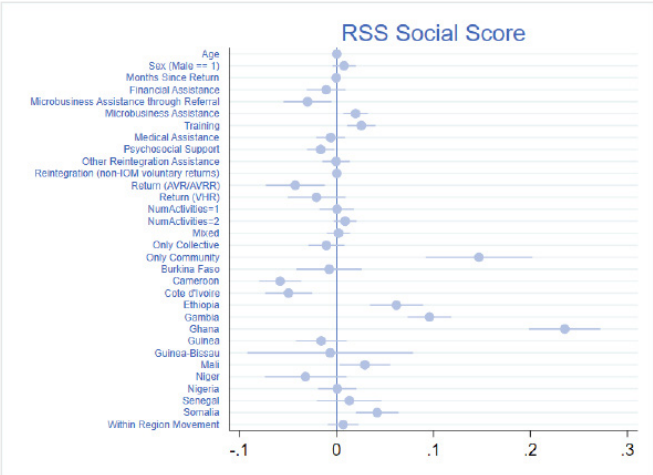


Chart 16. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score (left) and RSS Economic score (right), using referral for microbusiness assistance



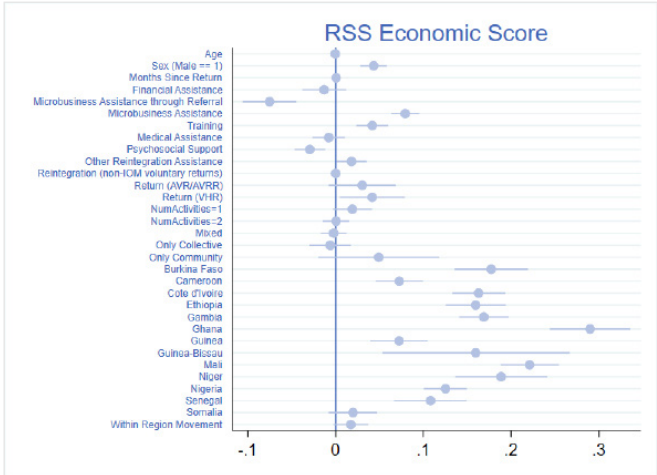
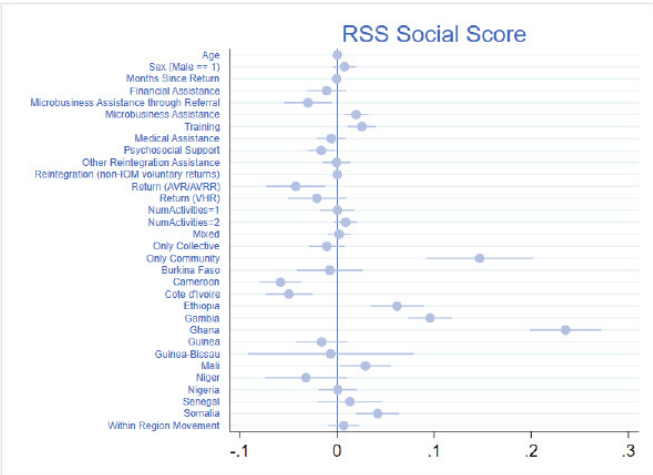


Chart 17. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score (left) and RSS Psychosocial score (right), using referral for microbusiness assistance



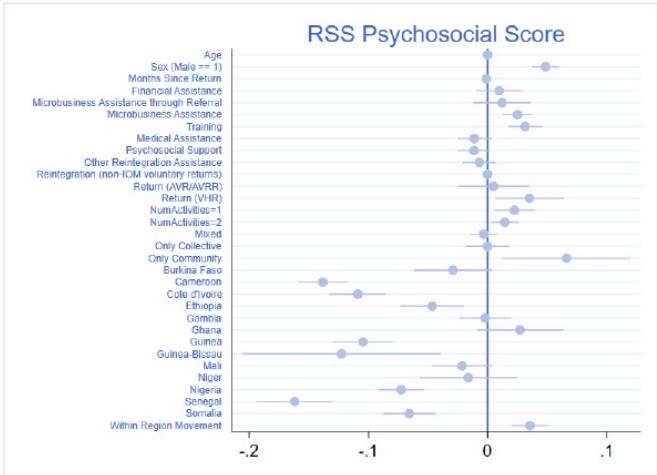
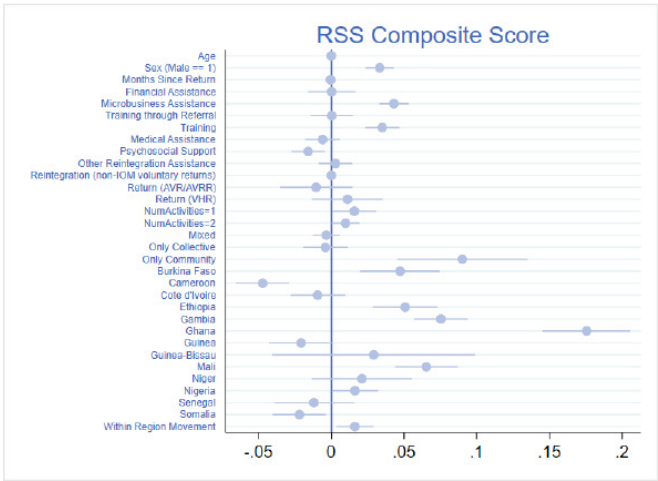


Chart 18. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score (left) and RSS Economic score (right), using referral for training



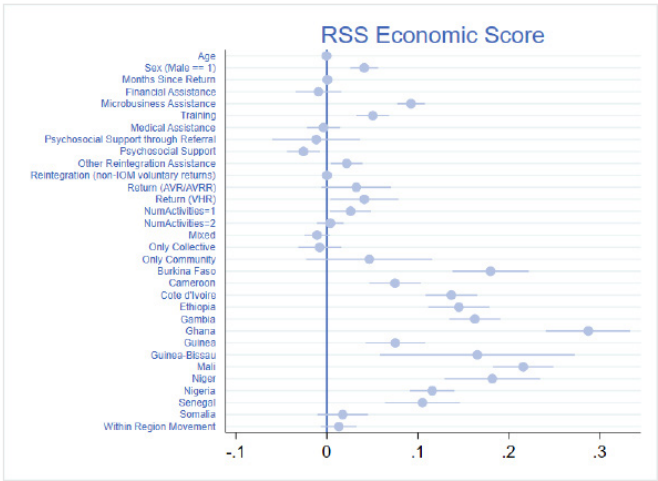
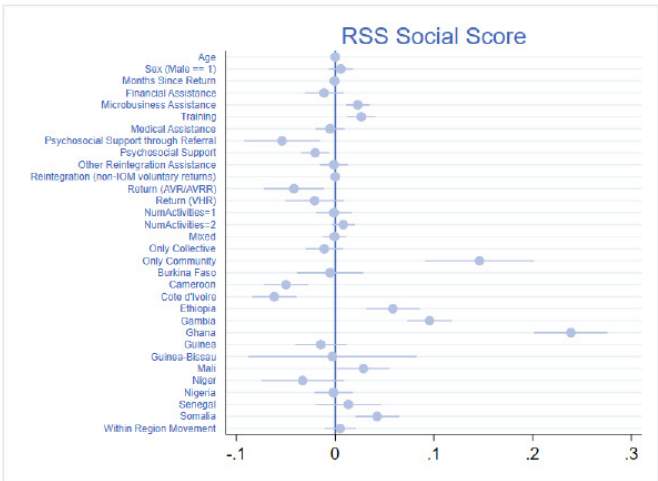


Chart 19. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score (left) and RSS Psychosocial score (right), using referral for training



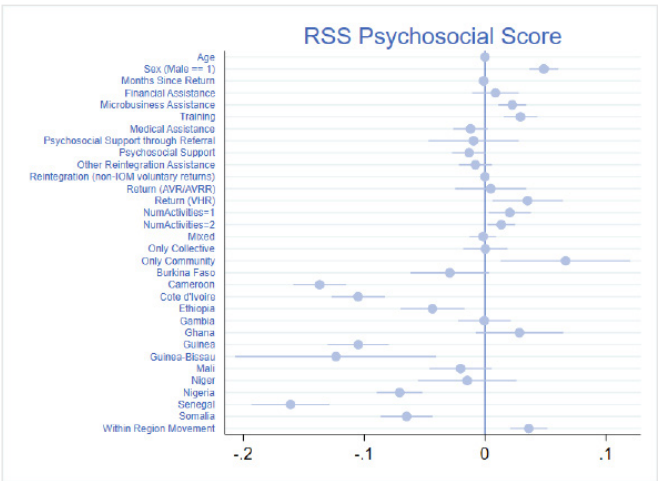
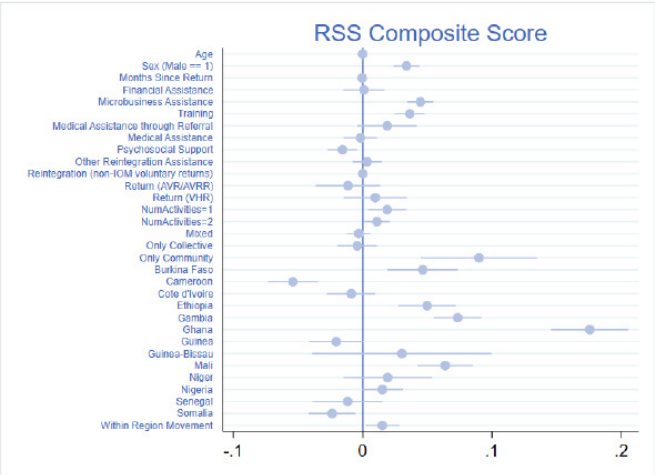


Chart 20. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score (left) and RSS Economic score (right), using referral for medical assistance



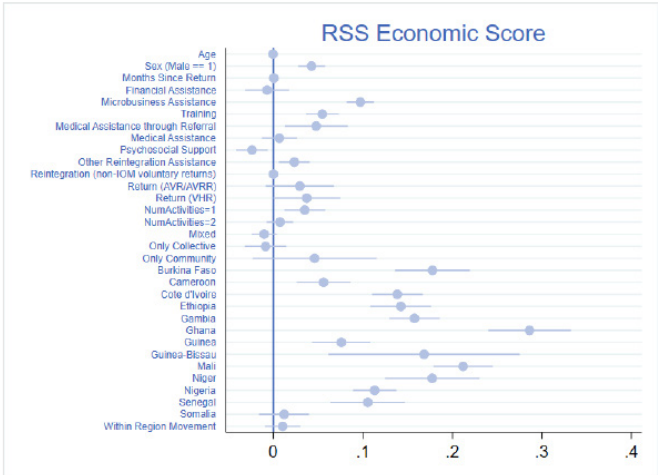
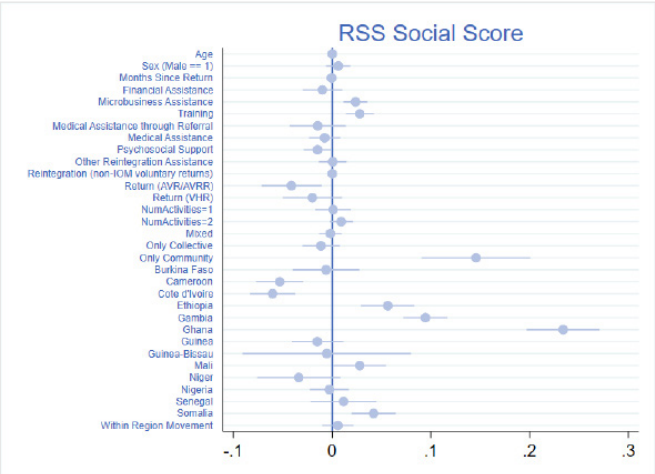


Chart 21. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score (left) and RSS Psychosocial score (right), using referral for medical assistance



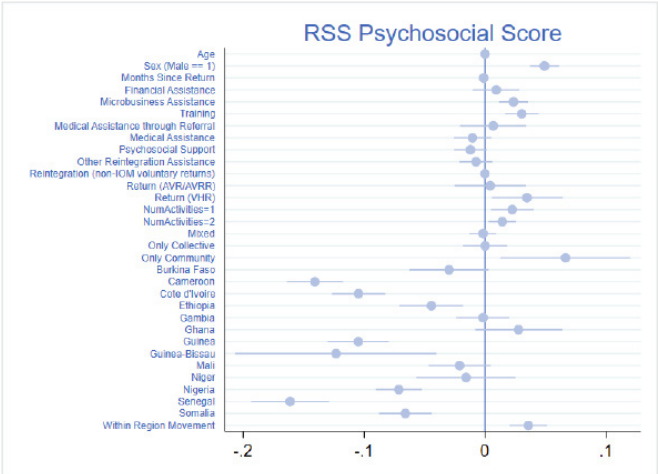
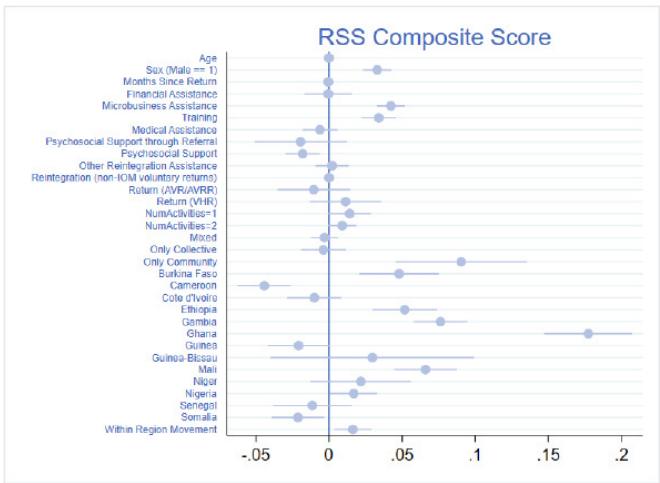


Chart 22. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Composite score (left) and RSS Economic score (right), using referral for psychosocial support



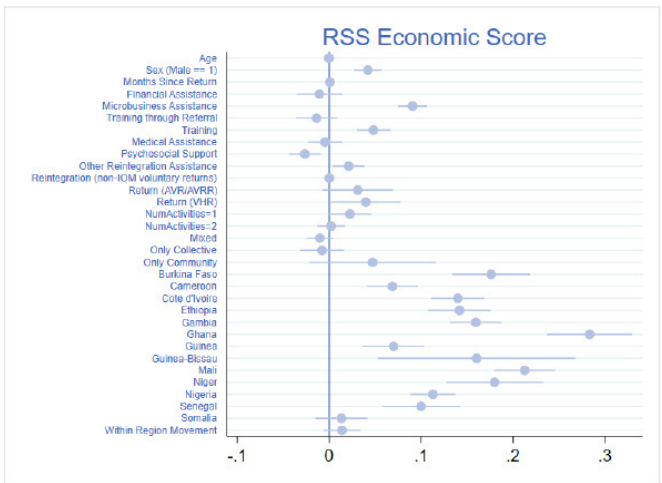


Chart 23. Regression analysis results (coefficients) – RSS Social score (left) and RSS Psychosocial score (right), using referral for psychosocial support