

Capacity Building on Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration

Introduction and Background

Launched in December 2016 with funding from the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) for Migrant Protection and Reintegration was the first comprehensive programme to save, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa.

In the Horn of Africa (JI HoA), the programme was launched in March 2017, targeting primarily Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. Migrants are supported to return to and reintegrate into their countries of origin in line with IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration.¹ This approach is multidimensional, as it seeks to address returnees' economic, social and psychosocial needs, and it also prescribes a coordinated intervention at three different levels: **individual, community and structural**.

Reintegration assistance at the structural level works towards creating the overall political, institutional, economic and social conditions for sustainable reintegration programming.² This involves strategically engaging reintegration stakeholders, building and strengthening their capacities and establishing strong coordination mechanisms. The JI HoA programme has implemented initiatives to strengthen the capacity of the relevant government authorities in various aspects of migration governance, with a focus on migrant protection, return and reintegration assistance provision, and the establishment of referral mechanisms.

Key areas of capacity-building activities in the JI HoA programme include:



Policy Support

Strengthening national policy frameworks to ensure that migrant protection and reintegration is embedded in national migration and development strategies and relevant sectoral policies in the country of origin. This includes support in the development and review of policies.



Process Strengthening

Supporting the nationalization of AVRR standard operating procedures, providing a robust framework for the delivery of return and reintegration assistance and enhancing referral mechanisms.



Support to Coordination Structures

Establishing and strengthening coordination structures to facilitate migrant protection and sustainable reintegration — at the regional, national and local levels.



Digitalization and Migration Data

Strengthening the skills, structures, processes or resources of key stakeholders to collect, manage and analyse return and reintegration data, to identify and articulate priorities to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returnees.

1 International Organization for Migration. Gravano, N., Götzelmann, A., Nozarian, N. & Jawadurovna Wadud, A. *Towards an integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return* (Geneva, 2017).

2 See IOM's Reintegration Handbook. Geneva, 2019. Available from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_reintegration_handbook.pdf.

Key Results in Djibouti

100%

Stakeholders declaring that they **are more engaged** in the field of voluntary return and reintegration assistance

2

Strategies, policies and plans developed and/or directly supported

100%

Partners reporting that data produced has **supported evidence-based policies, procedures & programme design**

1

Field studies conducted along with surveys and other research

12

Stakeholders **strengthened through capacity building** or operational support on reintegration

100%

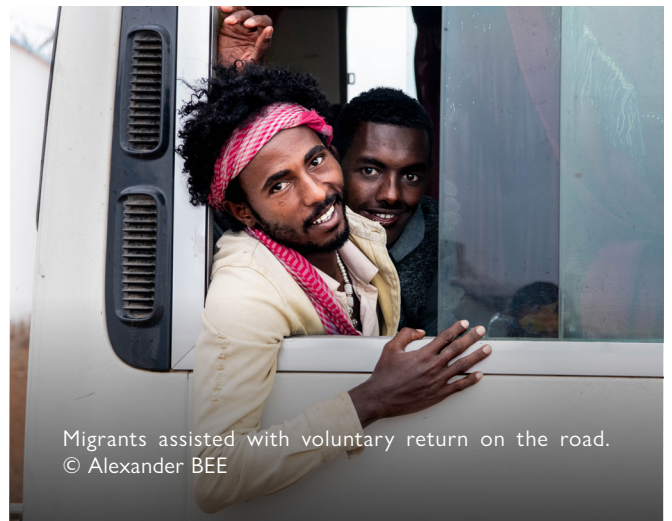
Stakeholders declaring **increased knowledge** on return and reintegration issues

3

National/regional/local networks and dialogues on migration related issues newly established or functionally enhanced



Ethiopian migrants crossing Djibouti. © Alexander BEE



Migrants assisted with voluntary return on the road. © Alexander BEE



Obock's region, Djibouti, November 14, 2021. IOM's mobile unit rescued 22 migrants in the desert. © Alexander BEE

Country Profile

Djibouti has a population of over 1 million people and covers a land area of about 23,200 km². It is one of the smallest countries in Africa, both in population and land area. In terms of economy, Djibouti has been experiencing significant growth due to its strategic location for international trade, with a gross domestic product per capita of 2,394 in 2021 United States dollars.

Over 220,000 movements are recorded across key flow monitoring points transiting each year and approximately 150,000 migrants live in the city of Djibouti. The country is located at a strategic crossroads between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and is one of the main transit points for thousands of migrants trying to reach the Arabian Peninsula. These migrants mainly originate from Ethiopia and Somalia, in search of economic opportunities and in response to climatic shocks such as drought, food insecurity, conflict and violence. To

arrive on the coast of Djibouti, migrants travel using various modes of transport, most frequently on foot through the desert where temperatures can surpass 50°C in the summertime. Migrants making this journey often suffer from acute dehydration and exhaustion due to the arduous terrain and lack of drinking water along the route. Given the lack of access to basic needs and services including medical care in these remote and isolated areas, migrants often adopt survival coping mechanisms such as drinking unclean water that causes them to contract waterborne diseases. Smugglers have also been known to abandon migrants in remote stretches of desert if they become ill or if they can no longer continue for other reasons. Smugglers gather in places such as Fantahero on the outskirts of Obock town before heading to the coast and crossing the Bal El Mandeb Strait to Yemen.

The EU-IOM JI programme in Djibouti closely collaborated with government institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) partners, among which:

ENTITY	MAIN AREAS OF COLLABORATION
The regional prefectures and regional councils (Arta, Ali Sabieh, Dikhil, Obock and Tadjourah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regional prefectures and regional councils work closely with IOM Djibouti for issues related to migration management and migrant protection and assistance in the different regions.
Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry works closely with IOM Djibouti on matters related to access to health for migrants.
Ministry of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry works closely with IOM Djibouti on all matters concerning counter-trafficking and access to justice for migrants.
Ministry of the Interior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry is a key counterpart of IOM Djibouti in all aspects of migration management and support to vulnerable and stranded migrants through the provision of protection and assistance services.
Ministry of Women and Family Affairs (MFF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministry is a key IOM partner in Djibouti. The MFF is in charge of child protection in the country and also lead the Best Interest Determination (BID) process. The MFF also supports IOM Djibouti in the management of the transit centre for unaccompanied and separated migrant children in Djibouti city.
Local authorities, including the Coast Guard, the Marine Guard and the National Navy, the Gendarmerie and the Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOM Djibouti works closely together with local authorities on issues related to search and rescue activities (on land and at sea) as well as on identification and referral of migrants in vulnerable situations.
National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Displaced Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This office is the governmental body in charge of protection and assistance to refugees in Djibouti.

Key Achievements

Under the EU-IOM JI programme in Djibouti, IOM conducted a number of structural level interventions, as follows:



Policy Support

- Worked with the MFF on a study on street children to engage the Government on the issue of migrant street children and encourage them to take action to address their needs. A major result of the study's recommendations has been the opening of a new transit shelter for migrant children who wish to voluntarily return home.



Process Strengthening

- Helped nationalize and validate the framework standard operating procedures (SOPs) for assisted voluntary return and reintegration in Djibouti, raising awareness on migrant protection and reintegration challenges as well as determining the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. The SOPs were validated in February 2020.
- Organized a child protection workshop for representatives from the MFF, IOM staff, Caritas, the Red Crescent and the United Nations Children's Fund. IOM trained representatives from the Djibouti Red Crescent and Migrant Response Centres staff in Obock on the identification and management of cases of gender-based violence.
- Strengthened the capacity of local and national authorities on the management of mortal remains in Djibouti.



Support to Coordination Structures

- Supported the establishment of a National Referral Mechanism for Vulnerable Migrants in Djibouti. With co-funding from a national EU Action, a referral guide was developed involving several national institutions, civil society organizations and protection actors. The launch of the guide has facilitated the formalization of cooperation between relevant actors assisting vulnerable migrants in Djibouti. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative and the Office of the National Coordination for Migration held two workshops to launch the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), in Tadjoura and Obock. The NRM workshops were attended by 42 participants including representatives from local authorities, civil society organizations, law enforcement agencies and UN agencies. The committee agreed to hold regular capacity building forums.
- IOM Djibouti and IOM Ethiopia carried out preparatory work for a planned joint knowledge exchange visit to Dire Dawa in Ethiopia to identify local actors who can support reintegration plans for unaccompanied migrant children.



Digitalization and Migration Data

- Supported the creation and operationalization of a technical working group (TWG) on migration data, chaired by the National Institute of Statistics. The TWG has been improving the use and comparability of migration data in Djibouti and facilitating the harmonization and accessibility of migration data among relevant institutions, ministries and agencies responsible for the production and use of migration data.
- Supported the enhancement of information management capacity, including beneficiary record management of the Loyada transit centre in Djibouti managed by the National Office of Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims.