

RETURNEES FROM LIBYA:

The Bittersweet Experience of Coming Home Summary Report



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This summary report looks at the situation of migrants who have returned home to several West African countries as a result of the conflict in Libya. It aims to provide an understanding of: the factors that led to migration to Libya in the first place; the migrants' journey to Libya and their efforts to make a new life; the hasty return home; and the current needs of returnees and context to which they are returning. It draws on several assessments carried out by IOM at the height of the crisis and provides a unique perspective on the thoughts and minds of returnees, their families and their communities. What emerges is a very human story – gratitude for the many lives that were saved through a rapid and sophisticated international response, but also a sense of despair about the future. Returnees have the ideas, skills and desire to make new lives for themselves in their home communities, but they are in desperate need of technical and financial support to help make this reintegration a reality. Wider destabilization in the countries of the region is a potent threat if these issues are not addressed. The report concludes with a set of recommendations which propose measures to help returnees reintegrate, and projects and programmes required to facilitate “community stabilization” in areas of return.

Context

In February 2011, civil unrest in Libya erupted into armed conflict between pro-Gaddafi forces and the rebels of the National Transitional Council, with air support from NATO. The fighting led to one of the largest migration crises in modern history, with 706,000 migrants fleeing across Libyan borders between 28 February and 27 September 2011. This outflow into neighbouring countries comprised not only migrants from those countries but also nationals from further afield – and from more than 120 countries – who needed to be transported back to their countries of origin. Most were from Africa but there were also thousands from Asia – particularly Bangladesh but also more distant countries such as the Philippines and Viet Nam. IOM's role in the crisis was to support Member States in evacuating nationals stranded in and outside Libya. This summary report looks specifically at the plight of returnees to six West African countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. It draws on assessment reports and/or profiling exercises carried out by IOM to map out the needs in areas of return.

Life in Libya

The studies show that strong traditions of migration exist in all six countries. Most experience internal migration from rural to urban areas and from poorer to richer parts. All are significant migration-producing countries and Libya has been a popular destination for migrants, in addition to being a staging post for irregular migration to Europe – particularly France, Italy and Spain. Migration is largely prompted by the search for employment and most migrant-producing areas are poor and lack viable employment options.

Prior to going to Libya, migrants were engaged in diverse occupations such as trading, masonry, plumbing, carpentry and farming. Most were low-paid occupations, thus prompting a search for new opportunities abroad. The route to Libya from sub-Saharan Africa is a treacherous journey across the Sahara Desert, involving days of travel. Upon arriving in Libya, migrants were engaged in varied types of work such as masonry and construction, labouring, farming, housekeeping and odd jobs. Income could be intermittent and it is not possible to generalize on the amounts earned or remitted by migrants. What can be said is that across all six countries, remittances were a significant form of support to families,

playing a major role in household survival. They were used to meet basic daily needs – paying for food, housing, health and education – and little was left over for investment.

Return home

According to the latest IOM figures (dated 14 March 2012), the crisis has resulted in some 318,000 third-country nationals in five of Libya's neighbouring countries (Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Niger and Tunisia) requiring evacuation to their home destinations – mainly across Africa but also to some countries in Asia. The vast majority of returnees (98% to 99%, in some places) were males, mostly aged 20 to 40 years with low levels of education. Inevitably, as in any humanitarian crisis, migrants returned in haste; they feared for their lives because of the conflict itself and also because they risked becoming targets for the rebel forces. Possessions, savings, valuables and documents were abandoned in the rush to leave. IOM worked with government and partner agencies to ensure that reception facilities were in place. This involved the setting up of transit centres to provide food, water and sanitation while transportation to final destinations was arranged.

Circumstances of returnees and experience of returning home

For many returnees, going home was a bittersweet experience. Reunions were emotional; families were relieved to see family members come home safely, but joy quickly turned to worries about making ends meet and returnees were embarrassed at coming home empty-handed. Returnees found themselves in very difficult circumstances and commonly expressed sentiments of desperation, anxiety and frustration. The most common and obvious concerns were employment, financial support, daily expenses and housing. There was also frustration with government and political authorities for failing to take follow-up action.

Returnees resorted to a variety of measures to make ends meet, including using savings and selling assets and livestock. Some returnees went back to the work they did before going to Libya – such as farming – but lacked the financial means to help kick-start new income-generating activities, even though they had ideas and an interest in helping themselves. Most had aspirations, for instance, to go into farming, set up businesses, carry out construction projects or acquire driving skills, but needed money and materials to launch these initiatives. Other barriers to reintegration included psychological difficulties, loss of property or investment and debts. Not surprisingly, some returnees wanted to migrate again and were just waiting for the opportunity to return to Libya. Interestingly, however, most returnees were keen to stay at home and to adapt to local conditions, if only they could obtain assistance in finding jobs or setting up some kind of business for themselves.

There was also an impact on host communities in the six countries. The majority of returnees were from impoverished and underdeveloped communities that experience agricultural failure, food insecurity, malnutrition, an absence of economic opportunities, inadequate health infrastructure and education services and – in some regions – conflict. Labour migration was thus a key coping strategy.

In the course of the Libyan conflict, the transport and return of hundreds and thousands of migrants to their homes was a huge logistical challenge, and one that all parties – international organizations, governments and civil society – worked constructively together to address. The emphasis has been largely on providing safe and dignified evacuation and transport assistance, as well as temporary shelter, food and health care. Governments in the region cooperated with IOM and partners in taking adequate measures to facilitate the safe return of citizens and third-country nationals through the territory. In all six countries, the return and reception of migrants appear to have been systematically organized. While most migrants have returned safely, the majority of them still require reintegration support. The potential for socio-economic reintegration was assessed in several areas, often yielding some very

specific suggestions. While there is evidently potential in most places, investment and development are required.

Conclusion

The assessments give insights into the returnee situation in all six countries. The efficiency of the repatriation operation carried out by the international community, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in response to the most immediate danger, saved the lives of thousands of migrant workers and prevented the Libyan crisis from spilling over into other countries and turning into a much larger humanitarian catastrophe. Several months on, with the most immediate security threats at bay, other needs have come to the fore. Now, what is most visible is the hardship and disappointment faced by tens of thousands of young men (who represented the majority of returnees), suddenly robbed of the livelihoods they had journeyed so hard to find, and facing a hopeless future and no means of helping themselves. Programmes for socio-economic integration are desperately needed to help individual returnees and families, but also to safeguard the peace and stability of wider communities, countries and the region as a whole. There is still a need for ongoing humanitarian assistance in the form of free distribution of food and psychosocial assistance (among other things), until reintegration programmes are up and running. Initiatives aimed at providing these services should draw on best practices and learn from the success of programmes and projects for youth employment and/or rehabilitation, or from IOM programmes elsewhere. As part of this process, the data that have been collected on returnees will provide an essential resource for future planning. The report concludes with a compilation of recommendations addressing the needs for reintegration and community stabilization; migration management and capacity-building; and sustainable development.

I. INTRODUCTION

This summary report looks at the situation of migrants who have returned home to several West African countries as a result of the conflict in Libya. It aims to provide an understanding of: the factors that led to migration to Libya in the first place; the migrants' journey to Libya and their efforts to make a new life; the hasty return home; and the current needs of returnees and context to which they are returning. It draws on several assessments carried out by IOM at the height of the crisis and provides a unique perspective on the thoughts and minds of returnees, their families and their communities. What emerges is a very human story – gratitude for the many lives that were saved through a rapid and sophisticated international response, but also a sense of despair about the future. Returnees have the ideas, skills and desire to make new lives for themselves in their home communities, but they are in desperate need of technical and financial support to help make this reintegration a reality. Wider destabilization in the countries of the region is a potent threat if these issues are not addressed. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for action. This last section discusses the types of measures that need to be developed to help returnees reintegrate, and the projects and programmes required to facilitate “community stabilization” in areas receiving returnees.

2. CONTEXT

In February 2011, civil unrest in Libya erupted into armed conflict between pro-Gaddafi forces and the rebels of the National Transitional Council, with air support from NATO. The emergency continued until the end of September 2011, when most of the country was under the control of the National Transitional Council and there were only sporadic battles in Gaddafi strongholds. The fighting led to one of the largest migration crises in modern history, with 706,000 migrants fleeing across Libyan borders between 28 February and 27 September 2011. This outflow into neighbouring countries comprised not only migrants from those countries but also nationals from further afield – and from more than 120 countries – who needed to be transported back to their countries of origin. Most were from Africa but there were also thousands from Asia – particularly Bangladesh but also more distant countries such as the Philippines and Viet Nam. IOM's role in the crisis was to support Member States in evacuating nationals stranded in and outside Libya. IOM emergency operations were carried out in two major phases in 2011, as follows.¹

February–June: During the first few months of the crisis, massive evacuation operations were conducted in the four main countries where migrants found refuge (Chad, Egypt, Niger and Tunisia), to cope with the massive flows out of Libya. Overall, IOM and its partners provided transportation assistance to more than 210,000 stranded third-country nationals (93% were assisted between February and June), departing from Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Niger and Tunisia. One of the main objectives was to decongest the borders to prevent a spread of the crisis to neighbouring countries. To this end, at the beginning of March, IOM and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) joined forces to coordinate evacuation efforts and set up the Humanitarian Evacuation Cell at the central level. The Cell is currently hosted by IOM.

June–September: As cross-border movements out of Libya decreased substantially in June, IOM strove to remain active in Libya (security permitting), to reach out to stranded migrants, while maintaining its evacuation operations in neighbouring countries. As of May 2012, IOM had undertaken the evacuation of 38,000 migrants stranded in Misrata, Sebha, Gatroun, Tripoli and Benghazi, through a combination of means of transportation (boat, bus and plane). Despite the many logistical challenges, IOM was able to provide assistance to stranded migrants inside Libya because of its extensive expertise in movement management and thanks to its experienced operational staff on the ground.

Before the crisis, the Libyan economy had been highly reliant on foreign workers – both highly skilled/specialized workers and large numbers of unskilled irregular migrants, with the latter, particularly, accounting for hundreds of thousands of the foreign nationals forced to leave Libya. Libya's oil wealth and infrastructure development, coupled with a pro-sub-Saharan African foreign policy pursued by Gaddafi, made it a magnet for poor people from nearby countries. Many found work in the low-skilled labour market in construction, agriculture, and so on. Some were absorbed into the Libyan army as regular officers, and others were reportedly taken on as mercenaries and, allegedly, given Libyan citizenship for their services. These mercenaries were reportedly used by the Gaddafi regime to brutally suppress the uprising, leading to reprisal attacks on migrants, which were denounced by IOM, the United Nations and human rights groups.

Libya's neighbouring countries bore the brunt of the situation and had to contend with the influx of vast numbers of traumatized and impoverished migrants, among whom were persons with special needs such as those with medical conditions, unaccompanied minors, and foreigners registered in Libya as refugees, asylum-seekers and trafficked persons. This influx was coupled with broader threats to

¹ For further information on the IOM response, please see: *Migrants Caught in Crisis: The IOM Experience in Libya*, IOM, Geneva, available from http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/MigrationCaughtinCrisis_forweb.pdf; and *Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan Crisis*, IOM, Geneva, available from www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/media/docs/reports/MENA-Seven-Month-Report.pdf.

peace and security, such as the proliferation of weapons around the region, and links to terrorism and organized crime, as noted in a recent United Nations Security Council report on the aftermath of the crisis.² These issues added to the problems already blighting the region, such as poverty, food insecurity and nutritional crises. The scarcity of rainfall across the Sahel indicates that the 2012 harvest is likely to be worse than previous years, further compounding the situation.

While 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 is not without consequences. The risk of destabilization in countries in the region remains a key concern; for example, the recent military coup in Mali may be partly due to the proliferation of arms from Libya and the possible involvement of Tuareg returnees who fought as mercenaries alongside Libyan troops.³ (Some Tuaregs were reported to have gone to Libya only when the crisis began, to join pro-Gaddafi forces.⁴) There are also concerns that such factors will compound the insecurity caused by the food crisis in the region, especially in Niger, which is now hosting additional refugees from Mali, following the outbreak of conflict in that country.

There are also economic repercussions. Aside from the direct impact of the loss of remittances, there is increased competition for resources and jobs, which puts pressure on local economies. The aforementioned United Nations Security Council report comments on the budgetary and financial implications at the national level. For a number of years, the Libyan strategy had been to invest heavily in sub-Saharan Africa, and the suspension of these investments in countries such as Mali has added to unemployment figures and led to an increase in the price of basic commodities and high transportation costs. In Niger, defence spending reportedly went up by 65 per cent, while the budget for social services went down.

This summary report looks specifically at the plight of returnees to six West African countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. It draws on assessment reports and/or profiling exercises carried out by IOM to map out the needs in areas of return, as well as documents related to IOM reintegration and community stabilization programmes set up to assist returnees in Chad and Niger – the two most affected countries. The summary report is also based on IOM reports on five of the countries, as well as an assessment report on Ghana produced by the United Nations Development Programme, with the support of IOM. As the assessments were carried out between June and October 2011, they may not give an accurate picture of the latest situation on the ground. Although the overall context is well known, these assessments provide insights into the micro-view – the perspectives of returnees, their families and their communities, and the reality of coping with an unplanned and premature return. The aim of the summary report is to provide a quick reference guide by compiling key data and factual information from each assessment into one accessible document. However, care needs to be taken when comparing the results of each assessment, as each study was conducted according to the local context, as explained below.

² Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region: 7 to 23 December 2011 (reference S/2012/42).

³ See, for example: Tuareg rebels make troubled return from Libya to Mali, BBC website, 29 February 2012 (available from www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17192212); see also: *Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel*, United Nations Environment Programme, 2011 (available from www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Introduction/EnvironmentalCooperationforPeacebuilding/EnvironmentalDiplomacy/SahelReport/tabid/55812/Default.aspx).

⁴ Tuaregs 'join Gaddafi's mercenaries', BBC website, 4 March 2011 (available from www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12647115).

3. METHODOLOGY

The assessments were carried out using a variety of methods, including interviews and focus groups, quantitative questionnaires, observations and literature reviews. Rather than being standard, the approach was adapted to each context. This enabled the observation of general trends and patterns in the returnee experience; however, the methodological and definitional differences mean that a comparison of quantitative data across countries is not possible. The assessments sometimes deployed innovative methodologies; for example, the Ghana assessment collected data through a local radio phone-in involving the researcher and government/NGO representatives. Respondents were located through IOM registers, by visiting places frequented by returnees, issuing invitations on local radio and the like. Some studies (e.g. in Senegal) adopted a very rigorous approach, recording interviews, transcribing notes, using specialized software to carry out data analysis, and so on. Common constraints included a lack of time, difficulties in establishing representative samples, the challenges of working with “hidden groups” and, occasionally, fatigue among returnee populations when faced with yet another information-gathering exercise. All assessments targeted several different rural and urban sites in a country known to be places of return.

The needs assessments were accompanied by a profiling exercise in places with larger numbers of returnees, namely Chad and Niger – which yielded additional statistical data on returnee populations. In Niger, for example, from March to August 2011, IOM collected different types of information from returned migrants and also carried out a rapid assessment in areas of highest return. Data collection comprised three elements: daily data on transboundary movements at border crossings and airports; registration data for transportation and humanitarian assistance; and a profiling questionnaire for a representative sample of returnees to assess their needs and characteristics in more detail. This quantitative data collection was combined with a qualitative assessment which adopted a case study approach and examined the socio-economic needs of returnees in three regions. The assessment report, coupled with the statistical analysis, helped give a deeper understanding of reintegration requirements.

Table 1: Source information on the regions in which the assessments were conducted

Burkina Faso	3 provinces – Boulgou, Zoundwéogo and Sanmatenga
Chad	5 areas – Lac, Kanem, Ouaddai, N’Djamena and Salamat
Ghana	3 areas in the Brong Ahafo region – Sedhiou, Kolda and Tambacounda
Mali	2 districts – Gao (urban district) and Kita (urban district and 2 rural communities)
Niger	3 districts – Tillabéry, Tahoua and Zinder
Senegal	3 regions – Tambacounda, Sedhiou and Kolda

4. MIGRATION PATTERNS

The studies yielded detailed information on the migration patterns in all six countries. Most experience internal migration from rural to urban areas and from poorer to richer parts. Ghana and Senegal, which represent two of the larger economies in the region, are migrant-receiving countries, hosting a significant number of nationals from neighbouring countries. All are significant migration-producing countries and Libya has been a popular destination for migrants, in addition to being a staging post for irregular migration to Europe – particularly France, Italy and Spain. Other destinations include Algeria, to the north, and Southern and Central Africa (including new destinations such as Cameroon, the Congo and Gabon). There are strong traditions of migration to Côte d’Ivoire from both Burkina Faso and Senegal. Patterns of repeat migration, expulsion and return to countries such as Libya are also evident, as is seasonal migration, which ties into the annual farming cycles.

Migration is largely prompted by the search for employment. Most migrant-producing areas are poor and lack viable employment options. This particularly affects young people, who are often not drawn to traditional occupations such as farming, for example, and may be excluded from certain industries because the local economy is dominated by older people. The Casamance region of Senegal suffers from armed conflict, which is an added push factor. Although it is an area of considerable potential, with abundant arable land and a favourable climate, Casamance remains one of the poorest parts of the country. Recurrent drought and severe food insecurity are major problems in the subregion, especially for Chad and Niger. In some communities, migration is also seen as a rite of passage – a journey into adulthood and a way of showing oneself capable of assuming adult burdens. In one site in Mali, clanship rivalry was found to be a unique driver of migration, as competition between families was pushing sons to go abroad to make a success of themselves.

Table 2: Source information on migration patterns

Burkina Faso	Since colonial times, there has been a strong tradition of migration mainly to Côte d’Ivoire, where nationals of Burkina Faso account for the largest foreign community. The deterioration of conditions in Côte d’Ivoire in the 1990s led to the emergence of other routes to Ghana and Gabon and, since the early 1990s, especially to Italy, North Africa and Libya. Migration patterns vary depending on the region of origin: from Zoundwéogo mainly to North and Central Africa; from Boulgou to Europe and North and Central Africa; from Sanmatenga to Côte d’Ivoire and the western province of Burkina Faso. Boulgou and Zoundwéogo particularly show diverse patterns of movement to Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Italy, Libya and Spain. Italy was the preferred destination until the early 1990s because of the ease of entry and residence and job opportunities in the south, especially on tomato farms – in some places, such as Bissa, migrants were given the nickname “Italian” in their home provinces for this reason.
Chad	There is external migration to Cameroon, Libya, Niger and Nigeria and internal migration to other parts of Chad. While the exact numbers of migrants are not known, the Government of Chad estimated that there were 300,000 Chadians in Libya based on figures gathered for the April 2011 elections in Chad. However, this is likely to be an underestimate as those with historical ties living in Libya for generations would not be counted. Migration patterns vary by region. Kanem (an area of high levels of migration): A 2010 Action against Hunger report suggests that 1 in 5 youths migrate to cities. There are 3 types of migrants in the region: seasonal migrants mainly composed of livestock merchants; migrants who work outside the region and send remittances to families back home in the region; and those who have migrated abroad permanently. The area has strong ties with Libya. Lac region: Most migrants are away for cycles of 2 to 3 years. Migration is not organized but there has been a wave of migration in the last 5 years which has coincided with severe drought in the area. The majority of migrants sold assets to go to Libya, thus seeing migration as a long-term economic measure. N’Djamena: The capital had the largest number of returns based on IOM registration data, but the exact location of returnees is difficult to determine.

Ghana	The Brong Ahafo region emerges as a region with a high level of emigration, with some districts serving as staging posts for irregular migration to Libya across the Sahara. There is internal migration from the ecologically poor and neglected northern regions to the south and migration from rural to urban areas. Ghana is also an emigration-producing country. There is a culture of migration; people believe they cannot advance economically and socially unless they leave Ghana for a period. The most common destination is the West African subregion; others go to Southern Africa and to North Africa, mainly Libya. There is ample literature on the irregular migration of West Africans to Europe using North Africa as a transit point. Libyan policies towards sub-Saharan African migrants have changed over the years. The 1980s were characterized by positive gestures and a pan-Africanist approach by the Libyan regime. A subsequent downturn in the Libyan economy, pressure from Libyan citizens, xenophobia and racism led to a change in policy and increasingly repressive policies towards migrants, including expulsions, arrests, detentions and brutalities. As life in Libya became more difficult, migrants increased their focus on trying to reach destinations in Europe.
Mali	Kita and Gao are traditional areas of emigration. Migration from Gao focuses on Libya as the final destination. Migrants from Kita see Libya as a transit post for onward migration to various destinations in Europe – Italy, France and Spain. There are also new movements from Gao to Ghana, Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire; and from Kita to Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon and the Congo.
Niger	Although there is internal migration in the country, most migration is to Algeria, Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Libya and Nigeria. Niger is seen as a point of departure and transit because of the easy access to routes across the Sahara to North Africa, mainly to Libya and Algeria. Destinations vary according to ethnic groups e.g. the Tahoua region which is bound in the north-west by Mali sees greater numbers of Tuareg nomads migrate to Libya compared with other countries such as Algeria, Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria. Patterns of seasonal migration (depending on the farming calendar) are also noticeable.
Senegal	Migration is to urban centres and neighbouring countries like Côte d’Ivoire and Libya and to Europe. At the same time as returns from Libya were taking place, returnees were coming back from Côte d’Ivoire also due to instability in the country. Migration patterns vary by region. Sedhiou: The region itself houses many migrants from neighbouring countries such as Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau. There is internal migration from rural to urban areas, mostly young seasonal workers who leave villages in the rainy season to become domestic workers or labourers in cities. There is also a large diaspora population from the region in neighbouring countries and in Europe (France, Italy and Spain). This is an area from which young migrants try to make their way to Spain on makeshift canoes, risking death or injury. Kolda: This is an area of high migration movement given its geographical location. There are many migrants in the region from neighbouring countries, many from Guinea. There are significant departures to some African counties and to Europe. The department of Bakel is recognized as one of main source areas for migration to France.

Table 3: Source information on causes of migration

Burkina Faso	Migration is caused by limited economic opportunities, rainfall deficit, lack of fertile land and shortage of gainful employment. In some areas, economic considerations are reinforced by socio-cultural factors – characteristics show that younger members of society (e.g. young household heads and single persons) are the first to migrate due to pressures on the land, the monopoly of the labour market by older persons, and the fact that migration is seen as an opportunity for social and economic emancipation. Population data show that most people living in the areas under consideration are women (explained by the fact that most migrants are male) and that the population is youthful (nearly 50% are aged up to 14 and the majority are under 40 years of age). All three regions have low literacy rates, low primary school enrolment rates (below the national average), low primary school completion rates and low levels of adult literacy. Since access to health care is mostly constrained by the cost, there is a low level of hospital attendance and a reliance on self-medication and healers. Although agriculture is the main activity in all three regions, it is hindered by traditional farming methods and poor irrigation. Local needs are covered through grain production, but field surveys show that there are periodic food crises – two such crises in the last five years.
Chad	Migration is caused by food insecurity and a lack of economic opportunities. The primary reason for migration is to provide economic support to families. It is seen as a way of adapting to the lack economic opportunities and a means of assuring food security. There is a high dependence on markets (81.7%) for food as subsistence agriculture is insufficient. The Ouaddai region has been affected by instability for years due to refugee inflows from Sudan. Migration from this area is mostly internal but also towards Sudan and South Sudan due to strong links and cultural and ethnic ties, whereas migration to Libya is purely economic.
Ghana	Migration is caused by a lack of viable employment channels outside farming, low education rates and the general undervaluing of education.
Mali	Migrants report that they go to Libya in search of job opportunities and better living conditions. In Kita, the social phenomenon of clanship rivalry is driving migration as members of the same extended family or clan compete to have their sons seen as the most successful migrants. People migrate despite local economic development potential (agro-pastoral and commercial) in both Kita in the west and Gao in the north.
Niger	Recurrent drought, severe food insecurity, very high levels of poverty, mass unemployment and economic insecurity are all strong motivators for migration from Niger. Apart from pastoral and agricultural activities, there are few opportunities in terms of income generation for youth. In some areas, agriculture potential is also underdeveloped and/or heavily dependent on the weather, which has been a problem in recent years due to changes in rainfall. There is a tradition of young people going to Libya with parental support or money obtained on credit.
Senegal	Migration is caused by poverty in all areas. In addition to this, the Sedhiou region, in the centre of Casamance, has suffered from armed conflict in the last two decades between the military and Senegalese Casamance separatists. The economy is elementary and reliant on agriculture, but the area has abundant arable land and a favourable climate with the potential for yielding winter crops, rice, vegetables and fish farming. Thus, despite enormous potential, it is among the poorest areas in the country, especially in terms of opportunities for young people. Young people judge agriculture to be hard work and seasonal. The region's traditional agricultural practices do not appeal to young people.

5. THE MOVE TO LIBYA

5.1. Life before going to Libya

The assessments shed some light on how migrants lived before they went to Libya. In Ghana, migrants were engaged in diverse occupations such as trading, masonry, plumbing, carpentry and farming. Most had worked, on average, for 4.6 years before departing for Libya and had accumulated an asset base of approximately c 4,000 (USD 2,300). Several had served apprenticeships in a range of vocational trades and a smaller number had undertaken short courses. There was less diversity among migrants from other countries (such as Burkina Faso and Senegal) who had been mainly engaged in low-paid jobs in agriculture and livestock and were actively seeking different types of jobs in Libya.

Burkina Faso	Before migrating to Libya, 60.60% were in agriculture and farming and only 3.6% were employed or salaried.
Chad	–
Ghana	Before travelling to Libya, returnees had been engaged in diverse occupations, including trading, masonry, plumbing, carpentry and farming. Several returnees had also served apprenticeships in a range of trades and vocations, while a much smaller number had undergone short training courses. Before going to Libya, the majority had engaged in various jobs, including trading (20.7%), masonry (19.8%), carpentry (12.1%) and farming (10.7%). They had worked on average for 4.6 years in Ghana before going to Libya and accumulated an asset base of c 3,945.51.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	The vast majority (41.6%) were working in the primary sector before migrating, especially agriculture and livestock farming. The remainder worked in business, construction, tailoring, carpentry and mechanics. Low incomes can be seen as a push factor for migration as people move in search of a higher income.

5.2. Routes to Libya

The route to Libya from sub-Saharan Africa is a treacherous journey across the Sahara Desert and involves many days of travel, with some dying along the way. Migrants travel by road to various transit points and then continue on foot through the Sahara Desert to Libya.

Table 5: Source information on routes to Libya

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	Chad and Niger, which border Libya to the south, share a large stretch of desert with Libya, thus making any journey across the border a difficult and dangerous endeavour. The journey across the desert can be carried out on foot – even road journeys may take 15 to 30 days in deplorable conditions.
Ghana	The most predominant flows are from the Brong Ahafo region. Most migrants took road transport to Agadez in Niger, from where they would begin journeys on foot through the Sahara to Libya. False travel documents are said to be available in this area.
Mali	–
Niger	The most common places of origin for migrants from Niger are Tahoua and Zinder, followed by Maradi and then several other locations such as Agadez, Tillabéry and Niamey. Research on migration routes suggests that migrants from Niger will often pass through Mali and Algeria en route to Libya and other North African and European destinations. Dirkou, a small town in the north of Niger, is a transit point for one of the main trans-Saharan trade routes towards the Libyan coast. The route starts in Niger via Niamey, Agadez, Dirkou and Madama (a military checkpoint on the Niger side of the border) and the first entry point in Libyan territory is Tomou. Further transit points in southern Libya are Gatroune, Sebha and Ghat. The journey takes approximately 12 days and covers a distance of approximately 3,000 km.
Senegal	The trans-Saharan route is marked by several stages. There are several transit points in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Algeria, Libya and Morocco for further migration in the region and beyond. Libya is seen as a transit country for sub-Saharan Africans who wish to go to Italy. Interviews with returnees showed that many lived in Libya while awaiting the chance to cross into the Mediterranean.

5.3. Jobs held by migrants in Libya

The assessments suggested that the type of work available to migrants varied according to their country of origin. A very high percentage of Ghanaian returnees (94%) had found work in masonry and construction – especially plastering. Returnees from elsewhere tended to be engaged in a wider range of lower-skilled work, such as labouring, farming, housekeeping and odd jobs. Data on returning Nigerians showed that 41 per cent worked in construction, 23 per cent worked in agriculture and the remainder were engaged in a variety of occupations, ranging from shopkeeping and small businesses, to working on the docks, gardening and guard duty. The majority of female returnees said they had remained without formal employment in Libya. Earnings varied considerably: returnees to Niger reported earning between CFAF 50 and CFAF 100,000 per month (USD 0.20 to USD 199). Returnees to Mali said they had acquired skills and learned about new technologies during their time in Libya. Irrespective of the country of origin, work for migrants seemed intermittent, with returnees often reporting that they survived in Libya without work for months at a time. According to the data from assessments carried out in Ghana, most returnees were satisfied with the level of remuneration they received; they were able to make savings and accumulated an asset base over three years, valued at around c 4,000 (USD 2,300), comprising land, houses and vehicles. They had stayed in Libya for an average of three years, and several had been back numerous times, following successive deportations.

Table 6: Source information on work done in Libya

Burkina Faso	Before migrating to Libya, 60.60% were in agriculture and farming. Once in Libya, only 2.2% said they practiced farming. Furthermore, 3.6% said they were employed or salaried before departure, but this increased to 52.2% once in Libya. This suggests migrants went to Libya to engage in activities which were not accessible at home.
Chad	The majority (30%) were working in agriculture, with significant numbers in construction (11%), tending livestock (10%), manual labour (8%) and trade (8%).
Ghana	In Libya, returnees were predominantly (94%) engaged in malaga or plastering work, masonry and construction work on building sites, and there appeared to be little occupational variation within the strict division of labour in which they had worked.
Mali	The returnees had acquired skills in modern technology in agriculture, cultivation, irrigation, modern gardening and the mechanical sector.
Niger	According to a report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, migrants in Libya were selling their labour mainly for agricultural work and odd jobs. The profiling survey shows that migrants from the Niger were distributed throughout Libya but with a higher concentration in economic centres such as Tripoli, or Sabha in the south, or other coastal cities in the north west, such as Misrata.
Senegal	Libya is seen as a transit point for departures to Europe – migrants would make a living and send remittances back home without having to meet the regulatory requirements in force in Europe. They carried out low-skilled jobs, such as labour, farm work and housekeeping, for which there was no competition from Libyan nationals.

Table 7: Source information on regularity of work

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	–
Ghana	The work they had been engaged in in Libya was not always continuous work, and many returnees spent months at a time without work.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	–

Table 8: Source information on savings and assets accumulated

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	–
Ghana	Returnees reported satisfaction with the level of remuneration in Libya and were able to save from their earnings. Over 3 years, most accumulated an asset base valued at € 4,642.08. The assets acquired at home and in Libya did not appear much different; however, the volume of more expensive assets increased. In Ghana, the types of assets acquired were shops and farms, whereas in Libya they were land, houses and vehicles. It was not easy to differentiate between assets acquired in Ghana before departure and those acquired after migration; however, given the age of returnees, it is doubtful that they would have acquired much before departure, otherwise there would have been no motivation to migrate, except when migrating to Europe, where greater sums of money can be made.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	–

Table 9: Source information on length of time spent in Libya

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	Of the returnees, 62.1% had spent 1 to 5 years in Libya, 15.5% had spent less than a year, 11.9% had spent over 10 years and 10.5% had been in the country from 5 to 10 years.
Ghana	Of the returnees, 55% had lived in Libya for 1 to 3 years, which worked out at an average of 3.1 years. One individual had lived continuously in Libya for 20 years. Several returnees had been back several times following successive deportations and were referred to as “tycoons” by the others.
Mali	–
Niger	The majority of returnees (69%) had been in Libya for a period of less than 5 years. Only 1% had been there more than 10 years, and 3% for 5 to 10 years. A significant number (27%) had been there less than a year.
Senegal	–

6. THE RETURN HOME

6.1. Numbers of returnees

According to the latest IOM figures (dated 14 March 2012), as a result of the crisis in Libya, some 318,000 third-country nationals from neighbouring countries (Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Niger and Tunisia) required evacuation to their home destinations – mainly across Africa but also to some countries in Asia. Most returnees were transported by air and a small number by bus. Since mid-December 2011, returns have slowed considerably, but there is still some residual movement to Egypt, Niger and Tunisia. The latest figures indicate that 216,618 West African nationals have returned to their home countries – 136,786 crossed the border directly from Libya into Chad and Niger, and 79,832 did so with IOM assistance from neighbouring countries. In addition, several governments evacuated their citizens from Libya. Table 10 shows the number of returnees, by country of return and by the mode of transport used to return them home (air/road). (These numbers do not include those who returned without IOM assistance.) The largest numbers returned to Libya's immediate neighbours, Chad and Niger. In terms of onward movement, Ghana and Mali received the next highest numbers of returnees. As this indicates, aside from direct repatriations from Libya to home countries, IOM was also involved in transporting thousands of third-country nationals, mainly from other sub-Saharan African countries, who had crossed the southern border of Libya into Chad or Niger and still needed to find their way home. IOM operations were set up to assist their return to countries of origin by air or by land.

Table 10: Return of West African country nationals, by type of transport, March 2012

Country	CBM	Return by Air	Return by Bus	Total
Benin	-	107	2	109
Burkina Faso	-	880	781	1,661
Cameroon	-	160	-	160
Central African Rep	-	44	-	44
Chad	55,630	31,747	-	87,377
Congo	-	8	-	8
Côte d'Ivoire	-	90	15	105
Gambia	-	351	-	351
Ghana	-	11,096	339	11,435
Guinea	-	680	-	680
Guinea-Bissau	-	177	-	177
Liberia	-	10	-	10
Mali	-	11,164	231	11,395
Mauritania	-	783	-	783
Niger	81,156	16,664	-	97,820
Nigeria	-	3,158	525	3,683
Senegal	-	406	-	406
Sierra Leone	-	45	-	45
Togo	-	342	27	369
Total	136,786	77,912	1,920	216,618

Source: IOM Daily Statistical Report, 14 March 2012.

6.2. The return journey

When the conflict broke out, sub-Saharan African migrants found themselves in a precarious situation. Some were accused of being mercenaries recruited to fight under Colonel Gaddafi and became the subject of harassment and threats. One Chadian migrant was told at gunpoint: “You came here with nothing and you will leave with nothing.” With the conflict rapidly intensifying, many migrants were unable to recuperate their belongings or salaries. Some destroyed their own identity documents, fearing that rumours about migrants being given visas to fight for Gaddafi might expose them to danger.

As in any humanitarian crisis, migrants inevitably returned in haste, fearing for their lives because of the conflict itself and also because they risked becoming targets for the rebel forces. Possessions, savings, valuables and documents were abandoned in the rush to leave. The Senegal assessment report revealed that some even lost their lives en route through the Sahara. The journey home was uncomfortable, often on overloaded trucks – some carrying as many as 200 people although they were designed for only 80 – and baggage was lost en route or abandoned at airports due to limited space in the hold. Reports of bribery and extortion by police, border and embassy officials, both in Libya and in transit and home countries, were commonplace.

IOM worked with government and partner agencies to ensure that reception facilities were in place. This involved the setting up of transit centres to provide returnees with food, water and sanitation while transportation to final destinations was arranged. In Mali, for instance, migrants benefited from the combined efforts of several partners, including the government, IOM and others. The majority were returned by air on chartered planes. They were greeted in Bamako with assistance, food, shelter and psychosocial support. From there, bus transport was arranged to home destinations. Returnees to Mali by land reported being harassed as they passed through Algeria and Niger.

In some countries, returnees were met in their home towns with food and accommodation provided by the local authorities and NGOs. Similar plans were in place in other countries, although the services varied, depending on the locality. One issue that comes up in different reports is the payment of ground transport cost upon arriving home. These costs were supposed to be covered by the authorities under reception plans, but returnees in both Mali and Senegal, for example, said they had to find the money themselves to board the buses provided. Statistics sometimes show a discrepancy between the number of migrants registered at airports and those who subsequently arrived back in their home localities. This may have been due to a variety of push and pull factors: for instance, some may have been reluctant to go home without the means to support themselves and may have moved on elsewhere; others may have been attracted by the prospect of greater opportunities in urban centres or capital cities.

Table 11: Source information on harassment in Libya

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	Returnees reported threats and attacks in Libya. In a rapidly intensifying conflict, they were not able to recuperate their belongings or salaries. One returnee said he was told: “You came here with nothing and you will leave with nothing.” The perpetrators were identified as either “rebels” or “civilians with guns”. Rumours that Chadians had been given visas so that they could fight for Gaddafi fuelled this prejudice. This is the reason why so many were threatened and also why they chose to destroy their documents so as not to be associated with the armed forces. They therefore did not have documents when they fled and could not prove their claims to money and other valuables.
Ghana	West African migrants were targeted because of allegations that black West Africans had been recruited to fight as mercenaries alongside Gaddafi forces. The assessment report states that this labelling was ambiguous and misleading as Libya had its own black populations.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	When the war started and sub-Saharan Africans were accused of being mercenaries, Senegalese migrants tried to escape through Senegalese embassies in neighbouring countries.

Table 12: Source information on problems en route

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	Information about the routes was ascertained, but no problems as such were reported.
Ghana	Returnees expressed frustration over how they left Libya and the extortion perpetrated by the Libyan police and some Ghanaian embassy officials.
Mali	The return was largely organized by IOM, UNHCR and the Red Cross, on the request of the Government. Many returned by air or road and were unharmed but complained about being unable to retrieve luggage and lost valuables and about the lack of follow-up support. As in any humanitarian emergency, difficult choices had to be made in terms of available space and priorities. Reception services were organized and assistance provided in terms of food, shelter and psychosocial support. The Government assured transportation costs from the capital to the home location but many returnees said that they paid their own costs. Some reported that NGOs paid for internal transport. Those who returned by land also complained about being forced to pay Malian security forces CFAF 5,500 to access transport organized by the Red Cross.
Niger	Returnees said they left Libya in haste and fear. The main complaints were about the conditions en route in terms of overloaded trucks (200 persons on trucks with a load limit of 80 persons), the long distances covered and the loss of property they were forced to leave in Libya, especially for those who had been there for some years. They had suffered health problems (e.g. measles and meningitis) but had recovered. Children had suffered nutritional problems. Some complained about extortion by law enforcement officials in the form of customs charges, which were deemed excessive and unjustified in the circumstances.
Senegal	Most returnees said they had to suddenly leave Libya in fear of their lives and did not have time to prepare, leaving behind possessions, savings, documents, etc. Some reported that the return journey involved atrocities, abuse and privations; some even lost their lives in the Sahara Desert while en route. Reception services were offered on arrival in the capital. Some said they spent days in the capital trying to get money from relatives for the return journey home. The assessment report states that there was a difference in the numbers of migrants at Dakar airport compared with those found in the localities and puts this down to the fact that many migrants did not return home since they could not support themselves and preferred to settle elsewhere. Some also went on to neighbouring countries, including Gambia.

7. CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURNEES

7.1. Gender

The vast majority of returnees (98% to 99%, in some places) were male. The profiling data for Niger show that female returnees made up only 1.47 per cent of the total returnees. Explanations given for the lack of women returnees tended to focus on assumptions that available jobs (such as those in construction) were unsuitable or the fact that travel across the Sahara was too hazardous. However, it also seems that female returnees were less willing to come forward due to the stigma associated with working in Libya and the perception that they were sex workers. In Ghana, the small number of female interviewees discounted this perception, claiming that other jobs such as housekeeping and hairdressing were available and that only females from other countries were engaged in sex work. The Senegal assessment found that women mainly migrated to join their husbands. In Chad, it was observed that the number of female returnees increased as the crisis went on, and it was assumed that the women had been living in Libya with their families and were initially more hesitant to return.

Table 13: Source information on gender

Burkina Faso	All interviewed returnees were male.
Chad	The majority were male (87%), but the composition of the returnee group changed over the course of the emergency. During the first weeks the majority were men, but the number of women increased as the crisis continued. The assessment report assumes that women lived and worked in Libya with their families and were initially more hesitant to return.
Ghana	The returnees interviewed were predominantly (99.5%) male, and the largest proportion (43.6%) was aged between 25 and 29 years. About 65% of returnees had not progressed beyond junior high school, while another 13% had reached senior high school. Almost 50% were unmarried, but, on average, about 55% of returnees had at least one child. The breakdown by gender is as follows: 774 were male (i.e. 99.49%) compared with 4 females. This suggests that Ghanaian migration was largely male and that available jobs in construction were mainly geared towards men and considered unsuitable for women. The assessment report states that the hazardous mode of travel across the Sahara may also be the reason for minimal female involvement; however, the report also points out that interviews with male returnees and the community indicate a higher rate of female involvement and that many did not come forward for interviews because of community perceptions that they had engaged in sex work in Libya. Nonetheless, the few female respondents who came forward discounted this perception, claiming that other jobs such as housekeeping and hairdressing were available to female migrants in Libya. They said that women from other countries engaged in sex work: "The [Ghanaian] males will not allow Ghanaian ladies to do that sort of work over there".
Mali	Males accounted for 92% of the returnees.
Niger	Males accounted for 99% of the returnees.
Senegal	Males accounted for 98.5% of the returnees. The international migration of women is still marginal in the three regions. Women migrate mainly for family reunification. The assessment report suggests that the difficult conditions of migration routes across the Sahara may explain the low presence of women.

7.2. Age

The returnees were mostly 20 to 40 years of age, in all six countries. The assessments in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Senegal further indicated that, of this number, the majority were in their 20s. The Niger profiling surveys cited 80 per cent as aged between 20 and 40. A very small percentage were over 50 (only 1% according to the Ghana assessment), and Senegal reported a small number of children under 15. This should not come as a surprise; the young are the most likely to migrate, for a host of reasons, including the lack of employment opportunities at home, the challenges likely to be encountered along the migratory routes, the quest for adventure, and the desire for independence. It is worth noting that

the ages of the migrants interviewed could not be verified, due to the lack of identity documents –in Chad and probably also elsewhere.

Table 14: Source information on the age of returnees	
Burkina Faso	Of the returnees, 66.4% were 20 to 30 years old; 27.1% were 30 to 40. These two age groups made up 93.5% of returning migrants and shows that it is mainly the young who migrate.
Chad	Men between the ages of 19 and 35 made up 80% of the sample. The significant number of young and work-age returnees indicates that there might be a substantial impact on the Chadian job market and increased competition for resources and economic opportunities which might lead to social tensions. Information on age relies on the answers given by returnees; IOM could not verify this information due to the loss of personal identity documents.
Ghana	The majority (43.7%) of returnees were between 25 and 29 years; another 26.6% were between 30 and 34 years; while 14.4% were aged 40 to 44 years. One in ten were between 18 and 24 years of age, but a small proportion (1.2%) were 50 years and older. There were some differences between districts.
Mali	Most returnees in both locations were young, and were younger in Kita than in Gao – 81% were under 30 years in Kita as compared with 51% in Gao.
Niger	Of the returnees, 80% were between the ages of 20 and 40. The profiling data show small numbers of children in the group of returnees: 3% of males were between the ages of 10 and 15, whereas 6% of females were between 0 and 9 years of age, and 8% between 10 and 15. The data suggest that these were children travelling as dependants rather than children travelling alone: overall, 7% of migrants were accompanied and of these only 2% (or 78) were accompanied by children.
Senegal	The majority of returnees (24.9%) were between 25 and 30 years of age with nearly 70% between the ages of 20 and 40. Some migrants were children between the ages of 6 and 15 years.

7.3. Marital status

The marital status of returnees showed a mixed pattern. In Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal, the pattern was very similar: nearly two thirds were married, which suggests that it was mainly newly-wed couples who migrated. The pattern was more evenly balanced in Ghana, and, in Chad, most returnees were married. In Mali, there were significant differences between the sites assessed, but the incidence of divorce and separation appeared to be minimal. Data from Niger show that the vast majority (93%) travelled alone, usually leaving behind an average of five dependants, which suggests a pattern of temporary labour migration rather than permanent family migration. The situation regarding the number of dependants in other countries is less clear. Assessments carried out in Burkina Faso indicated that nearly half of the returnees had no children and that the remainder had only one child. In Chad, it was found that the majority of returnees had several dependants, but it was not clear whether these were children or extended family members.

Table 15: Source information on the marital status of returnees

Burkina Faso	Of the returnees, 28.6% were single and 70.7% married – of the latter, 43.9% reported being childless, 56.1% said they had one child, 42.4% reported having 1 to 3 children.
Chad	The majority (54.5%) did not answer the question on marital status; of those who responded, 64% were married and 31% single. It can be assumed that they were representative of the returnee group. Families and dependants were numerous according to other sources. Of the returnees, 53% had 1 to 5 dependants, 20% claimed to have 6 to 10 dependants and 7% had more than 11 direct dependants.
Ghana	Most (49.2%) had not been married, 45.3% were married and 2.2% reported being in consensual unions. The incidence of divorce and separation was small at 1.7% and 1.3%, respectively.
Mali	The trends were different in each location studied. In Goa, the majority (80%) were married – often marrying before migration and coming back and forth to see their families. In Kita, the pattern was reversed with 67% being single and migrants coming back to marry in this locality.
Niger	The profiling data show that 23% of the women and 34% of the men were married; 93% travelled alone and had 5 dependants remaining in Niger.
Senegal	The data show that 31.9% were single and 66.9% married, with less than 1% divorced or widowed. The fact that it was mainly married people who migrated suggests the additional responsibilities coming with being newly wed were a motivating factor.

7.4. Educational attainment

The education levels of migrants were found to be low. Of the six nationalities assessed, Ghanaian migrants appeared to have the highest level of schooling: nearly two thirds of them were educated into their teens and only a small minority had no schooling at all. Interviews with the wider community revealed that education was highly valued and that migration was considered as a threat to academic achievement, highlighting the need for pupils to be provided with vocational training opportunities and information on the risks of irregular migration. The education levels of returnees to other countries were very low. In Niger, 82.2 per cent had no education at all; 11 per cent had been educated to primary level; 6.7 per cent had gone to secondary school; and only 0.1 per cent had a university-level education. The same pattern was evidenced in Burkina Faso and Senegal: many of the migrants had not attended school at all and those who had tended to stop at primary level. Assessments in Chad revealed that there was little or no formal education – much the same as in Mali, although the option of Koranic schooling was available to some in that country.

The assessments in Ghana also looked at further education and training, and found that the majority of returnees had undertaken an apprenticeship on average for more than a year before their journey to Libya. These apprenticeships were most commonly in building and construction, which was the sector in which most Ghanaian returnees were found to have worked during their time in Libya. A few had also been on short courses. Senegal was the only other country where the assessments included vocational training, revealing that nearly half of the returnees had had some form of training before their departure to Libya – mostly in building and construction. Very few had computing skills.

Burkina Faso	The majority of returnees (62.6 %) were illiterate. Only 30% and 7.2% had a primary and secondary education, respectively.
Chad	Most returnees were involved in manual labour and had little to no formal education; 58.4% had no formal education, 29% had Koranic education, 6% were educated to primary level, 3.4% to secondary level, and 0.9% to university level.
Ghana	Of the returnees, 4% had no formal education, 10% were educated only to the primary level, 65% were educated up to junior high school level, and 13% to senior high school level. Interviewees saw the abandonment of school to travel to Libya as a threat to education and stressed the need for pupils to be targeted with information on the risks irregular migration, vocational training, etc.
Mali	Education levels among returnees were low: only 50% reached basic level, with 9% going on to secondary education or higher; 12% were in Koranic schools and 25% had no instruction at all.
Niger	Among the men, 82.2% had no schooling, 11% had been educated to primary level, 6.7% to secondary level and 0.1% to university level. Among women returnees, the percentage was higher: 86.5% were unschooled, 6.7% had attended primary and secondary school, and none had advanced to university.
Senegal	Of the returnees, 54.1% had been to school, while 45.9% had not. Of those who went to school, 53.9% had stopped at primary level and only 46% went on to secondary school.

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	–
Ghana	Of the returnees, 73% said they had been an apprentice at some point and received informal training. Across cohorts and districts, returnees had on average 20.6 months apprenticeship training before emigrating. The most common occupational sector for training was building and construction (229 people, or 40%), 82 received training as automobile mechanics/electricians and 68 in driving; another 27 were apprentice welders; and 17 trained in tailoring and dressmaking. A few had also been trained on short courses related to work or other targeted areas to improve livelihoods. Older cohorts had received more training e.g. 4.5% of those aged 30 to 34 compared with 1.3% of those aged 18 to 34. Overall, only 3.8% had ever been on short training courses lasting less than 6 months and related to livelihoods. Short training courses covered various subjects: 19% on agriculture and farming practice; 15.4% on professional/management and computing; 12% teaching skills; and 8% on clerical skills. One in ten reported possessing computing skills – this is not surprising given the kind of work done in Libya. A third of these had learned on their own, 28% had learned at school, and 25% were taught by friends. Only 1% to 2% had learned on the job or through adult literacy. Their low levels of educational attainment did not dispose them to acquire computer literacy.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	Learning on the job was more prevalent than formal training, with 42.6% having vocational training before departure. In terms of sectors, 40% were in construction, followed by carpentry, transport, sewing, mechanical work, bakery work, etc. Only 2.8% reported having computer skills.

8. REMITTANCES

8.1. Amount and mode of transfer

It is not possible to make generalizations across the countries concerning the amounts remitted by migrants, given the variability in reporting and currency exchange rates. Also, even within countries, the remittance data were conflicting; for instance, in Ghana, returnees reported sending home c 602 (USD 340) per month, but bank officials claimed that the amounts were considerably lower – on average, USD 86 per month and with an upper limit of c 500 (USD 288). Given that Ghanaian migrants seemed to have access to better-paid jobs than other West African migrants, it seems likely that returnees from other countries were remitting less on average. In Burkina Faso, for example, the assessments revealed average annual remittances of CFAF 250,000 (USD 498), whereas returnees to Mali said they remitted CFAF 100,000 (USD 195) on an annual basis.

In terms of transfer methods used to remit income, Malian and especially Ghanaian returnees said they mainly used money-transfer agencies such as Western Union. Others sent money through banks, agents and friends. Interviewees from Niger mainly favoured informal channels and used middlemen traders. Some Malian returnees also used an informal buddy system known as “fax”, which had the advantage of offering lower commission rates, but involved a higher risk of the migrant being deported if caught using informal means of money transfer.

Table 18: Source information on the amount and regularity of remittances

Burkina Faso	Some data on remittances, not from Libya but from other places such as Italy and Gabon, were available. For example, research in the mid-1990s showed that nationals of Burkina Faso in Côte d’Ivoire annually repatriated an average of CFAF 250,000 per migrant, although the amount remitted varied by occupation and according to the legal status of migrants.
Chad	Kanem region: No official figures, but it was estimated that CFAF 100 to CFAF 500 million came from Libya per month.
Ghana	Almost all (90%) returnees reported sending remittances back home. This was confirmed by local bank managers in some districts who asserted that Libya had been the top remitting country in terms of numbers of remittances received, though not in value. They put an upper limit at c 500, and lower limit of c 150. Returnees claimed they sent an average monthly remittance of c 602.90; however, this is likely to be an exaggeration as payments were periodic and employment in Libya was irregular. It is more likely that returnees were saving money rather than transferring it home. Nine out of ten sent remittances to cater for an average of 1.4 children and about 5 other beneficiaries.
Mali	Of the returnees, 91% said they transferred money back home, making 6 remittances a year amounting to an annual average of CFAF 600,000, i.e. CFAF 100,000 each time.
Niger	Transfers were estimated to be at least CFAF 50 million per week in the town of Filingue alone.
Senegal	More than 73.9% of returnees said they regularly transferred money home.

Table 19: Source information on modes of transfer

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	–
Ghana	The main modes of sending remittances included, inter alia, money transfers (79.3%), banks (12.6%), agents (5.52%) and friends (2.55%). Many returnees did not have bank accounts before travelling and used intermediaries in Libya or Ghana to open accounts into which periodic deposits were made. Local banks confirmed that they have accounts for people in Libya.
Mali	Remittances were sent mostly through money transfer companies such as Western Union and MoneyGram. Informal systems were also used such as “fax”, a buddy system; these processes are almost identical to formal measures except that there is less commission and migrants are exposed to the risk of being arrested and deported back home.
Niger	Remittances were made through middlemen traders and rarely using formal channels like Western Union.
Senegal	–

8.2. Value and use of remittances

Across all six countries, remittances from returnees were a significant form of support for families, playing a major role in household survival. The remittances were used to meet basic daily needs – paying for food, housing, health and education – and little was left over for investment. The assessments suggested that, in fact, most remittances were spent on food and, in some countries, nearly 90 per cent of remittance income went towards this basic essential. If money was spent on acquiring assets, it tended to be on agricultural purchases such as livestock, plots of land or farming equipment. In Ghana, some of the migrants’ families used the funds to send the migrants’ children to private schools. In all six countries, however, savings rates were low.

Assessments in Ghana indicated that returnees were satisfied with the way in which remittances were spent. It seems that households with family members abroad enjoyed a relatively high standard of living and were considered by other community members to be doing well. However, the remittances appeared to benefit only the respective households, and there was no evidence of the local economy having enjoyed positive impacts in any of the countries. The Chad assessment reported no communal benefits. Information obtained from the assessment in Niger was somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, interviewees said that remittances provided significant support to families and the local economy; on the other, enquiries made in the towns visited by the assessment team indicated that remittances were not being used for social investment projects in communities. The Mali assessment report hints at the potential benefits of families setting up small businesses and sharing the skills and know-how imparted by migrant workers. Two of the assessments also refer to the potentially negative side effects of migration, in terms of weakening family ties and the creation of dependency on remittances, which can undermine local productivity.

Table 20: Source information on the value and use of remittances

Burkina Faso	Remittances are a significant resource for families. Migration generates resources but also weakens family ties and the increased partitioning of family homes (in the form of dividing yards) and the creation of private spaces. Waning solidarity is also evident at the community level. Some migrants use funds on return to help families, buy goats or sheep, invest in small business or invest in livestock; others do not make productive investments.
Chad	In Ouaddai, the benefit of migration is mostly felt by families but not beyond. Migration is not organized and it is mainly younger uneducated men from rural areas who migrate. In Kanem, according to a recent Action against Hunger study, remittances are an important source of revenue. As in the Lac region, there do not appear to be communal benefits to migration and support is mainly at the family level. Families with relatives outside the region depend on them for money and for agricultural and pastoral activities. Migrants sometimes buy livestock to increase family wealth.
Ghana	In general, remittances appeared to have had beneficial impacts on households and communities and were used to support family consumption, to educate children and to buy and construct property, with each remittance supporting 5 household members on average. The main types of assets that returnees possessed were buildings, plots of land, tractors, vehicles, corn mills, chain saws, containers and shops and spraying machines. Household interviewees said such revenue was often used to pay off debts incurred for travel. When returnees came back during the first year, household members were disappointed that they were not able to enjoy high levels of remittances before enforced return. Of the respondents, 88.1% said that food was the main use for remittances and 3.7% cited the purchase of a plot of land and building of a house; 3.3% sent remittances for saving. A noticeable development in some districts was the existence of several private schools whose pupils included the children of migrants who were supported by remittances. Interviewees saw remittances as a way for households to have relatively high standards and for making improvements to their homes. Such households were perceived by other community members as “having done well”. In terms of whether returnees were satisfied with the way in which remittances had been used, 43.4% were very satisfied and 41.5% were satisfied; a small number were not satisfied; and 3% were indifferent.
Mali	Communities agree that migrants provide real support to families in many ways – remittances are used to pay for food, housing construction, agricultural equipment, health insurance, taxes and education. Many said migrants sustain communities of origin. Remittances are invested in meeting family needs. In some cases, support to families boosts the local economy through the setting up of small trade enterprises. In addition, if migrant know-how is shared with the community, this can help local development and learning e.g. through activities like baking, painting and welding.
Niger	The towns visited by the assessment team had many nationals in Libya and interviewees said that remittances were a great help to families and the local economy. Remittances were mainly used to meet the domestic consumption needs of the family, to purchase plots of land for building a house, or to cover wedding expenses. In Filingue or Abala, there were no reports of funds being used for social investment in the community, e.g. in health centres or schools (which contradicts what interviewees said).
Senegal	Remittances were used for food (58%), with the rest of the money being used for family maintenance, daily expenses and the purchase of livestock; only 5% was used for investments. Migrant remittances play a major role in household survival. Remittances are useful but also have a negative effect by creating dependency and encouraging sluggishness in local production.

9. CIRCUMSTANCES OF RETURNEES AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF RETURNING HOME

9.1. Migrants' reception at home

For many returnees, going home was a bittersweet experience. Reunions were emotional; families were relieved to see family members come home safely, but joy quickly turned to worries about making ends meet and returnees were embarrassed at coming home empty-handed. One Senegalese returnee described his mother's reaction: "My mother cried when she saw me and said she had lost her Soutoura [implying a loss of dignity and respect – in this case, due to loss of income]." Most returnees were from poor families, and the return home heightened the vulnerability of already desperate households, particularly in countries such as Niger, which had already been affected by recurrent drought and food insecurity.

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	Returnees said they were received with love and warmth, but they were embarrassed to arrive empty-handed.
Ghana	Returnees were initially welcomed warmly by families and communities but many later felt humiliated and belittled by returning home empty-handed.
Mali	The reunion with families was a happy event, but despair quickly gained the upper hand given the harsh conditions in places of origin in terms of limited material and financial resources.
Niger	–
Senegal	Returnees referred to the difficult emotional experience of returning home: "We are not returned voluntarily but under duress of war. In Senegal, there exists a state of mind as when you return empty-handed you are no longer considered and you are rejected. If you have no self-control, you are going crazy. Your friends will flee and even your family, they soon forget what you did for them."

9.2. Circumstances and living conditions

Returnees in all countries found themselves in very difficult circumstances and commonly expressed sentiments of desperation, anxiety and frustration. What came across most forcefully, in all the assessment reports, was the human tragedy of young men and women being suddenly uprooted from their livelihoods, and transplanted back into a situation of dependency, with a bleak and uncertain outlook. Returnees frequently talked of feeling belittled, humiliated and ridiculed; they experienced scorn and abuse from community members and felt emotionally fragile and unstable. One returnee from Mali expressed what many were feeling, in all six countries, when he said: "People should not come to mock us while we are in this dejected situation."

The most common and obvious concerns were employment, financial support, daily expenses and housing. The Burkina Faso assessment focused particularly on living conditions and revealed that most returnees were living with relatives or friends in homes constructed with basic, temporary materials. Some appeared to have problems finding the next meal and often had to manage on just one meal a day. However, interviewees appeared to experience shame about the difficulty of meeting their basic food requirements as they would admit this in individual interviews but would emphasize other types of problems, such as psychological difficulties, when talking in focus groups. Other challenges included covering the costs of schooling and health care.

Returnees expressed frustration with government and political authorities for failing to provide follow-up. A returnee in Niger said: "It's four months since I returned and no support has reached us. It seems

as if something [money] is scheduled for us but it remains blocked, for some reason, in Niamey.” To the assessment team, returnees said: “You are the nth mission, then we do not see anything concrete.” Family tensions are also heightened. Some returnees are resentful that remittances were not used wisely. One returnee to Mali said: “I was able to send nearly CFAF 2 million (USD 3,984) per year to my parents who have squandered everything. Now I find myself today without even CFAF 1,000 (USD 1.99), which is frustrating. If I had known it was going to be like this, I would have stayed abroad for good. Now, I want to leave permanently.” In other cases, families expressed concerns about their survival. One father in Senegal said his son had been the sole provider for the family and, since his son’s return, the family had been experiencing enormous difficulties.

Returnees resorted to a variety of measures to make ends meet. Local bank managers in Ghana reported an increase in the withdrawal of deposits and early redemption of fixed deposits, as well as an increase in the demand for loans. In Burkina Faso, animals were being sold to meet immediate needs. In both cases, returnees were effectively liquidating important investments in order to survive.

Some returnees returned to the work they did before going to Libya – such as farming – but cited difficulties in accessing cash to buy inputs (e.g. seeds, fertilizers and chemicals). In Burkina Faso, very high numbers of returnees took up agriculture – largely, it seems, because they could gain access to land to grow crops. In Ghana, some returnees purchased taxis even though they did not know how to drive or have insurance, which posed a risk to them and others. The Niger assessment report revealed that some returnees started income-generating activities such as small restaurants or enrolled in “food-for-work” programmes. In Mali, few migrants came back with sufficient savings to start projects that would facilitate their socio-economic integration.

Returnees in all six countries lacked the financial means to help kick-start new income-generating activities, even though they had ideas and an interest in helping themselves. Most had aspirations, for instance, to go into farming, set up businesses, carry out construction projects or acquire driving skills, but needed money and materials to launch these initiatives. The small number of female returnees tended to be more interested in setting up businesses or working in the food industry than working the land. They faced particular constraints in terms of securing employment, accessing food and making a living from agricultural activities.

Aside from financial resources, other key barriers to reintegration included psychological difficulties, loss of property or investment, and debts. The “culture shock” of returning home seems to have been an issue for some; having been used to different lifestyles in Libya, they were described by community members as dressing differently, standing out and engaging in what was seen as inappropriate behaviour, such as heavy drinking and promiscuity. In some cases, they appeared to be unwilling to do the work they had done before leaving and were interested only in doing more skilled work.

Not surprisingly, some returnees wanted to migrate again and were just waiting for the opportunity to return to Libya. An interviewee in Senegal said: “If it was not for the war, we would not have returned ... because our situation was better in Libya than in Senegal. There, we earned a good living but now we have problems trying to get hold of CFAF 25 (USD 0.5). It is faith in God that enables us to live and not to fall into madness.” What is interesting, however, is that most of the returnees were keen to stay at home and to adapt to local conditions, if only they could receive some assistance in finding jobs or setting up a business for themselves.

Table 22: Source information on the circumstances and concerns of returnees

Burkina Faso	<p>Of the returnees, 79.7% had returned to agriculture rather than the work they carried out in Libya; the rest were working in crafts, trade and wage labour. It is not surprising that most were in farming as access to land is not difficult and 80% said they had a plot to cultivate. Returnees were found in 3 types of living arrangements: 66.6% were living in the home of a relative or friend; 30.2% in their own houses; and 2.9% in rental accommodation. The majority (83.3%) were in buildings made of non-permanent materials. There were limited sanitation facilities: 79% said their homes had showers made of temporary materials; only 21.7% had latrines. Migrants have minimum comfort, but the same conditions are experienced by those who have never migrated. In terms of meals, 84.8% have at least 2 meals a day; 60.7% are able to meet food needs with the help of relatives and friends and 3% with the help of a loan. Of the respondents, 34.1% were able to meet food needs themselves through their current occupation and 2.2.% through savings; however, 60.7% are dependent on relatives and friends to satisfy their food needs. In terms of schools, 44% said they were not able to enrol at least one child in school for lack of funds. To pay school fees, 46.6% are helped by parents and relatives, 3.6% take out a loan, 42.9% are able to meet schooling costs through their current occupation and 7.1% through savings. In terms of overall living conditions, more than half (52.2%) said that living conditions were poor, 47.1% found them acceptable, and only 0.7% said that conditions were good. The main difficulties reported by migrants in focus groups in order of importance were psychological problems (distress, depression, despair) (32.26%), followed by poverty, problems associated with food and creditors. However, in individual interviews, most said that food problems (28.8%) were the main concern, followed by dependency, housing and health care. This significant difference indicates that there is a need to try to preserve dignity in public by concealing the main problem. Barriers to reintegration are seen as the inability to repay loans undertaken for emigration, psychological difficulties, loss of property or investments and lack of financial resources to meet their needs. Financial issues were also identified as a source of conflict between spouses and family members.</p>
Chad	–
Ghana	<p>Returnees expressed a sense of desperation, anxiety and frustration. In terms of concerns: 68% referred to employment; 18% to financial support; 4.6% to meeting daily expenses; 4% to housing; and only 1% referred to starting a business or education/schooling. Several returnees complained about the lack of decent accommodation, irregular food supply and hardship and expressed their frustration at political authorities and the lack of assistance received following registration exercises. Returnees cited the lack of gainful employment and financial support since their return as their main problem. While some had returned to their previous occupations as farmers and artisans, they cited difficulties in accessing cash to buy inputs (seeds, fertilizer and chemicals) and to meet daily consumption expenses. Local bank managers also reported withdrawals of deposits, early redemption of fixed deposits and an increased demand for loans by a substantial proportion of returnees who held accounts with the banks.</p>
Mali	<p>Returnees found themselves in a precarious situation; few had made savings in Libya, making it difficult to implement projects back home – only 29% were able to start new initiatives. Besides the traditional farm work, there were very few income-generating activities despite the fact that returnees would like to put skills learned in Libya to use. Migrants were left to fend for themselves with a real risk of fresh migration to Libya. According to information on the ground, some had already returned at the time of the assessment. Returnees expressed despair at being at home without any economic activity, feeling empty-handed and in a fragile psychological state. One said: “It should not be that people come to mock our increasingly precious situation of disappointment that we have now”. Another said: “I was able to send nearly CFAF 2 million (USD 3,984) per year to my parents who have squandered everything. Now I find myself today without CFAF 1,000 (USD 1.99), which is frustrating. If I had known it was going to be like this, I would have stayed abroad for good. Now, I want to leave permanently.” Some expressed a change in mentality and an unwillingness to do the work they did before migration to Libya, preferring to put the skills learned in Libya use.</p>
Niger	<p>In Tillabéry, the lack of gainful activity is seen as a problem and returnees showed signs of weariness: “It’s four months since I returned and no support has reached us. It seems as if something [money] is scheduled for us but it remains blocked, for some reason, in Niamey”. Some had started income-generation activities (e.g. small restaurants); others had enrolled on “food-for-work” programmes, but most were inactive as there was no farm work during the rainy season. Debt problems were common as loans had been taken out for day-to-day survival. There was a similar situation in Zinder. Problems were compounded by the food crisis; returnees were mostly from villages which were hard hit by the food insecurity that had plagued the country for decades and peaked in 2005 and 2010.</p>
Senegal	<p>Returnees reported feeling ridiculed, indicating that they had internalized the problems associated with an aborted migration experience and lack of external support.</p>

Table 23: Source information on health

Burkina Faso	In terms of meeting health expenses, 30.4% did so from their current occupation, 4.3% from savings and 65.2% through loans or other support.
Chad	–
Ghana	Of the respondents, 46% reported ailments and 3.2% saw these as chronic. Since returning, 43% had attended hospital for skin-related diseases, chest pain, body pain, malaria and fever; 60% had paid the bills themselves, while the National Health Insurance Scheme covered almost 17% of sick returnees. Only 274 were registered with the Scheme as they needed assistance with paying premiums.
Mali	–
Niger	In Tahoua, there were isolated cases of measles. Children in returnee families were in difficult situations and there were serious problems relating to access to drinking water, limited living space, sleeping in the open and promiscuity.
Senegal	–

Table 24: Source information on coping mechanisms and activities of returnees

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	–
Ghana	Some had returned to previous occupations, but many cited difficulties in accessing cash to buy inputs (seeds, fertilizers and chemicals) and to meet daily expenses. A few returnees also purchased taxis but some did not have driving skills, licences or insurance, exposing them and passengers to risks. Others could not find work as plasterers as they were not qualified masons.
Mali	–
Niger	The situation of returnees varied from region to region. In Tillabéry, for instance, some had started income-generation activities such as small restaurants or taverns, found employment (e.g. caretaking) or had enrolled in “food-for-work” programmes. The profiling data show that the majority in all regions had returned to work as agricultural labourers or had started business activities. In all regions, the assessment noted that returnees were struggling to make ends meet.
Senegal	Of the respondents, 29% had no work, while the majority (51%) were working in agriculture; the rest were working in business, building, carpentry and mechanics. Although most had an occupation, most were not satisfied. Returnees expressed a wish to explore other opportunities, including new migration: “If it was not for the war, we would not have returned ... because our situation was better in Libya than Senegal. There, we earned a good living but now we have problems trying to get hold of CFAF 25 (USD 0.5). It is faith in God that enables us to live and not to fall into madness. The loss of our fellow adventurers also gives us strength.” Another said: “It is very difficult and our dignity does not allow us to reach out; this is the personality of the adventurer. We are people who sacrifice to work and support their families; it is with dignity that we face the desert. Today, they look at us as ‘less than nothing’, while the opposite is true. Our women were distinguished because they frequently sent money, but today we do not even have the means to ensure daily bread; it’s degrading.”

Table 25: Source information on the aspirations of returnees

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	In Matafo, returnees said they would like to stay in Chad and resume the activities they had done before migration – agriculture, fishing and livestock. They needed money and materials to go back to previous activities. Women returnees were not interested in working the land and said they would like capital to engage in commercial activities.
Ghana	Returnees wanted assistance to go into farming and agro-processing, to acquire driving skills, gain public sector employment (e.g. as policemen), or to set themselves up in business or trading, or construction work (electrical repairs, welding, masonry and plumbing). Some had organized themselves into associations to group together assistance from the Government to embark on farming ventures. A few others wanted assistance with tuition and boarding to resume education and training.
Mali	Returnees said they had skills to live successfully in their home communities, but only 29% had initiated any activity. Potential activities included agriculture, market gardening, livestock, trade and transportation. One interviewee commented: “I am pleasantly surprised to see our young people returning from Libya, engaged in trades to which they attached little importance before leaving for Libya.”
Niger	In Tillabéry, socio-economic reintegration ideas related to what returnees knew and what they had done in Libya. Returnees suggested areas such as manual labour, agriculture, baking, driving, construction, mechanics, the security sector, trade, welding and hairdressing. Returnees said that the labour market in Libya offered more opportunities than that at home, but showed a willingness to adapt to local opportunities. They expressed an interest in the pastoral sector (livestock), trade (shops), the automotive and mechanical sector and food production (especially women). In Tahoua, socio-economic integration ideas included livestock, trade and crafts. In Zinder, returnees suggested trade, driving, masonry, crafts and other new areas. The profiling data show that 57% of men aspired to work in agriculture and 23% in business, with the remainder divided between different interests such as taxi driving and building work. Among the women, a very small percentage aspired to work in agriculture (1%), with larger numbers preferring business (20%); however, the majority did not seek work outside the home (40%).
Senegal	–

Table 26: Source information on future migration plans

Burkina Faso	–
Chad	The majority (93%) said they wanted to remain in Chad; only 4% wanted to return to Libya or to go to a third country, with the remaining 3% not answering.
Ghana	Many returnees said they were monitoring developments in Libya to decide to embark on new journeys. At same time, some of the respondents were eager to settle at home if they could be assisted with means to find jobs or set up businesses.
Mali	–
Niger	According to the profiling data, many returnees (50%) expressed a wish to receive credit facilities or the provision of materials to help start their own income-generating activities in their place of origin.
Senegal	Most had occupations but were not satisfied and wanted to explore new opportunities, including migrating again: “If it was not for the war, we would not have returned ... because our situation was better in Libya than Senegal. There, we earned a good living but now we have problems trying to get hold of CFAF 25 (USD 0.5). It is faith in God that enables us to live and not to fall into madness. The loss of our fellow adventurers also gives us strength.”

10. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

10.1. Impact on communities

There was also an impact on host communities in the six countries. The majority of returnees were from impoverished and underdeveloped communities that experience agricultural failure, food insecurity, malnutrition, an absence of economic opportunities, and inadequate health infrastructure and education services. Some regions also suffer from conflict. To address these challenges, labour migration was a key coping strategy.

The assessment reports indicate that the economic impact of the loss of remittances was felt at individual family and community levels, although this somewhat contradicts the aforementioned indications that remittances had little effect on the wider community. Family consumption was undoubtedly affected, with money for housekeeping and daily food being a problem; some families had to withdraw their children from private schools. The impact seemed to be particularly serious in places that had suffered severe food insecurity for years, such as Niger, or where there was a particularly heavy dependence on remittances, such as in Mali.

In terms of the wider community, the abrupt termination of remittances had a negative effect on local markets and traders in Niger. In Senegal, villages with a large expatriate community in Libya suffered acutely – for example, in the village of Mandingo, where 75 per cent of the village income was derived from remittances from Libya or elsewhere. Local banks felt the effects through the loss of deposits and commissions from transfers from Libya. In Chad, there were no visible impacts on communities or families at the time of the assessment, but the interviewees spoke of potential instability due to the lack of jobs and the inability of returnees to reintegrate into local society. Interviewees in both Ghana and Niger cited community concerns about security and the association of returnees with heavy drinking and petty theft; however, it is not clear to what extent these were proven allegations or merely stereotypes. In Ghana, community members were generally sensitive and concerned about the social instability that might occur if hardworking young men were unable to find jobs. A bank manager interviewed for the Ghana assessment gave his perspective on the crisis: “It has brought problems ... people came unprepared. But those who had sent money home were better able to withstand it. Some had arrived in Libya not too long before. Others were enjoying life there and had not saved up. So how to make ends meet is a problem...” By contrast, in Burkina Faso, there was little community support – seemingly due to a lack of investment by migrants in their countries of origin while they were away.

Table 27: Source information on socio-economic impacts

Burkina Faso	The sudden return had a visible impact on host communities, with 23.6% reporting a degradation in living conditions; 19.11% reported increased food security, and 10.11% increased family expenses. Other impacts included depression, loss of investment, housing problems, promiscuity and increased expenses. In some places like Boulgou, which has experienced two food crises in last 5 years, the situation was already very fragile in food terms. The majority of those surveyed said they were able to meet food needs through family and friends, but that the food situation was worsening. Common strategies included selling animals (which represent savings) and other goods. This loss of wealth and investments serves to increase long-term vulnerability. Remittances sent to parents and relatives had been an important source of income. A 2007 survey by the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) said that migrant remittances represented 15% of annual household income on average, with even higher levels in the provinces. Migration is seen as a family project and family investment.
Chad	In the Lac region, at the time of the assessment, key respondents said that there was no visible impact on families or communities; nonetheless, they were concerned about instability caused by the lack of jobs. The long-term social effects of migrants who had been away for a long time trying to adapt to the home culture and lifestyle was also commented on. Interviewees said they could identify returnees by how they dressed and their “strange attitude”, and worried about the “bad examples” being set and delinquent behaviour. The assessment also noted prejudice against women who had gone to Libya on their own and assumptions that they had been sex workers. There was no impact on market prices as that was not dependent on migrants in Libya. In Kanem, there was no evidence of an impact on, or additional vulnerability for, families, but there were concerns about the already existing food insecurity. In Ouaddai, there was no visible impact, but again there were concerns about potential impacts. No specific trends were identified in N’Djamena, the capital. The city is divided into different neighbourhoods and impacts were hard to gauge. The region of Salamat does not see as much migration as other regions and there was no evidence of an impact linked to returns.
Ghana	The economic impacts of the loss of remittances were felt at the individual, family and community levels. Family consumption was affected, with some returnees considering withdrawing their children from the private schools they attended. Housekeeping and money for food was also regarded as a problem by some returnees and household members. Lastly, local banks also reported lost deposits and commissions from transfers from Libya. Of the returnee households, 70% reported having financial difficulties; another 7% said they had difficulties in meeting household expenses; 5.8% reported difficulties in meeting education expenses; 10% reported no negative impacts, maybe because they made sufficient investments back home to generate income on return. Besides direct impacts, purchasing power was also reduced. Concerns were expressed over the aggressiveness and lifestyles of returnees in terms of drinking and womanizing. Some community members accused returnees of engaging in petty theft. The police also said the security situation had deteriorated.
Mali	Migrants had supported communities and the end of remittances had a negative effect on living standards. The town of Gao was greatly affected and the living conditions of families had deteriorated. Migrants who had previously supported their families had become dependants. In some localities, urgent food assistance was needed. Returnees in Gao and Kita were generally unemployed and wanted to work in agriculture or local businesses.
Niger	In Tillabéry, at the family level, the vulnerability of households was increased. The town had faced severe food insecurity in recent years and a number of households had survived on direct food support from the State and international organizations. There was also an effect on communities, local markets and traders. In Tahoua, the sudden and massive returns affected individuals, families and community traders. There was a profound effect on families that needed remittances to supplement weak livelihoods. In Tillabéry there was a security incident when dozens of returnees congregated in Filingue on the arrival of the U.S. ambassador, who was visiting for other reasons (to see the work of an NGO). Aside from this, there were no major security incidents, but there were rumours of thefts and other crimes linked to returnees. In Tahoua, some security issues were raised about the fear of returnees stealing livestock. In Zinder, there were allegations of armed robberies involving weapons from Libya. The assessment report cautioned against stigmatization.
Senegal	The massive return of migrants and cessation of remittances led to resentment in families. One father of a migrant said that his son had been the sole provider for daily survival and since his return the family had experienced enormous difficulties. According to the village heads of Mandingo village, 75% of the village income came from migrants from Libya or elsewhere.

Table 28: Source information on family and community responses

Burkina Faso	The lack of community support initiatives can be explained by various factors, including the fact that migrants had invested very little in their place of origin. Those who had invested locally had done so with families and not with communities. Migrant families with several members in Libya had suffered the heaviest impacts.
Chad	In the Lac region, returnees were well received by families or host families in the communities. There was relief about the returnees safe return, but there was also concern about the lack of opportunity and food insecurity (especially with more mouths to feed). In Kanem and Ouaddai, returnees were also well accepted.
Ghana	The return of migrants was initially welcomed by family and community members. It was acknowledged that the return home had been a hardship for migrants as the conditions under which they had returned had been difficult, and this had increased their dependence on family members and reduced purchasing power in the communities. Community members were generally sensitive to the plight of returnees. However, they also expressed concern over the aggressiveness of several returnees and accused them of engaging in petty theft and heavy drinking. At the same time, they called for assistance for them, noting that these were hardworking and strong young men who might become antisocial if they could not find jobs. A local bank manager commenting on the impacts said: "It has brought problems ... people came unprepared. But those who had sent money home were better able to withstand it. Some had arrived in Libya not too long before. Others were enjoying life there and had not saved up. So how to make ends meet is a problem." Returnees were welcomed due to fears for their safety. The harsh conditions of their return were also recognized as many arrived without possessions or money due to them by their employers. There was an increased dependence on families. Bank managers said returnees were withdrawing deposits, redeeming fixed deposits before maturity and increasingly asking for loans. Community members said they wanted returnees to be assisted with loans and training schemes; they highlighted the danger of antisocial behaviour if returnees could not find jobs. They did not see them as competition for jobs and believed they could be reintegrated.
Mali	–
Niger	–
Senegal	The family response was very emotional: some were in tears of joy at seeing their relatives return safely; some were in tears of despair at the loss of income. One said: "My mother cried when she saw me and said she had lost her 'Soutoura'". This refers to privacy, dignity and respect and is used in relation to preserving a family's name and reputation.

10.2. Government response

During the Libyan conflict, the transport and return of hundreds and thousands of migrants to their homes was a huge logistical challenge, and one that all parties – international organizations, governments and civil society – worked on constructively and together to address. The emphasis has been largely on providing safe and dignified evacuation and transport assistance, as well as temporary shelter, food and health care. Governments in the region cooperated with IOM and partners in taking adequate measures to facilitate the safe return of citizens and third-country nationals through the territory. In all six countries, the return and reception of migrants appear to have been systematically organized, but measures faltered – perhaps inevitably, given the circumstances – when it came to reintegration support. At the time of writing this report, some governments (together with IOM and other international organizations) had secured some funds and started the process of planning reintegration support for their returning migrants. However, more comprehensive planning is needed.

In terms of reception, the approach in Senegal, as in other countries in the region, involved the government mobilizing a national committee to plan a response with the help of IOM and other agencies. This involved meeting returnees at international airports or at land border crossings, providing them with basic assistance, and then organizing transport back to the returnees' home localities.

Most migrants have returned safely, but the majority of them still require reintegration support. In Niger, the Government issued an order for support to be provided to returnees in the form of food distribution, seed supply, distribution of livestock, and the transfer of money. However, the degree of implementation at the local level varied. Some local authorities did almost nothing and did not even have a clear registration process. Others, while slow to start, had plans in place for cash transfers, cash-for-work programmes and strengthening grain banks. The situation in Chad was found to be similarly variable. Some local or regional authorities had set up welcome committees and were carrying out registration as a prelude to other activities, while others were doing nothing. In Senegal, part of the problem was that return was managed at the central level, without the involvement of local authorities, which made for a weak response at the local level.

Table 29: Source information on government/authority response

Burkina Faso	Returnees were met at the capital's airport by CONASUR (National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation), the Red Cross and IOM. They were housed and fed and then transported back to their home communities by special convoy or using private carriers. Similar operations were also carried out at land border crossings. Further actions were not taken. The only real support came from families: of the 64.13% who said they had received assistance, 99.4% said it came from their families.
Chad	In the Lac region, the governor set up a committee to register returnees coming to the region's capital. Returnees were welcomed, but local authorities were unable to give a figure for the number of returns as these were recorded on paper. There seemed to be good collaboration concerning registration procedures, but resources were tight and capacity insufficient. In Kanem, a committee was set up in the capital of the region comprising local government, the Red Cross, etc. In addition to those returning with IOM, some migrants returned spontaneously. Registration was carried out but was not consistent. In Ouaddai, there was no welcome committee. The Government worked with IOM at the transit centre to register returnees but not all returnees stayed in the region.
Ghana	The Government had stated its good intentions, but the assessment report observed that, at that point in time, little assistance had been extended beyond that provided at the initial registration phase.
Mali	Efforts had been made to support return, but these did not continue into the reintegration stage. Local authorities had compiled some figures, but these underestimated the numbers of arrivals. It was assumed that thousands of migrants had returned, but there was no reliable data collection. More could be done to mobilize implementation in agriculture or in public works.
Niger	IOM Niamey provided assistance to more than 26,500 of the most vulnerable persons from Niger and other sub-Saharan African nationals. The Government established an ad hoc committee to coordinate and monitor the situation of nationals from Niger living in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya and established a plan comprising the following elements: (a) targeted free food distribution; (b) seed supply; (c) distribution of small ruminants; and (d) cash transfer. The Government was also considering establishing a socio-economic rehabilitation programme for those concerned, working on crisis management related to returnees through an early warning system and sponsoring a national study on an economic reintegration programme. In Tillabéry, reception measures established by local authorities were described as "timid" and focused on returning migrants to their villages of origin rather than holding them in temporary camps. In one place, the authorities stopped NGOs carrying out censuses to avoid conflicting figures. In terms of the response to the Government's 4-point plan, people thought the first 3 aspects (food, seed and ruminants) were relevant to migrant needs. In Filingue, government actions had not yet begun and some international agencies were beginning to consider activities. The communities complained that people came on mission and then nothing happened: "You are the nth mission, then we do not see anything concrete". In Tahoua, after an initial hesitation, the Government started to implement reception activities through its local development plans, which involved cash transfers, cash-for-work programmes and strengthening grain banks. In Zinder, the authorities acknowledged that official reception conditions were lacking due to political transition and limited resources. They therefore opted for redirecting people to villages of origin and avoided keeping people in camps at the commune level. Returnees said that people were sent back to villages without being identified and profiled. Since then, however, ad hoc committees have begun to identify returnees and better establish socio-economic profiles. In Zinder, some NGOs and international agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme, launched an initiative to provide investment for seeds and agricultural support. The assessment by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs states that those in cities had more opportunities for reintegration than those in rural areas as they can find odd jobs. Villagers were said to be selling the few animals they had to pay debts. Market gardening does not exist in pastoral areas or in the outskirts of the desert. NGOs would also like to offer training; one suggested "green jobs" and waste collection and recycling.
Senegal	The Government mobilized a national committee for refugees, returnees and displaced persons to coordinate with IOM return operations. A plan was drawn up involving IOM, other agencies and various ministries for reception services at the airport to welcome returnees, collect data and provide money for transport to final destinations. Some returnees said they had to find their own money to go home. The establishment of a coordination mechanism meant that return statistics could be reviewed and the vulnerability and socio-economic pressure of massive returns on communities of origin could be discussed. According to the assessment report, return was managed at the central level seemingly without the involvement of local political and administrative systems, which may explain the lack of response in some localities.

10.3. Potential for socio-economic integration

The potential for socio-economic reintegration was assessed in several areas, often yielding some very specific suggestions. While there is evidently potential in most places, investment and development are required. In Mali, for instance, there is potential in terms of agricultural development, which fits well with the skills acquired by returnees in modern agriculture during their time in Libya. However, financial support is needed for returnees to be able to use these newly acquired skills in productive and lucrative ways. Likewise, in Ghana, returnees need support in realizing the potential for establishing new businesses in their districts in agriculture and food processing, especially on a cooperative basis. As a follow-up to the assessments carried out in the country, IOM Ghana has started projects aimed at income-generation initiatives and awareness-raising on the hazards of migration. In Chad, the assessments indicated that some programmes initiated by international agencies to address food security and nutrition had ended, highlighting the need for: a renewed emphasis on microcredit and income-generation support (in the form of materials and agricultural inputs required to set up businesses); capacity-building (such as in small business development, carpentry and sewing); and wider job creation and community development initiatives. Interviewees in Niger cited the need for emergency assistance (in the form of food, cash transfers and food-for-work programmes) and support for agricultural interventions.

Table 30: Source information on integration potential

Burkina Faso	The assessment confirmed the urgent need for food aid. There was an interest in economic activities, but the returnees' lack of experience in the fields of interest may mean that technical and financial support is not enough to sustain activities. Although there is a desire to remain in the communities, the temptation to leave is great and, as such, economic reintegration initiatives need to take this factor into account.
Chad	In the Lac region, existing programmes include a national programme on food security and a microcredit project. Interviewees suggested the following activities: monitoring and follow-up of returnees; materials and agricultural inputs to get started; the development of other skills such as small business development, carpentry and sewing; ensuring support for returnees in groups; and microcredit and income-generation activities. In Kanem, there were development projects run by the FAO, the World Food Programme, Médecins du Monde, Action against Hunger and others, but these have ended. 700 wadis are arable all year, but owned by individual farms. The FAO managed to negotiate access for cultivation, but, aside from this possibility, there is limited arable land. Interviewees said that immediate support was needed in the areas of food; monitoring of returns; microcredit activities; job creation schemes; awareness-raising activities; and activities for women.
Ghana	Many returnees perceived economic opportunities in the districts as revolving around agriculture (crop, poultry and animal farming), processing of agricultural produce, especially fruit (watermelons and mangoes), trading, skilled artisanal work (masonry, carpentry) and driving and electrical work. Most had moved to Libya to find more gainful employment and there was a perception of better opportunities in Libya or elsewhere. The sojourn abroad also increased their aspiration for a good life. Of the respondents, 96% perceived economic opportunities in the districts where they lived that could be seized if proper support was provided in terms of vehicles, small machinery and guaranteed prices for crops. Some were interested in non-traditional crops such as butternut squash. They believed the long hours and hard work in Libya would help make such ventures a success. The majority also believed that they had the skills needed to do these jobs (e.g. carpentry and masonry, driving, trade, farming); nonetheless, 51% wanted to acquire technical skills. Returnees also mentioned group or cooperative activities in construction, business, farming and transportation. In the Sedhiou area, returnees identified opportunities for vegetable crops, banana growing and beekeeping. The region may present opportunities for socio-economic integration for young people provided the potential is used judiciously and professionally. Banana, sesame seed and cashew nut production are the lifeblood of the local economy. In Kolda, opportunities include livestock rearing (cattle, goats) and fisheries. The assessment report states that some training initiatives are under way for young people, but these are either ignored or not taken up by returnees due to misunderstanding or misconceptions surrounding these projects.

Mali	Both localities visited by the assessment team offered the potential for the reintegration of returnees – growth sectors are agriculture, livestock and trade, which are in line with the practical skills of returning migrants. Other potential areas include bakeries and construction. Migrants lack the means to implement activities as few savings were made. In Libya, they acquired skills in modern technology in agriculture, cultivation, irrigation, modern gardening and driving. One local person commented: “I am pleasantly surprised to see our young people returning from Libya, engaged in trades to which they attached little importance before leaving for Libya.” Returnees said they could live successfully in their home communities with the skills they had acquired, but only 29% had initiated activities because they lacked funds. Banks showed a willingness to assist returnees if they had promising projects. Some development aid programmes like Action against Hunger, Oxfam and the World Food Programme also have programmes in the area.
Niger	The assessment report gathered information on the potential for sustainable socio-economic reintegration. The following types of employment and income-generation activities were proposed in interviews: labouring; agriculture and livestock; food production and catering (e.g. bakeries); automotive work (repairs, driving); construction work; security; welding; and hairdressing. Returnees were aware that the labour market in Libya offered greater opportunities, but they showed a willingness to adapt to local opportunities. In the region of Tanout, local development plans proposed ideas for reintegration such as the development of a vocational training centre to teach skills and crafts (e.g. metalwork and woodwork). NGOs in the locality have also suggested skills training or “green jobs” involved in the collection and recycling of household and public waste. In Zinder, interviewees called for emergency assistance in terms of direct food, cash transfers, food-for-work programmes and agricultural support.
Senegal	–

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment data provide a clear and consistent picture of the returnee situation in all six countries. The efficiency of the repatriation operation carried out by the international community, governments and NGOs, in response to the most immediate danger, saved the lives of thousands of migrant workers and prevented the Libyan crisis from spilling over into other countries and turning into a much larger humanitarian catastrophe. Several months on, with the most immediate security threats at bay, other needs have come to the fore. Now, what is most visible is the hardship and disappointment faced by tens of thousands of young men (who represented the majority of returnees), suddenly robbed of the livelihoods they had journeyed so hard to find, and facing a hopeless future and no means of helping themselves. Programmes for socio-economic integration are desperately needed to help individual returnees and families, but also to safeguard the peace and stability of wider communities, countries and the region as a whole. There is still a need for ongoing humanitarian assistance in the form of free distribution of food and psychosocial assistance (among other things), until reintegration programmes are up and running. Initiatives aimed at providing these services should draw on best practices and learn from the success of programmes and projects for youth employment and/or rehabilitation, or from IOM programmes elsewhere. As part of this process, the data that have been collected on returnees will provide an essential resource for future planning. The assessments carried out in the six countries resulted in a variety of recommendations, which have been consolidated in the following list.

Reintegration and community stabilization

1. Community stabilization

In areas affected by high returns, support should be provided in a holistic way, to the entire community, rather than targeting returnees or their families, which could create tension in the communities.

2. Socio-economic reintegration

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

3. Mainstreaming protection

Given the potential long-term social impacts 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 – in the development of strategies as well as in the actual activities that may be included in the reintegration programmes.

4. Addressing gender bias

Activities for women should be included in any strategy, to ensure that 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 the women's needs. Both returnee women and women left behind face specific familial, social and economic challenges, and it is important that these gender-specific concerns be addressed.

5. Activities by groups/associations

Given that most communities prefer to develop associations in order to implement activities, 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 help them establish successful enterprises. In addition, the establishment of cooperatives or associations of returnees should be encouraged.

6. Reintegration support should be 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. 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. Lastly, 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.

7. Participation

Returnees and/or their associations should be actively involved in the implementation of the various reintegration projects, with a view to enhancing the returnees' exposure to, and knowledge of, the workings of the different institutions and organizations in the districts. This will also help to defuse their concerns about possible politicization and/or the misallocation of funds for their reintegration.

8. Children

The children of returnees must be reintegrated into the school system. This may be an issue in some countries where children have got used to learning in Arabic or English but are now, back home, being taught in French.

Migration management and capacity-building

1. Government capacity-building

Besides short-term support to governments in building their capacity to deal with the immediate 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 (the human, financial and social capital associated with remittances, as well as returns). The relevant government institutions and civil society organizations should be trained in the management of labour migration to promote better use of remittances for the social, economic and environmental development of their localities. In the same vein, the 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 facilities to enable them to provide better psychosocial support to returnees and their families.

2. 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. Information campaigns

Information must be provided on safe migration and the dangers of irregular migration, 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. 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 on programmes that promote social cohesion, peace, security and development.

Sustainable development

1. 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, the sponsorship of inter-district competitions among schools, etc.) to provide attractive rewards to winning schools and pupils.

2. Risk management strategies

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

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