

Bangladeshi migrant workers who fled the conflict in Libya are assisted by IOM. The Organization on 8 March helped some 2,180 Bangladeshi migrant workers return home. © IOM 2011 (Photo: Chris Lom).

TWO YEARS AFTER THE CRISIS: RETURNEES FROM LIBYA REVISITED¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of the 2011 conflict in Libya continues to reverberate in countries across North and West Africa. The crisis led to an outflow of migrant workers back to their home countries in the region and across the world. To this day, albeit in much smaller numbers, migrants are continuing to leave Libya. While the timely intervention and transportation of returnees prevented an immediate humanitarian crisis from occurring on Libya's borders, the return of vast numbers of migrants to their home countries was not without consequences. Even though the crisis has diminished, pressing humanitarian needs still remain.

As was recognized at the time, the Libyan crisis also posed a broader threat to peace and security in the region through the proliferation



of weapons, and links to terrorism and organized crime.² The risk of destabilization to countries in the region was a key concern. Already in 2012, the military coup in Mali was being partly linked to the proliferation of arms from Libya and the possible involvement of Tuareg returnees, who had fought as mercenaries alongside Libyan troops.³ The recent escalation of the conflict over the past months suggests that these fears were

justified; the aftermath of the Libyan crisis is clearly one of the many factors that have contributed to the situation in Mali.⁴

Two years after mass returns began, this report provides an update to a policy brief issued in May 2012, on the situation of migrants who returned to their home countries as a result of the conflict in Libya in 2011. While the initial policy brief focused specifically on returns to several West African countries,⁵ this

² UN Secretary-General report to the Security Council of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, 7–23 December 2011 (reference S/2012/42).

³ For examples, see: BBC, "Tuareg rebels make troubled return from Libya to Mali", 29 February 2012 (available from www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17192212); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), "Livelihood security: Climate change, migration and conflict in the Sahel", 5 December 2012 (available from www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Introduction/EnvironmentalCooperationforPeacebuilding/EnvironmentalDiplomacy/SahelReport/tabid/55812/Default.aspx); BBC, "Tuaregs 'join Gaddafi's mercenaries'", 4 March 2011 (available from www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12647115).

⁴ Guardian, "West overlooked risk of Libya weapons reaching Mali, says expert", 21 January 2013. Available from www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/21/west-libya-weapons-mali.

⁵ International Organization for Migration, "Returnees from Libya: The bittersweet experience of coming home summary report", 2012 (available from http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=41_7&products_id=828); "Policy in brief – Returnees from Libya: The bittersweet experience of coming home", May 2012 (available from http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=36&products_id=786).

¹ Prepared by Asmita Naik, IOM consultant.

update takes a broader view and looks at the situation of returnees in a number of African and Asian countries. This policy brief update first reviews the current situation of returnees and then examines the measures taken to support them. Finally, it lays out some lessons for the future, by revisiting and revising the recommendations made previously in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.

3. CONTEXT

Following the start of the Libyan conflict in 2011, nearly 800,000 migrant workers fled Libya and returned to their home countries. As shown in Table 1, the countries under review dealt with widely differing numbers of returnees from Libya – from as few as 191 documented returns to Ethiopia to as many as 173,873 Egyptian returnees.⁷



IOM staff assists Bangladeshi nationals who arrived home after fleeing the conflict in Libya. © IOM 2011.

2. METHODOLOGY

The update is based on a short survey of IOM missions in several African and Asian countries in autumn 2012. IOM and local counterparts were requested to provide information on the current country context, the situation of returnees, policy and programmes able to support returnees, and recommendations. It is based on replies received from four of the six West African countries covered in the original policy brief (Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, and Niger)⁶ as well as contributions from six other IOM Country Offices in North Africa and Asia (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tunisia, Viet Nam, and Bangladesh).

Table 1: Documented returns from Libya as of the end of 2011⁸

Country	Number of returnees from Libya
Bangladesh	36,683
Burkina Faso	1,627
Chad	87,189
Egypt	173,873
Ethiopia	191
Ghana	18,512
Niger	96,721
Sudan	17,124
Tunisia	136,749
Viet Nam	10,500 approximately

Source: IOM, 2012.

⁷ These figures only show organized returns, and do not include the undocumented return of those migrants who organized their own travel.

⁸ While returns from Libya continued throughout 2012, these were marginal when compared with the movements in 2011. All statistics on returns are from internal documents from relevant IOM missions.

Countries with large numbers of returnees had coordinated programmes for repatriation. For instance, both Chad and Ghana had comprehensive programmes of transportation, medical assistance, food and psychosocial support implemented in collaboration with IOM and other key stakeholders from the United Nations and the NGO community. Viet Nam instituted a sophisticated government-led response based on its experience in the evacuation of nationals from previous conflicts (i.e. Iraq in 1990 and Lebanon in 2006). This resulted in the repatriation of more than 10,000 Vietnamese nationals within nine days, funded by the Government and the corporate sector coupled with a programme of employment support and aid relief. Other countries such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Sudan provided more limited assistance to returnees. In the case of Burkina Faso, for example, the returnees from Libya were assisted at their arrival in Ouagadougou by the Government Agency of Social Affairs and Emergency Response (CONASUR), the Red Cross and IOM. They were provided with food and accommodation, psychological assistance and transport fees, and returned progressively to their home villages by special convoy or private transport services.

IOM and other organizations provided advisory support and assistance at airports and transit locations in bordering countries such as Tunisia, as well as further afield in Malta, Turkey, and Malaysia. IOM also provided return and reintegration assistance to migrants. From October 2011 through December 2012, for instance, IOM assisted 6,809 migrants to return home voluntarily from Libya. IOM assisted with pre-departure and transportation arrangements to enable migrants to return to their areas of origin,

⁶ For Mali, given the recent conflict, it was not possible to gather any updated data.

and offered reintegration support upon return.



Migrants' convoy arrives in Zouarke (Chadian Border Village with Niger). © IOM 2011.

Although returns reached a peak in mid-2011, they have continued on a minor scale to the present day. Despite the end of the armed conflict in Libya, migrants continue to flee the country due to ongoing instability, following release from detention centres throughout Libya, or once employment contracts have ended. For instance, assistance was provided to 500 returnees to Chad through joint operations by the Government, the Chadian Red Cross and IOM between June and November 2012. The majority of these returnees had been held in detention centres or were fleeing tribal fighting between different ethnic groups in the south of Libya. In Niger, IOM continues to provide humanitarian assistance to migrant returnees in need through its transit centres in Dirkou and Arlit. Migrants also continue to return to Burkina Faso through Niger. IOM's NIGERIMM programme, which provides these migrants with return and reintegration aid, assisted 81 migrants to return to Burkina Faso in October 2012 alone. As another example, a number of Ghanaian migrants left Libya to go back home in early 2012. Having been paid to guard the premises of international

companies, they had remained in Libya until it was safe enough for company managers to return.

Large-scale returns from Libya, which constituted a significant crisis in 2011, have since been overshadowed by more recent events. Even though the crisis has diminished, pressing humanitarian needs still remain. For instance, many migrants remain in detention facilities throughout Libya, in difficult and often harsh conditions. Countries of return have also continued to experience a constant ebb and flow of migration movements to and from other countries. Ethiopia, for example, is a major migrant-sending country in the Horn of Africa as well as a receiving country for thousands of refugees from neighbouring Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and the Great Lakes region.

A number of countries, and among them the least developed and therefore the least able to cope, have faced major new challenges. In Burkina Faso, the plight of the returnees has been superseded by new concerns including refugee inflows from the Malian crisis, as well as food insecurity and cholera outbreaks. Chad has continued to suffer from extreme climatic, political and economic shocks. The Arab Spring and revolutions across North Africa have also inhibited the capacity of governments to focus on the issue of returnees from Libya. Egypt and Tunisia, for example, were faced with the influx of many different nationalities fleeing the Libyan crisis while in the midst of its own political turmoil. Sudan also underwent major political change in 2012 when it split between North and South, which has impacted on return operations. Countries throughout Asia have also had to prepare for new eventualities such as a potential migrant exodus from Syria, although returns to date are reported to be very limited.

4. POLICY AND PROGRAMME RESPONSES

Against this fluid background of widely differing and changing country contexts, responses of governments and the international community to the needs of returnees from Libya have also varied enormously, from intensive and comprehensive support programmes to little or no action at all.



In Mao, west Chad, returnees have set up their own market to survive with their families. However, they say that their earnings are not the same as what they used to make in Libya. © IOM 2012.

REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME

In Viet Nam, the Government led the response with a comprehensive range of measures including transportation home and support from aid relief through to employment programmes. In Chad, IOM designed a full programme of socioeconomic and psychosocial reintegration activities, which was strongly supported by the Government. The Government of Niger set up a composite response comprised of the establishment of committees from national through to local levels and a national emergency plan for reintegration. In Ghana as well, the Government implemented some of its own direct measures and also supported two large reintegration programmes run by IOM. This included the promotion of returnee associations as a way of enabling

returnees to work together and help themselves. In Bangladesh, a sophisticated cash disbursement scheme was set up to distribute funds to returnees in a transparent and systematic way. The Egyptian Government, with IOM support, established information hubs in the country to provide help and assistance to returnees. In Tunisia,

IOM assisted young returnees by including them in a project for unemployed Tunisian youth aimed at promoting entrepreneurship.

In some countries, the United Nations and NGOs launched programmes for returnees. In Egypt, projects by organizations such as the Sawiris Foundation,

World Food Programme and Terre des Hommes carried out economic reintegration initiatives such as food for training and vocational training. Other countries, including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Sudan, report that there has been little or no follow-up action due to a variety of reasons, such as lack of funding, lack of interest or lack of capacity .



A joint IOM Chadian assessment team conducts a registration for the stranded migrants in the remote village of Ngouboua on the Chad-Nigeria border. The team discovered a group of over 800 destitute Chadian returnees from Nigeria, including a large number of unaccompanied children aged between 6 and 14. © IOM 2012.

There are two important points to bear in mind about the reintegration programmes that were established in these countries. Firstly, most of the activities are ongoing and have not yet been independently evaluated; as such, it is not possible to comment on the effects and impact of these programmes. Secondly, a number of programmes deliberately targeted both returnees and other community members to foster community stabilization and to avoid tensions and resentments at a local level. Table 2 provides details of reintegration programmes carried out in different countries.

Table 2: Information on reintegration programmes

Country	Reintegration programme
Bangladesh	Outside Africa, the largest return movement was to Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh, with support from IOM and the World Bank, instituted a repatriation and reintegration programme that included a modest cash transfer to all returnees. A sophisticated process of cash disbursement was put in place, involving extensive publicity of the availability of these funds through the media, a verification system to check the eligibility of candidates and a procedure for addressing grievances. While the Government of Bangladesh conferred an ‘Excellence Award’ on IOM for its efforts, no information is yet available on how the cash transfers were used by returnees and what impact they had on reintegration.
Chad	<p>In Chad, the destination of one of the largest groups of returnees, reintegration was strongly supported and facilitated by the Government, including the Office of the President. IOM designed a comprehensive strategy fully supported by the Government, which comprised three main aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Economic reintegration activities</i> – These activities include the provision of vocational training, literacy courses and individually tailored reintegration packages for returnees. • <i>Community-based socioeconomic reintegration activities</i> – Carried out in areas of high returns, a community development approach was used to implement small-scale projects, such as drilling boreholes and rehabilitating schools, which benefit not only returnees but also communities as a whole. • <i>Psychosocial reintegration activities</i> – Five psychosocial mobile teams were established to carry out culturally appropriate counselling and support activities. This included recreational activities and support groups comprised of returnees and local community members, in addition to capacity-building for local social and medical service providers. <p>In addition, IOM’s strategy towards Chadian returnees from Libya has involved other activities such as community stabilization, peace building and advocacy to mainstream responses to the Libyan crisis through humanitarian programming in the country.</p>

Egypt	The Egyptian Government, with the support of IOM, has set up a project to stabilize communities at risk and facilitate migration management between Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. This involves establishing 'hubs' in areas of high returns, to provide returnees with information regarding employment opportunities and services such as health care. A small grant scheme is also in place to address labour market gaps, as well as to allocate funds for small enterprises and compensation for returnees.
Ghana	<p>The Government of Ghana, besides directly implementing a few concrete measures to support returnees, has shown its commitment through support to IOM's two reintegration projects. These projects promote the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees, mainly through vocational and micro-business skills training, business counselling, provision of basic start-up kits and access to health insurance. To address community stabilization needs, the projects do not exclusively target returnees. Vulnerable community members within major migrant-sending areas were also targeted to receive a proportion of the assistance (10%). IOM also carries out capacity development for partner NGOs, information campaigns to promote safe migration, psychosocial support and counselling. Research on community preparedness and coping strategies for future large-scale returns are also planned.</p> <p>One interesting initiative promoted by the Ghanaian government's National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) was the formation of returnee associations, resulting in the creation of several different groups. One of these is the Great Jamahiriya Peace Group, an association of all returnees and with specific political interests in Libya. Other groups are more apolitical, such as the Northern Returnees Integrated Development Society, which is more regionally based, is limited to those affected by crisis, and is focused on preventing future migration crises as well as unsafe migration.</p>
Niger	<p>In Niger, the recipient of the largest group of West African returnees, the Government has elaborated an emergency plan that includes the adoption of the National Programme of Socio-Economic Reintegration of Returnees and the appointment of a steering committee. Under a framework established by the Prime Minister, ad hoc committees were set up at the national, regional, departmental and communal levels to coordinate and monitor the repatriation of returnees. The reintegration of returnees from Libya was also included as a major axis of the Security and Development for Sahel-Sahara Areas Strategy developed by the Prime Minister. The Government of Niger has also instituted some reintegration programmes to help Nigerien returnees to set up businesses, mainly in agriculture and livestock breeding.</p> <p>Despite these significant government efforts, additional assistance was required to effectively address the needs of returnees. Since November 2011, IOM has provided assistance to support the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees. After carrying out needs assessments in areas with large numbers of returnees, tailored programmes were developed to provide assistance, such as the EC-funded Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Egypt (RAVEL) and the Italian-funded NIGERIMM. Support was provided to either individual microenterprises or to cooperatives involving both returnees and other community members. Community stabilization programmes were also carried out in order to balance assistance to individual returnees with attention to host community needs. IOM set special provisions for unaccompanied minors, including humanitarian assistance and family reunification. Under the NIGERIMM programme, support was also provided to nationals of other countries who had fled from Libya to Niger, helping them to return to their villages of origin and set up microenterprises.</p>
Tunisia	In Tunisia, IOM provided reintegration assistance to young Tunisian returnees from Libya by creating synergies with an MDG-funded project on youth, employment and migration implemented in three pilot governorates (Tunis, Gafsa, El Kef). The project aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and the innovative projects set up by young unemployed Tunisians to create sustainable jobs. By including young returnees from Libya in this project, IOM helped to facilitate their reintegration and assisted them in setting up their own income-generating projects.
Viet Nam	Viet Nam's comprehensive government-led response included a range of measures such as aid relief of approximately USD 50 per returnee, vocational training, changes to repayment terms of loans and deployment to construction programmes in Viet Nam.

Source: IOM, 2012.

RE-EMIGRATION SUPPORT

In addition to reintegration, governments have also made efforts to focus on re-emigration. In Viet Nam, this was an explicit component of the policy towards returnees. IOM assisted the Government through a project aimed both at supporting

Current needs for the reintegration of the Chadian returnees from Libya have been assessed by IOM throughout the whole country.
© IOM 2012.



reintegration and helping returnees to find new work abroad. IOM also set up a pilot migrant resource centre in Hanoi in May 2012, to give reliable information on safe migration. Although part of a wider strategy aimed at supporting the government's migration management strategy, the centre is also intended to benefit returnees from Libya. In Egypt, although on a smaller and ad hoc scale, the Egyptian Government facilitated the Libyan Government's recruitment of 150 technical and general workers.

FOLLOW-UP TO PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

As for the recommendations made in the initial policy brief of May 2012, progress to date has been limited.⁹ Most IOM offices report that follow-up actions have not been taken, given the lack of broader support programmes for returnees. One notable exception was in Ghana, where there has been a systematic integration of the recommendations into its programming. These are worth looking at, as they provide concrete examples of how the recommendations can be brought to life in programming:

- *Socioeconomic reintegration support* – Steps were taken to ensure that reintegration support was targeted and relevant by giving basic start-up kits after training; reviewing grants and increasing them if necessary, taking into account the local situation; allowing recipients the flexibility to use grants for other purposes, such as for university fees; and ensuring that the need for skills development in Libya was taken into account when designing support activities.

- *Community stabilization* – The programme developed in Ghana benefitted both returnees and the wider community. Activities included school rehabilitation, handing over of decision-making powers to community leaders, and inclusion of vulnerable community members (20%) in service provision. The programme also involved the creation of cooperatives of returnees and community members. Reintegration support to returnees and vulnerable community members was designed to stimulate increased employment opportunities within the community.
- *Priorities based on the context of each region* – To ensure that each project appropriately addressed local priorities, the programme was tailored according to the context of each region within Ghana where projects were implemented and involved both local authorities and returnee associations, in line with the policy brief recommendations.
- *Psychosocial protection* – Along with direct mental health and psychosocial support, the programme also integrated mental health and psychosocial issues into other programme components. For example, training on business development skills included space for participants to share migration stories, discuss feelings, and work towards behaviour change and building confidence.
- *Gender bias* – Although there were very few women returnees (6 out of 139), all were selected as beneficiaries. The programme implementers were briefed on gender issues and paid specific attention to the role of women, which had some notable positive results. For example, one woman returnee was elected chairman of one of the eight cooperatives by her fellow (male) members. Another woman returnee talked about the experience of being a migrant worker in Libya from a female perspective, which included a discussion of discrimination and sexual harassment issues.
- *Participation* – IOM carried out a number of consultations with returnees and communities, and took their concerns into account when designing a response and when defining selection criteria to be integrated into the programme.



Official welcome. © IOM.

⁹ The list of recommendations included in the policy brief was a compilation of the recommendations received from individual IOM offices.

- *Migration management and capacity-building* – Government officials attended training and were closely involved in all programme activities.
- *Information campaigns* – The programme includes sensitisation on the realities and risks of irregular migration, as well as legal migration options, through activities such as radio programmes and information dissemination at public events such as football galas.
- *Risk management strategies* – A comprehensive study is planned to understand how host/returning communities can reinforce their livelihoods in order to be less vulnerable to premature large-scale returns in the future.

5. CURRENT SITUATION OF RETURNEES

In most countries, there is no information on the current situation of returnees. Such information only exists if there have been new studies by multilateral agencies. One survey carried out by IOM in June 2012 in Ghana gives some fresh insights into the current situation of returnees there.¹⁰ The profiling exercise revealed that...

...a great majority are still unemployed; despite learning new skills in Libya, they have not been able to set up their own businesses due to lack of funds, or to find paid employment due to the absence of contacts and social networks.

Nonetheless, some returnees with specialized experience have found gainful employment, such as in the oil sector, or by putting up trading

businesses with neighbouring countries, such as an onion trade with Niger.

The emotional health of returnees is also a concern; roughly a fourth report that they are sad and feel depressed.

The premature return home also led to a number of relationship issues. In many cases, there are tensions and arguments with family members over financial constraints, with some marital relationships ending in divorce. Likewise, relations with the wider community continue to be fraught. Despite the difficult experience of returning home, many returnees and their families were still relatively better off compared with other community members. There is little sympathy for returnees, and social divisions and jealousy emerge when returnees alone are seen to receive support. The study suggests that 40 per cent intend to leave Ghana again, with Libya still ranking as the preferred destination. Others mentioned destinations throughout Europe, such as Spain, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as Belgium and France to a lesser extent. Some even indicated destinations further afield, including Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia and Dubai. Although unconfirmed, it appears that those willing and able to re-emigrate

had already done so within a few months of their return.

A study carried out by IOM and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Tunisia in 2012, "Migration of Tunisians to Libya: Dynamics, challenges and prospects," presents some interesting findings. This first assessment of Tunisian returnees from Libya not only considered the current circumstances of the returnees, but also reflected on their lives in Libya and the return experience, as well as their prospects for returning to Libya. Table 3 summarizes the current status of Tunisian returnees from Libya.

The study found that 42.6 per cent of Tunisian returnees from Libya had since re-emigrated, due to the precarious employment situation faced in their country of origin. Survey results showed that 70.4 per cent wanted to return to Libya, or had already done so, and that only 20.1 per cent wished to remain in Tunisia. At the time of the study, 39.5 per cent of returnees had re-emigrated back to Libya to seek employment there. Contrary to the findings from Ghana, the study done in Tunisia suggests that those who had already re-emigrated tended to be those with less means – those who were more vulnerable, from more disadvantaged regions, from larger households, and with lower levels of education and lower skill sets.

Table 3: Current status of Tunisian returnees from Libya

Current status	Percentage of returnees
Able to find work in Tunisia	20.1% Of this: 73% employees 17% self-employed 10% other
Unemployed in Tunisia – actively seeking work	28.7%
Unemployed in Tunisia – not actively seeking work	8.7%
Had re-emigrated in search of work	42.6% Of this: 94% to Libya 6% to other destinations

Source: IOM and AfDB, forthcoming.

¹⁰ This survey profiled those returnees who applied for assistance under IOM's reintegration programme. The information was gathered through registration/application forms.

In Chad, IOM carried out a profiling exercise in 50 communities of high return, finding that many returnees faced difficulties regarding the lack of community infrastructure. While in Libya, the returnees had become accustomed to easy access to most community infrastructures such as education, health, housing, employment and social security. In their home communities, returnees have found these services to be difficult to access or completely non-existent, posing a significant stress factor for returnees. There is limited or no information from other countries on the state of returnees. Other countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan have no new data, but assume that the situation of returnees continues to be dire, that they lack employment, live in poor conditions and are waiting for opportunities to re-emigrate.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This update gives a glimpse into the current situation of returnees from Libya. Two years after mass returns began, the circumstances of many continue to be difficult, with few job opportunities and challenges

in adjusting back to family and community life. As shown by experiences in Bangladesh, Chad, Ghana and Viet Nam, it is possible to set up comprehensive programmes where the resources, political will and capacity exist. These efforts serve as good examples, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach that targets returnees and wider communities, as well as simultaneously addresses reintegration and safe re-emigration for those who desire it. This specific case of migrants returning home from Libya also provides us with...

...a larger lesson: once the immediate emergency is over, such returnees are likely to become a forgotten group, especially if they come from countries faced with new economic and political challenges.

IOM missions were invited to submit recommendations and lessons learned as part of the research exercise for this update. Based on these contributions, the recommendations contained in the initial policy brief of May 2012 were revised accordingly.



Food distribution to Stranded Migrants in Sabha. © IOM 2011.

REINTEGRATION AND COMMUNITY STABILIZATION

1. Balance individual assistance and community stabilization.

In areas affected by high returns, support should be provided in a holistic way, to the entire community. Targeting individual returnees or their families could create tensions in the communities, especially if returnees and their families are relatively better off despite the trauma they have suffered.

2. Base socioeconomic reintegration on defined priorities.

Reintegration programmes should be based on priorities defined by policy and planning documents at the regional, departmental and communal levels. They should also involve community-based organizations such as youth associations, socioprofessional groups and women's groups.

- Additionally, local products, goods and services should be used in the delivery of programmes, where possible.

3. Mainstream protection.

Given the potential long-term social impact of large numbers of migrants returning home to their communities, as well as the security issues involved, it is important to ensure that protection is mainstreamed, both in the development of strategies and in the actual activities that may be included in the reintegration programmes. This includes the provision of culturally sensitive psychosocial support, in order to help returnees cope with the emotional, psychological and relationship aspects of return. Access to continued health care and information on availability of social and health services for migrants and their families should be made available and/or integrated in the delivery of programmes.

4. Address gender bias.

Gender-sensitive activities should be included in any strategy, to

ensure that the entire families' needs are addressed and met. This will also ensure that families continue to receive the support they need, should returnees decide to go back to Libya or move elsewhere.

- In addition, given the potential prejudice against single women who have migrated to Libya, there is a need for initiatives to raise awareness of the women's rights and to support their needs.
- Both returnee women and women left behind face specific familial, social and economic challenges. It is important to support these differentiated concerns between men and women through gender mainstreaming tools.

5. Implement activities through groups and associations.

Given that most communities prefer to develop associations in order to implement activities together, this approach should be used in any medium-to-long-term activities. This would also be in line with ensuring a holistic approach to any interventions. Training could also be provided to groups of returnees in group formation, cooperative ventures, enterprise management and counselling, to enable them to establish successful enterprises.

- In addition, the establishment of cooperatives or associations of returnees should be encouraged.

6. Ensure that reintegration support is targeted and relevant.

Assistance should be provided to returnees to facilitate their reintegration based on their interests and capabilities – for example, through the provision of small loans administered by local banks, the distribution of inputs (fertilizer, chemicals and seeds) and the organization of tractor and marketing services for those interested in farming or trading.

- A package of emergency assistance through a small cash grant should be combined with humanitarian assistance to help those who are returning without any resources.
- Training in specific sectors (such as masonry and brick/tile-laying) should be provided to interested returnees through local apprenticeship schemes with master craftsmen and artisans, to enhance the returnees' skills and increase their employability.
- Returnees who wish to return to school could be assisted with tuition and board, and the skills developed by migrants in Libya should be further developed through apprenticeship programmes, using specific lines of credit from microfinance institutions or other local funding bodies.
- Reintegration support plans should be based on proper assessments of local needs and circumstances, and should be realistically budgeted taking into account differentials in pricing and costs in different returnee communities.
- Reintegration support should support access to existing government programmes, such as health services, as a cost-effective way of supporting returnees without new investments.
- The United Nations and its partners should work on multisectoral reintegration initiatives that focus on conflict prevention, social cohesion and protection, as well as livelihood support.
- Timing of reintegration support is crucial, and support should not be delayed. In most cases, economic reintegration support has still not effectively started almost two years after the return of the first migrants who fled Libya.

7. Encourage beneficiary participation.

Returnees and/or their associations should be actively involved in the implementation of various

reintegration projects, with a view to enhancing the returnees' exposure to, and knowledge of, the workings of different institutions and organizations in the districts. This will also help to diffuse their concerns about possible politicization and/or the misallocation of funds for their reintegration.

8. Reintegrate children into the school system.

The children of returnees may face difficulties reintegrating into the local school system. In some countries, children have gotten used to learning in Arabic or English but are now, back home, being taught in French.

MIGRATION CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

1. Provide both short- and long-term government capacity-building.

Besides short-term support to governments in building their capacity to deal with the immediate crisis situation, there also needs to be more long-term capacity-building at the central government level, in terms of managing migration, responding to local and international labour demands, and harnessing the benefits of remittances (human, financial and social capital associated with remittances, as well as returns).

- Relevant government institutions and civil society organizations should be trained in labour migration management to promote better use of remittances for the social, economic and environmental development of their localities, as well as to systematically track migrants and returnees and to better assess their needs.
- Return operations involving international organizations and countries of return should be based on a clear follow-up plan of action with designated roles and responsibilities. Support to existing funding mechanisms should be strengthened,

including the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (UNCERF) and the IOM Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism (MEFM),¹¹ which is conceived as a revolving fund that can bridge the gap between the start-up of emergency operations and the subsequent availability of funding.

- In the same vein, capacity-building of community institutions must be enhanced to provide guidance to youth on income-generating activities, and technical support should be given to community health, social and educational facilities to enable them to better provide psychosocial support to returnees and their families.

2. Encourage job creation.

Viable employment opportunities should be created in migrant-sending districts so that young people can make a living at home and are not compelled to migrate or embark on risky journeys in search of work.

3. Carry out information campaigns.

Information on safe migration and the dangers of irregular migration must be provided, starting in schools and reaching out to the communities in areas with high rates of irregular migration.

- Broader awareness raising campaigns should also be carried out in communities of origin, through the media and public debates, on the hazards of migration and the difficulties faced by returnees.
- In addition, migrants should, while still in the host country, be provided with help in preparing for their return

through investment in business development in economically productive sectors.

4. Build capacity of national authorities, as well as development and humanitarian agencies.

Capacity-building should be provided to local and international development organizations to improve their ability to deal with migrants in crisis situations.

- Training and support should be provided to staff from international and local development agencies. Support should be provided for peer learning and sharing of experiences across countries. The basis for such capacity-building initiatives is provided by the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework, developed to better respond to the migration consequences of crises.
- Agencies should be encouraged to improve coordination, adopt common advocacy platforms and ensure that returnee issues are integrated into all aspects of development and humanitarian programming.

on programmes that promote social cohesion, peace, security and development.

2. Encourage technical education and vocational training.

Education ministries should be encouraged to provide literacy classes to returnees and to build the capacity of technical schools within the region.

- In the medium to long term, local authorities and opinion leaders (including traditional authorities, youth groups and the local media) should work with education departments to enhance the appeal of education and the acquisition of viable employment skills. This could be achieved by setting up scholarship schemes for students in need, enforcing the quotas established by regional educational institutions, and offering continuous public education (including outreach programmes and the sponsorship of interdistrict competitions among schools) to provide attractive rewards to winning schools and students.

3. Establish risk management strategies.

Risk management strategies for coping with future large-scale returns of this sort should be established at the local level. Such strategies should be integrated into any existing local disaster risk management strategies.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Promote regional initiatives.

A broader approach should be taken to tackle the root causes of recurrent food insecurity and malnutrition. This will involve strengthening the various countries' institutional and governance landscape and focusing

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¹¹ The MEFM is intended to complement the UNCERF by providing rapid funding in situations such as emergencies involving international migration, where the IASC/UNCERF delivery mechanism is not suited for use, or for rapid funds disbursement. The MEFM is primarily intended to cover the cost of international transport for migrants affected by emergencies.