

After Assisted Return from Germany: A Study on Long-term Reintegration StarthilfePlus Study II

ENGLISH VERSION



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Cover photos: (From left to right):

Photo 1: Zviad, Paata and Nugzar returned to their hometown in Ozurgeti, after different experiences abroad. In the framework of IOM-organized activities on sustainable reintegration and related skills training for returnees, Zviad, Paata and Nugzar submitted a joint business proposal to the local community centre, which aims to expand an existing small iron production business and transform it into a multi-profile iron and concrete production enterprise. This endeavour will result in the employment of even more members of the community and thus very important from a financial perspective, as studies show that the main reason for migration is usually unemployment and lack of finances. © IOM 2022/Jerry DE MARS for Beyond Borders Media

Photo 2: Elguja thought it would be easy to live and work in Greece, as it is similar to Georgia in its culture and traditions. He spent more than two years there, working at a meat factory. But his elderly mother and daughter needed him back home more than the money he was sending. He decided to return and with IOM's support managed to expand the family business and be close to his family. © IOM 2021/Eric GOURLAN

Photo 3: Natia is a single mother, who lives in Zestaponi, Imereti region along with her 11-year-old son. Natia migrated to Belgium to seek better opportunities for her family but had to return to Georgia to closely support her son. Through IOM's approach to reintegration, she was able to develop a reintegration plan upon return tailored to her needs. Natia could be supported thanks to fundings from multiple stakeholders, such as IOM, the Government of Georgia and Caritas. Natia bought several sewing machines and she also attended workshops to enhance her skills. She is now running her own sewing business at home. © IOM 2022/Jerry DE MARS for Beyond Borders Media

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After Assisted Return from Germany: A Study on Long-term Reintegration StarthilfePlus Study II

ENGLISH VERSION

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

BAMF	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, in German)
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung in German)
ERRIN	European Return and Reintegration Network
EUR	euro (currency)
GARP	Government Assisted Repatriation Programme
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MEASURE	Mediterranean Sustainable Reintegration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REAG	Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum-Seekers in Germany
REAG/ GARP	Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum-Seekers in Germany/ Government Assisted Repatriation Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Executive summary

The StarthilfePlus programme provides returnees with financial, and in some cases, in-kind assistance to ease their reintegration in the countries of return. Since its launch in 2017, the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and IOM have joined forces to explore the return and reintegration experiences of programme beneficiaries.

The database of the StarthilfePlus Study II consists of two successive surveys conducted among returnees in nine countries. The first survey took place about eight months after return, the second about three years after return. A total of 906 returnees participated in both surveys. In addition, 20 women who have been living in the country of return for an average of three years described their reintegration experiences in qualitative interviews.

The results of the study show the diversity of living conditions after return. The longitudinal design allows for the analysis of the reintegration process of different groups of returnees, disaggregated by such factors as sex, age or place of return. The findings contribute to the further development of evidence-based German return and reintegration programme design.

Social satisfaction and participation in the labour market have improved, and the housing situation is mostly satisfactory.

Over time, more and more surveyed returnees generate income from dependent or independent occupation. Thus, within around eight months after return, 41 per cent of study participants between 18 and 65 years of age had found income-generating employment. Three years after return, more than 64 per cent of working-aged respondents were with occupation.

Respondents' satisfaction with their social contacts likewise increased over time. Three years after return, around 92 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships within the family and with friends. Of the respondents, 80 per cent said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships in the neighbourhood where they live.

Around three years after return, three quarters of respondents live in a private apartment or house, while about 20 per cent live with relatives or friends. Only a few respondents live in shared accommodation or other types of housing. Overall, respondents seem to find the quality of their housing to be satisfactory. Three out of four consider their housing situation to be fair, good or very good.

Structural conditions often make the reintegration process more difficult.

Some respondents report a deterioration of structural conditions over time. The share of people with access to medical care, for example, has decreased. While 91 per cent of respondents stated in 2018 that they could see a doctor if needed, this share had fallen to 82 per cent of returnees by 2020. Satisfaction with the security situation among study participants has also decreased over time in many sample countries.

Many respondents have little trust in State structures, and returnees do not have access to public services everywhere. Only about one third rate access to public services as good or very good, while more than half the study participants say that they can only rely on the police and justice system in their place of return somewhat or not at all.

Although many of the returnees interviewed earn an independent income, three in four respondents still find it difficult to cover their own daily needs and those of their financial dependants three years after return. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated conditions in this regard. A total of 71 per cent of respondents lost income since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Structural reintegration is a particular challenge for returnees in societies with low political and economic stability. Furthermore, security cannot be guaranteed in some countries in the long term. Developments in Afghanistan and Ukraine since the data collection period are examples of how the security situation can change. The structural conditions for returnees are likely to have deteriorated significantly in Afghanistan as a result of the political upheaval following the Taliban takeover in 2021 and in Ukraine due to the onset of war in February 2022, although this is beyond the scope of this study.

Reintegration processes are not only shaped by the national context.

The analysis suggests that reintegration does not depend solely on the national return context. Returnees in an ostensibly identical national context can experience differences in their opportunities and access. For example, perceptions of the security situation and access to medical care differ, sometimes significantly, within national return contexts.

Furthermore, the study results show that factors, such as place of residence, sex and age, can influence living conditions. For example, respondents in rural areas with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants more often have very poor access to public services than respondents in urban areas. Men rate access to medical care better than women, and respondents aged 50 or above feel a sense of belonging to the community less often. Given the heterogeneity of reintegration conditions, assistance programmes could take into account the living situation of specific groups with corresponding needs at the place of return.

Returnee women perceive gender-specific disadvantages.

Women generate income from employment in agriculture, from other forms of employment or from self-employment significantly less often than men. Accordingly, 38 per cent of the women surveyed and 75 per cent of the men are engaged in income-generating employment. The qualitative interviews conducted as part of this study suggest that women's economic inactivity is frequently the product of unfavourable labour market conditions.

Women are also less often satisfied with contacts in the neighbourhood than men. It seems valid to assume that women's experience of migration partially contributes to them perceiving their social environment more critically than men. In the interviews, women in Iraq and Lebanon clearly indicate that they only became aware of gender-specific restrictions and prejudices in public life after their return.

Around half of returnees are thinking about onward migration.

Of the respondents, around 48 per cent have thought about migrating again, either outside or within the country. However, only 5 per cent have made initial preparations for onward migration in the near future. The majority of respondents who intend to migrate across borders expressed a desire to use regular pathways.

Economic factors such as insufficient income are among the most frequently cited reasons for intending to migrate. Other reasons for leaving the place of residence include structural conditions like poor health care, perceived lack of security or better educational opportunities abroad.

The half of respondents who indicated a desire to stay in their current place of residence express different reasons for that inclination. Some appreciate the proximity to family and relatives or are pleased with the quality of life at their place of residence. Others reported that they lack the economic means necessary for migration, or that they no longer want to migrate due to the potential risks.

Returnees consider assistance to be important for their reintegration.

Overall, 85 per cent of the returnees surveyed are satisfied or very satisfied with the StarthilfePlus programme. Around three years after their return, the absolute majority of returnees have spent the monetary assistance provided by StarthilfePlus in full. For 57 per cent of the study participants, the monetary assistance provided an important contribution to covering everyday needs. The StarthilfePlus assistance was moreover important for the respondents to finance housing and medical care, as well as ensure self-reliant livelihoods and education.

The vast majority of the surveyed returnees expressed the need for further assistance. Financial assistance is preferred because it can be used flexibly for different purposes. Returnees also consider in-kind assistance to be important, for example in finding income-generating employment or in setting up their own business. Some respondents indicated a need for assistance in education and psychosocial support.

Reintegration assistance that combines flexible financial support with skills-related and in-kind assistance at the place of return meets the needs of returnees. As such, the current structure of the StarthilfePlus programme, which includes financial and in-kind components, appears to be useful.

1

Introduction

The political and academic debate on return migration and return assistance in Germany and the European Union has intensified in recent years (King and Kuschminder, 2022; Salgado et al., 2022). This can be attributed to the increased importance of return policy, which is an essential component of the migration policy agenda in Germany and the European Union. Voluntary return stands in the foreground. As such, the coalition agreement 2021–2025 of the parties in the new Federal Government (Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and Freie Demokraten, 2021) notes the expansion of governmental return counselling and better funding for return assistance. The Return Directive of the European Parliament and the European Council of 2008 (Directive 2008/115/EC) (European Commission, 2008) and the European Agenda on Migration (European Commission, 2015) also emphasize the paramount importance of voluntary return. In April 2021, the European Union published the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration (European Commission, 2021), which seeks to implement the aspirations of the new Pact on European Migration and Asylum (European Commission, 2020) and places a more explicit focus on the rights and dignity of returning migrants.

In Germany, assistance for voluntary return began in 1979 with the introduction of the assisted return and reintegration programme for asylum-seekers (REAG programme). Since then, around 700,000 migrants who cannot or do not want to stay in Germany have opted for assisted return and reintegration. This programme has been expanded into a federal and State government programme for assisted voluntary

return (REAG/GARP) and forms the foundation for further support measures. The federal programme StarthilfePlus builds on the assistance provided by the REAG/GARP programmes and has been supporting the reintegration of voluntary returnees since 2017. The StarthilfePlus programme is implemented by IOM in 48 countries worldwide and has been further developed to better match the needs since its implementation in 2017.

BAMF Research Centre and IOM aim to provide evidence-based insights into return and reintegration experiences, as well as key challenges for the returnees who were assisted within the framework of StarthilfePlus. The findings aim to contribute to the further development of evidence-based return and reintegration programmes.

The accompanying research of the StarthilfePlus programme consists of two complimentary studies. The StarthilfePlus Study I titled “Assisted Voluntary Return from Germany: Motives and Reintegration – An Evaluation Study of the StarthilfePlus Federal Programme” examined motives behind the decision to return, as well as living situations in the first months after returning from Germany in 11 countries through a survey conducted in 2018 (Schmitt et al., 2019). The StarthilfePlus Study II, presented here, analyses the survey data of returnees who participated in the first survey in 2018–2019 as well as in a second survey in 2020–2021. The StarthilfePlus Study II thus allows analyses at two points in the reintegration process: (a) an average of eight months after return; and (b) around three years after return. The study is based on data from returnees in the following countries of return:

Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Georgia, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. For deeper insights into the perspectives of women returnees, 20 qualitative guided interviews were additionally conducted in Armenia, Iraq and Lebanon. Since the study only captures the experiences of interviewed returnees and is not based on a representative sample, the results cannot be applied to all returnees in these countries. Nevertheless, the insights gained provide an essential contribution both for assisted return programmes and for the ongoing academic discussion.

Most empirical studies in the field of return and reintegration are based on qualitative data with comparatively few participants (see Zakirova and Buzurukov, 2021). They often focus on specific groups of returnees and the local contexts of individual countries of return (see Arhin-Sam, 2019; Chobanyan, 2012; Saguin, 2020). As a result, a research gap has developed regarding quantitative and comparative research that highlights the different dimensions of reintegration across different subgroups and country-specific return contexts (Strachan, 2019). In particular, research on longer-term reintegration processes and their trajectories is limited due to challenges in data collection. These hurdles include, for example, the recruitment of study participants who have already been in their countries of return for some time. Data collection in multiple countries requires comprehensive capacities and must address local conditions such as language barriers.

Also, the relevance of return assistance programmes and the long-term challenges faced by returnees are not addressed systematically. Currently, this includes the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on the lives of migrants worldwide (IOM, 2021a). The StarthilfePlus Study II can address these research gaps by employing one of the first standardized surveys with returnees in different return countries at two points in time during the reintegration process.

Reintegration is thus the focus of the study accompanying the StarthilfePlus programme, as it is considered a central indicator for effective return policy (International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2021; IOM, 2017a; OECD, 2020). In general, the term reintegration refers to

a process of participation in social life in the return community (Cassarino, 2008:137). According to the IOM definition, reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities and psychosocial well-being that allows them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions based on choice rather than necessity (IOM, 2017a).

The IOM model for reintegration is made up of three reintegration dimensions: social, psychosocial and economic. Reintegration can additionally be observed at the structural, the community and the individual levels (IOM, 2019a; cf. also Black et al., 2004; Koser and Kuschminder, 2015). The StarthilfePlus Study II explores the individual level with an international comparative perspective. The focus is on the economic and social participation of the surveyed returnees, as well as their access to services and infrastructure at their place of return. Reintegration is examined in accordance with the IOM reintegration model as a multidimensional process which, in view of the heterogeneity of returnees (such as due to age or sex) and return contexts (such as different countries of return), can take many forms. The following questions lie at the centre of the study:

- How is the reintegration of returnees shaped approximately three years after their return, and are there differences in the reintegration level between returnees?
- How do the reintegration processes develop over time, and what challenges do returnees face in their longer-term reintegration?
- What relevance does the reintegration assistance of the StarthilfePlus programme have and which needs remain in the longer-term?

Increasingly, there is an understanding that migration is not a linear process that ends with a migration movement. Migration movements can, for example, be temporary or circular (Castles and Ozkul, 2014; Skeldon, 2012). In many cases, migration and return decisions are not made once but several times. This

insight results in another question that guides the research:

- Do returnees intend to stay or prefer onward migration?
- What reasons underlie these intentions for onward migration?

Structure of the study

This following report is structured in 12 chapters.

Chapter 2 discusses the background and development of the StarthilfePlus programme and places it within the broader migration policy context to portray the conditions of the assistance provided.

Chapter 3 explains the design and implementation of the StarthilfePlus Study II. This includes a description of sampling and survey dates, survey methods and the scope of the study.

Chapter 4 depicts the sociodemographic characteristics of study participants and the context of their migration.

Chapters 5 to 7 examine the reintegration experiences of surveyed returnees approximately three years after departing Germany along three reintegration dimensions: structural, economic and psychosocial. The structural dimension (chapter 5) includes security and essential access to public infrastructure, as well as the housing situation and health care at the place of return. Chapter

6, which focuses on the economic dimension, addresses access to the labour market, the ability of returnees to sustain themselves with their own economic resources and returnees' assessments of their personal economic situations. Chapter 7, which examines the psychosocial dimension, explores the importance of social contacts, experiences of discrimination and the feeling of belonging to community at the place of return.

Chapter 8 considers the experiences of women in the reintegration process, especially regarding economic participation and access to health care, as well as social inclusion and belonging. The women's personal insights gained from the qualitative interviews allow for a more comprehensive contextualization of the findings.

Subsequently, chapter 9 discusses the multidimensionality of reintegration as represented by reintegration indices and relates this to the general life satisfaction of study participants.

Chapter 10 examines the use of assistance and interviewee satisfaction with the support offered within the framework of StarthilfePlus. Longer-term assistance needs are also addressed.

Chapter 11 considers returnees' thoughts, intentions and preparations for onward migration.

Chapter 12 summarizes key study findings and presents recommendations for reintegration measures and sustainable reintegration assistance.

2 The federal programme StarthilfePlus

2.1. Assistance programmes for voluntary return and reintegration

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration constitutes a fundamental element of migration policy and management (BMI, 2021; Directive 2008/115/EC). Voluntary return assistance in Germany and the European Union aims to assist migrants to return in safety and dignity, develop new perspectives in the place of return and plan a new start. Assistance programmes for return and reintegration offer administrative, in-kind and/or financial assistance during the phase of return preparation and in the country of return (OECD, 2020). Through European Union-funded programmes¹ or the BMZ engagement in the field of voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, returnees receive not only in-kind assistance at their place of return, such as assistance in the field of housing, but also assistance aimed at facilitating reintegration, such as support in the search for employment or psychosocial support. To support people in Germany as they prepare for return, the not-for-profit organization Social Impact has, since October 2020, offered short-term courses and coaching sessions on behalf of BAMF and in cooperation with the GIZ to prepare returnees for

establishing a livelihood at their place of return.² They last between one week and three months and are provided under the premise that returnees are not planning on extending their residency in Germany. In other programmes, such as REAG/GARP for example, the primary focus is on in-kind and financial assistance.³

Migrants returning from Germany have received assistance related to their voluntary return and reintegration for over 40 years. The REAG programme, which covers travel costs and allowances, was introduced in 1979 by the then Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health, and has been implemented by IOM since then. In 1989, GARP was established and funded as an additional component by the Federal Ministry of the Interior for countries with strong relevance to migration management. The aim of this component is to provide returnees or those who migrate onwards with supplementary reintegration support (start-up assistance). In 2000, when the Federal Ministry of the Interior assumed responsibility for both programmes, they were combined in the REAG/GARP programme, which has since been jointly funded by the Federal Government and the German States. Different criteria, such as nationality, country of return, financial status and age, determine eligibility and the amount of assistance.

¹ In the context of European Union-funded programmes, the Joint Reintegration Services (JRS) programme is of particular note. It is linked to ERRIN, a programme phased out in 2022. Please see www.returningfromgermany.de/en/programmes/european-reintegration-programme-eurp.

² Please see www.returningfromgermany.de/de/programmes?programm=2.

³ Further information on return and reintegration programmes can be found in the information portal: <https://returningfromgermany.de>.

StarthilfePlus is a complementary assistance programme for migrants returning within the framework of REAG/GARP. The programme, which is funded by BAMF, has been assisting individuals in their reintegration at the place of return since 2017. The programme is specifically aimed at persons waiting for a decision on their asylum request or those whose application has been rejected.

2.2. The StarthilfePlus programme over time

2.2.1. The StarthilfePlus programme 2017 to 2018

The StarthilfePlus programme⁴ was implemented in 2017 and has been reformed continuously since then. In 2017 and 2018 – during the time frame in which respondents participated in the programme – the StarthilfePlus programme mainly consisted of financial assistance to support the reintegration of returnees. When compared to in-kind assistance, financial assistance has the advantage that returnees can use it individually, quickly and flexibly (Chaaban et al., 2020; Esper et al., 2022; UNHCR, n.d.).

When the programme was developed in 2017, two levels of funding were foreseen, depending on the time the return decision was made (see Figure 1). A prerequisite to receiving funding was that the applicants are destitute. Eligible persons received the full amount from the age of 12, while children under 12 received half (see also Schmitt et al., 2019). Under Level 1, asylum-seekers who opted for assisted departure before the asylum procedure was completed received a grant of EUR 1,200. Under Level 2, asylum-seekers whose application had been rejected received EUR 800, provided they opted for an assisted return within the deadline for leaving and waived legal remedies against their asylum rejection. For both levels, financial assistance was paid out in two equal instalments. The first instalment was paid out immediately before departure at the airport, together with the GARP assistance. The second

instalment was paid out six to eight months after return by the IOM offices in the countries of return.

Between February and December 2017, migrants who were not eligible for Level 1 or Level 2 assistance and met certain requirements⁵ could also receive assistance in the amount of EUR 800 under Level U. Here, too, payment was made in two instalments. As of 1 December 2017, the programme component Level S was introduced, providing persons eligible for protection who decided to return with EUR 800 of assistance. This assistance was provided through a one-time payment before departure at the airport. As of 1 January 2018, persons with Albanian or Serbian nationality who have received a temporary suspension of deportation (*Duldung*) in Germany for at least two years could also receive a grant of EUR 500 for their return under Level D, as well as assistance in the areas of housing and medicine. In such cases, payment took place in the country of return.

Additionally, returnees in the federal programme StarthilfePlus could temporarily receive reintegration assistance in the area of housing in around 40 countries through the additional component “Dein Land. Deine Zukunft. Jetzt!” (DLDZJ) (English translation: Your country. Your future. Now!). Returnees were able to request such assistance between December 2017 and February 2018, and again between September 2018 and December 2018. Returnees assisted under Levels S and D were excluded from DLDZJ. This in-kind assistance amounted to up to EUR 1,000 for individuals, and up to EUR 3,000 for families. It was paid out within one year at the place of return.

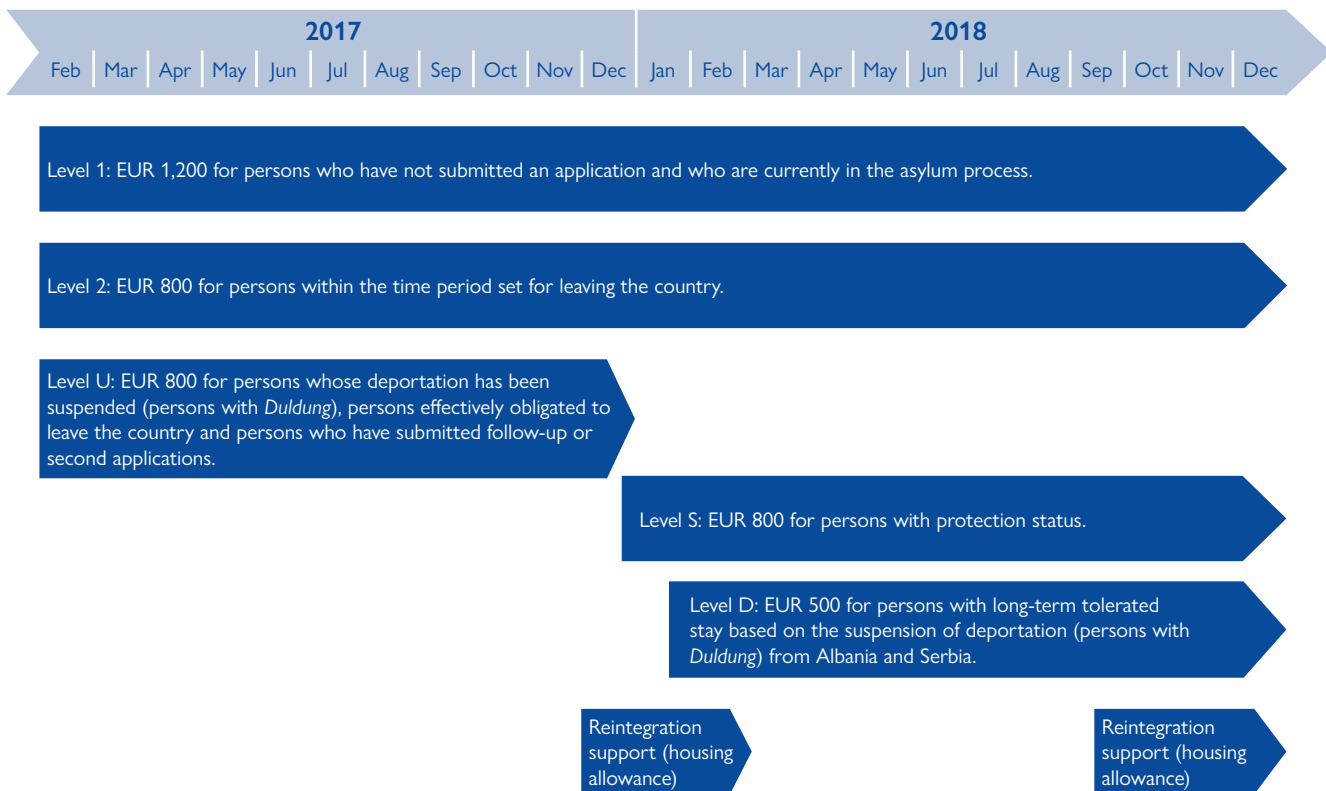
2.2.2. The StarthilfePlus programme 2019 to 2022

To simplify the programme, it was revamped in 2019, and between 2019 and 2022, it consisted of three components, which – unlike the various funding levels in 2017 and 2018 – were linked to the

⁴ For further detailed information on the programme, see the research report *Assisted Voluntary Return from Germany: Motives and Reintegration* (Schmitt et al., 2019).

⁵ These conditions included that they had been registered in Germany before 1 February 2017 and were obliged to leave the country before 1 August 2017, had received a temporary suspension of deportation (*Duldung*) or had filed a follow-up asylum application.

Figure 1. Components of the StarthilfePlus programme



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, authors' own depiction.

country of return.⁶ As before, the first component was financial, consisting of a single instalment paid out six to eight months after departure. Individuals received EUR 1,000 and families received EUR 2,000. The second component was housing assistance, which was paid out within one year of return in the amount of up to EUR 1,000 for individuals and EUR 3,000 for families. The third component, for persons with long-term suspension of deportation (Level D),⁷ consisted of a grant of EUR 500 for adults, in addition to in-kind assistance in the areas of housing and medical care. Within one year, assistance of up to EUR 1,000 for individuals and EUR 2,000 for families could be requested for housing, as well as EUR 1,500 for individuals and EUR 3,000 for families for medical care.

The Federal Government has developed additional instruments to meet the increased needs and daily expenses of returnees during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the StarthilfePlus programme was expanded with a COVID-19-related additional payment, which was granted on top of the regular country-specific reintegration assistance. Hence, returnees whose application was approved between July 2020 and December 2021 received a temporary special payment of EUR 1,500 for individuals and EUR 3,000 for families, which was paid out to returnees in two instalments (with the first instalment coming eight weeks after departure and second instalment coming eight months after departure).⁸

⁶ There were small deviations in the countries of return assigned to the respective programme components. This means that the option for StarthilfePlus assistance and the type of the assistance component could differ depending on the time of use, as well as the respective country of return.

⁷ Persons with long-term temporary suspension of deportation are migrants whose deportation from Germany has demonstrably been suspended for at least two years (BAMF/BMI, 2020).

⁸ With the introduction of the Corona top-up payments, the funding framework for reintegration assistance for persons with long-term temporary suspension of deportation (Level D) was also adjusted. In this case, there were again two supplementary payments: the first amounting to EUR 1,000 for individuals and EUR 2,000 for families within 12 weeks of return, and the second Corona top-up payment together with financial assistance amounting to a total of EUR 1,000 for individuals and EUR 1,500 for families six to eight months after return.

Assisted return to Afghanistan via the REAG/GARP programme has been temporarily suspended due to the security situation in the country since mid-August 2021. Return assistance via the REAG/GARP programme to Ukraine has likewise been temporarily suspended since February 2022 due to the war. As a result, no new StarthilfePlus funding stemming from the REAG/GARP programme is possible in these countries at the time of this report's publication. Depending on the situation on the ground, returnees who had already departed received the approved reintegration assistance.

The StarthilfePlus programme has been continuously modified, allowing for changes to be made to meet the needs of returnees. In addition to the gradual addition of in-kind assistance, financial assistance remains an important core component of the StarthilfePlus programme.⁹ As such, the StarthilfePlus Study II analyses the relevance of financial assistance for returnees on the basis of the funding period 2017–2018, and considers their reintegration needs over time. The insights gained provide important evidence-based impulses for the further development of voluntary return assistance in Germany (see chapter 10).

⁹ For up-to-date information on the StarthilfePlus programme, see www.returningfromgermany.de/de/.

3

Research design

The StarthilfePlus Study II is a longitudinal study with two surveys conducted at different points in time following return. Both surveys were conducted in nine countries of return.¹⁰ Parallel to the second survey, additional qualitative interviews with returnee women were conducted in selected countries.

Reaching returnees in the country of return for extensive quantitative analysis is difficult. Hence, such surveys are rarely conducted. Generally, no administrative registry data on returnees that could be used for sampling is available in the countries of return. Therefore, the initial identification of returnees often relies on local contacts (such as through self-organizations or aid organizations). Those initial contacts are then used to identify additional interview subjects using snowball sampling (see Baraulina, 2013). This strategy is mostly common in qualitative studies with small case numbers, but it can potentially lead to very selective sampling.¹¹ To improve the reachability, of returnees in this study, the in-person collection of the second instalment of the StarthilfePlus assistance at IOM country offices¹² was used to draw returnees' attention to the survey. The first survey was conducted between February 2018 and August 2019. This was followed by a second telephone survey between October 2020 and January 2021. Those who had already completed

the first survey and agreed to be contacted again were invited to participate in the second survey. With its focus on longer-term reintegration, this study refers to returnees who have participated in both surveys. Data from returnees who participated in the first survey but could not be reached for the second survey, or did not agree to be contacted again, will not be analysed in this study.

At the time of the first interview, an average of eight months had passed since departure from Germany. The shortest period between departure and the first survey was 6 months, and the longest was around 18 months. At the time of the second survey, participants had been living in their country of return for an average of three years. While some respondents were surveyed a second time only two years after their departure, in other cases, almost four years had passed.¹³

3.1. First survey

In the first research phase from February 2018 to August 2019, IOM and BAMF Research Centre conducted surveys with returnees in 12 different countries.¹⁴ In November 2019, the partners published the results of the first survey under the

¹⁰ The nine sample countries include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

¹¹ On the process for qualitative surveys see, for instance, Baraulina (2013:27f).

¹² Further studies with a larger number of surveyed returnees also often pursue the strategy to recruit interview participants through the IOM country offices. In this regard, see for instance IOM's study (2021a); Koser and Kuschminder (2015); and Strand et al. (2016).

¹³ Accordingly, the elapsed time between the two survey also differs. On average, this is about two years and two months; while some participants were surveyed again after about 14 months, in other exceptional cases, almost three years passed between the surveys.

¹⁴ The 12 sample countries of the first survey were Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ghana, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

title *Assisted Voluntary Return from Germany: Motives and Reintegration* (Schmitt et al., 2019). With interviews mostly taking place within the first year after return, the first survey accordingly focused on return motives, the decision to return, and reintegration in the first orientation phase, as well as the relevance of the StarthilfePlus assistance and return counselling.¹⁵

The first survey was conducted in the 10 countries with the largest number of StarthilfePlus recipients. Additionally, returnees were surveyed in the West African countries of Nigeria and Ghana. All returnees who had reached the age of 18 years by the time of departure – who had left Germany between 1 February 2017 and 31 December 2018 and had collected the second instalment of financial assistance offered through the StarthilfePlus programme – were eligible to participate in the survey. The survey was conducted between 15 February 2018 and 31 August 2019 via an online questionnaire (computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI)), to which participants could respond either at the collection of the second instalment on tablets at the IOM country offices or at a later point in time from home. The questionnaires were designed for independent participant responses. The

absolute majority of the interviews (>96%) were completed at the country offices, at times with the support of trained IOM employees (see Schmitt et al., 2019:21ff.).

A total of 2,068 returnees participated in the first survey.¹⁶ In Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, only relatively few returnees (n is <50) participated in the first survey. Since a statistical analysis of respondents from these countries of return would have been severely limited due to the low number of cases and the expected dropout rate, these countries were not taken into account for the second survey. In the nine remaining return countries, a total of 1,990 returnees participated in the first survey (see Table 1) out of a possible 6,342 eligible StarthilfePlus recipients who could have been surveyed in these countries during the survey time frame. This corresponds to an adjusted return rate of 31 per cent. The highest return rate was achieved in Nigeria (52%) and the lowest in the Russian Federation (20%). Of the 1,990 participants in the first survey, almost half live in Iraq (45%),

¹⁵ The questionnaire can be found in its entirety in the research report on the StarthilfePlus study I by Schmitt et al. (2019:95ff.).

¹⁶ The StarthilfePlus Study I by Schmitt et al. (2019) only included responses to the first survey (n = 1,339) from participants who were surveyed between 15 February 2018 and 25 October 2018 due to time constraints. This includes responses from participants in Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. Due to the initially slow response rate in the Russian Federation until 15 October 2018, returnees in this country of return could not be included in the StarthilfePlus Study I due to the small number of respondents.

Table 1. Countries relevant for the second survey including population and adjusted response rate

Sample country	Number of participants in the first survey	Share of participants in the first survey	Population of the first survey	Adjusted return rate by sample country
Afghanistan	164	8.2%	608	27.0%
Armenia	110	5.5%	477	23.1%
Azerbaijan	122	6.1%	455	26.8%
Georgia	225	11.3%	601	37.4%
Iraq	891	44.8%	2 256	39.5%
Lebanon	86	4.3%	242	35.5%
Nigeria	69	3.5%	133	51.9%
Russian Federation	180	9.0%	919	19.6%
Ukraine	143	7.2%	651	22.0%
Total	1 990	100%	6 342	31.4%

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

while other relatively large contingents can be found in Georgia (11%), the Russian Federation (9%) and Afghanistan (8%).

3.2. Second survey

The second research phase began in January 2020. This phase continued the analysis on the reintegration processes of returnees initiated in the StarthilfePlus Study I. The aim of the StarthilfePlus Study II was to gain a deeper understanding of the longer-term reintegration processes of StarthilfePlus recipients. To this end, a follow-up telephone survey was conducted with participants in the first survey in the nine countries previously mentioned.

3.2.1. Survey instrument

The questionnaire was developed with an eye to longitudinal comparability, on the one hand. Hence, many of the questions are based on the survey instrument used in the initial survey, allowing for the comparison between both points in time regarding certain aspects of reintegration. On the other hand, the indicators for sustainable reintegration developed by the think tank Samuel Hall in the MEASURE project likewise inform the development of the questionnaire (Samuel Hall/IOM, 2017; Samuel Hall, 2017; Majidi and Nozarian, 2019; see also, IOM, 2019a, IOM, 2019b; especially for questions 20, 38–39, 47–49, 51–56, see Annex).

Following the conclusion of StarthilfePlus assistance, returnees no longer have personal appointments at IOM country offices. As such, they could only be reached through telephone surveys (computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI)).¹⁷ Because the interview mode was adapted from an online survey (CAWI) to a telephone survey (CATI), adjustments were made to the length and wording of the questions. The interviews were designed to take approximately 30 minutes to obtain as

many commitments to participate as possible and prevent dropouts during the interviews. As a result, some questions from the first survey had to be removed, and only selected indicators from the Samuel Hall toolkit could be included. Additionally, question formulation had to be changed to make them more understandable in the context of a telephone interview.¹⁸

The questionnaire underwent a technical check, and weaknesses in feedback processes were corrected together with the programmers. IOM offices in the countries of return, which are in close contact with the returnees, verified the translations of the questionnaire produced in Germany¹⁹ and adapted the questions to the parlance of the return context, with which the native-speaking IOM staff is familiar through everyday contact with returnees. The expert knowledge of the IOM country offices proved extremely useful for the translation.²⁰

In line with the central research interests of the StarthilfePlus Study II, the questionnaire is structured into four overarching thematic blocks, with a total of 67 questions (see Annex):²¹

- (a) Use of financial assistance from StarthilfePlus and further assistance needs;
- (b) Household situation;
- (c) Living situation and reintegration in the place of return;
- (d) Intentions to stay or to move onwards.

Due to the longitudinal integrability of the data sets, there was no need to re-inquire about certain socio-demographic data (sex, age), residence in Germany, or the decision to return and the return process.

¹⁷ A face-to-face survey could not be implemented due to the distance between returnee places of residence and the IOM country offices and the significant survey costs associated with that distance. A repeat of the online survey was also not feasible, as many participants did not have the necessary technical equipment or lacked a stable Internet connection at their place of residence.

¹⁸ The calculation of questionnaire length initially followed the scheme developed by Liebau et al. (2019), then the response time of each question was tested.

¹⁹ The interviews were translated into the most important languages of communication and the national languages of the places of return. Specifically, these were English, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Dari, Pashto, Kurdish, Azeri, Georgian and Armenian.

²⁰ The authors' gratitude extends to the participating IOM country offices that were involved in the research process at different stages.

²¹ The scaling was in many cases reversed for the analysis.

3.2.2. Sampling

Participants in the StarthilfePlus Study I in the nine countries of return were contacted for the second survey. Only those participants who had expressed a willingness to participate in an additional survey and provided the necessary telephone contact details were contacted. Overall, 1,767 of the 1,990 participants in the first survey in the relevant countries (89%) expressed willingness to be interviewed again.

Almost half of the participants in the sample returned to Iraq (approximately 49%). Returnees to Nigeria and Lebanon, however, account for only a small share (<5%) of survey participants (see Table 2).

3.2.3. Survey implementation and response rate

The second survey took place by telephone between October 2020 and January 2021 in nine countries of return an average of three years after return (see Figure 2). Staff from the IOM country offices in the respective countries, whose day-to-day work focuses on return and reintegration, including interviewing activities, conducted the interviews. They were provided with a virtual training session in advance to familiarize them with the specifics of the questionnaire used.

At the beginning of the second survey, the focus was on the reachability of potential study participants. Given the amount of time that had elapsed since the first survey, contact details provided in that

Table 2. Sampling – Second survey

Sample countries	Agreed to the second survey	Share of all that agreed to the second survey
Afghanistan	163	9.2%
Armenia	106	6.0%
Azerbaijan	104	5.9%
Georgia	140	7.9%
Iraq	861	48.7%
Lebanon	45	2.5%
Nigeria	66	3.7%
Russian Federation	154	8.7%
Ukraine	128	7.2%
Total	1 767	100%

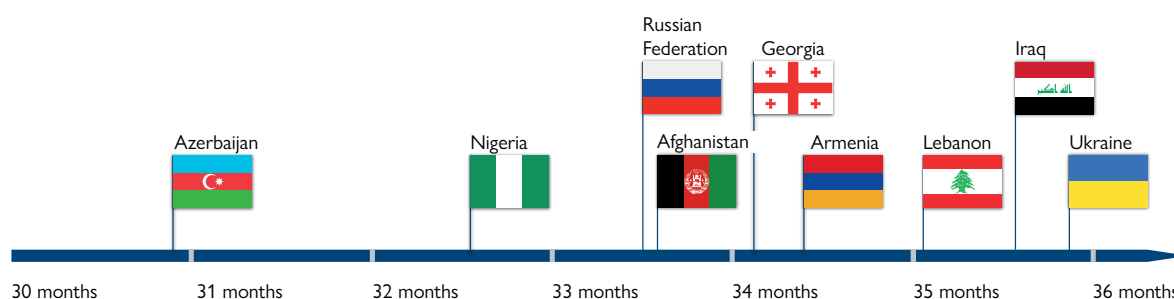
Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 1,990.

survey were perhaps, in some cases, no longer current. Moreover, it was expected that additional challenges such as a lower motivation to participate may arise due to the strained situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, a documentation tool for contact via telephone was used, allowing for the detailed documentation of participants reached. The tool also helped guide the interview process in close cooperation between the interviewees and the research team.²² To ensure participants were informed of the survey before

22 The disposition codes are based on the recommendations of the American Association for Political Opinion Research (2016); see also Gramlich et al., 2019.

Figure 2. Average time between departure and second survey by country, in months



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, unweighted.

being reached by telephone, contact was initially established via text message sent in advance to the persons concerned. Furthermore, all study participants received remunerations equal to about EUR 20 after completion of an entire interview.²³

Of the total of 1,767 potential survey participants, contact could be established with 1,080 – a contact rate²⁴ of 61 per cent (see Table 3). About 40 per cent of the respondents from the first survey could not be reached via the contact details provided, likely because they had changed telephone numbers or telephone providers. Of the 1,080 persons reached, 946 took part in the survey, which corresponds to a cooperation rate of 88 per cent. As such, concerns of a low interest in participating proved unfounded.

Table 3. Response rates – Second survey

	Persons	Quote
Contact rate	1 080	61.1%
Response rate	946	53.5%
Response rate (adjusted)	906	51.3%

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, authors' own depiction.

Note: The quote relates to n = 1,767.

Due to technical problems with data transmission, incorrect or incomplete information, invalid responses and other reasons, the survey data of 40 individuals could not be considered. Overall, responses from 906 interviewed returnees are available, which results in an adjusted response rate of 51 per cent.

However, significant differences in the response rate can be observed between countries (see Table 4). While the response rate to the second survey was over 65 per cent in Lebanon, Armenia and Azerbaijan, it was particularly low in Afghanistan, at 29 per cent.

Table 4. Response to second survey and number of persons in the analysis data set by country

Sample country	Number of participants in the second survey	Adjusted response rate
Afghanistan	47	28.8%
Armenia	70	65.0%
Azerbaijan	50	48.1%
Georgia	93	66.4%
Iraq	460	53.4%
Lebanon	34	75.6%
Nigeria	30	45.5%
Russian Federation	72	46.8%
Ukraine	50	39.1%
Total	906	51.3%

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, unweighted.

3.2.4. Data structure and weighting

A combined data set of the first and second survey is available for the analyses conducted for the StarthilfePlus Study II. Only data from participants who took part in both surveys is considered. For certain aspects of reintegration, a longitudinal comparison between the two surveys is thus possible. The data set compiled in the first survey also contains administrative data from the application process and the administration of the StarthilfePlus programme. This data includes sociodemographic characteristics, information on residence status in Germany and financial assistance received. As such, the analysis includes process data from the StarthilfePlus programme, survey data from the first survey, and survey data from the second survey (see Figure 3).

²³ On increasing the response rate in surveys through incentives, see Singer and Ye, 2013.

²⁴ All calculated contact rates (outcome rates) are based on the standards of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (2016) (cf. also Liebau et al., 2019). The contact rate was calculated as the ratio of target persons reached to all target persons. The response rate results from the ratio of those participating in the survey to all target persons (including those of all unresolved telephone numbers), while the adjusted response rate sets the target persons included in the analysis data set in relation to all target persons.

To reduce possible bias stemming from a lack of survey participation by some returnees (unit non-response), weighting factors were determined (see Sand and Gabler, 2019; Gabler and Ganninger, 2010). The study population is made up of adult returnees who left Germany in 2017 and 2018 and who collected the second StarthilfePlus instalment. Only this group has taken full advantage of the return assistance made available by the programme and is therefore relevant to the study design. Because all returnees who collected the second grant in the sample countries could potentially participate in the first survey, it is not a random sample. Consequently, design weights are omitted. To reduce bias in the data set due to the over- or underrepresentation of individual countries based on different response rates, a weight adjustment was applied instead (Sand and Gabler, 2019:364ff.).

In addition to the return country, sex and age group (see chapter 4) were used as auxiliary variables for the weight adjustment. Because the data was collected for the StarthilfePlus programme, all combinations of characteristics are available for analysis. By comparing the relative cell frequencies of these characteristics in the population and the present sample, a weighting matrix was first calculated for the data from the first survey. For

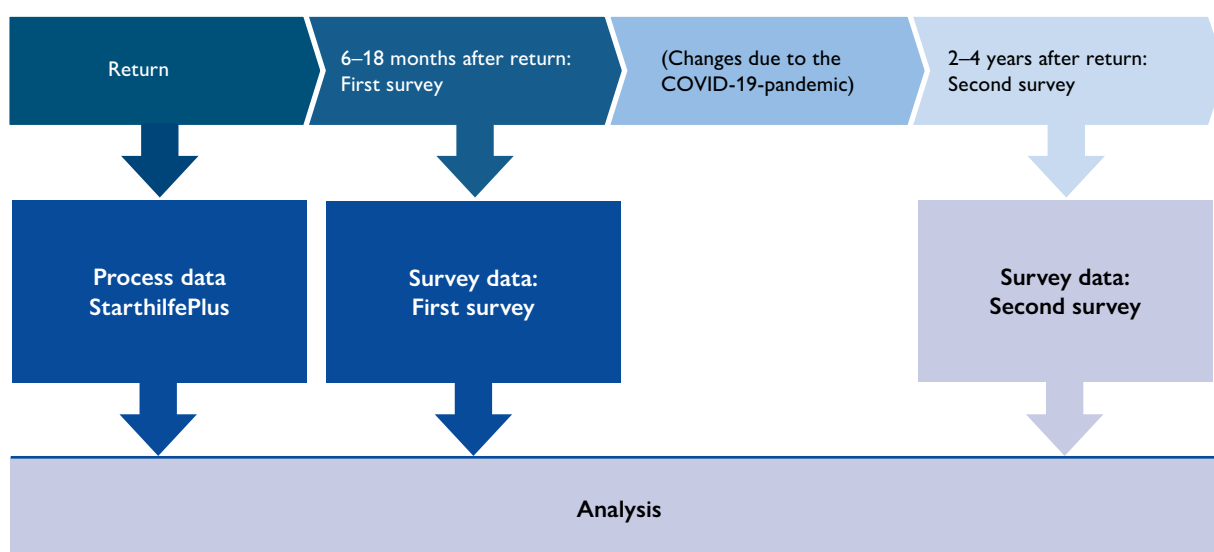
the longitudinal weighting of the second survey, the weights of the first survey were combined with the respective probability of remaining in the second survey. To avoid extreme weighting factors, the final weights were trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles.

Although the questions in the two surveys are only partially congruent, a merged data set emerges, covering the entire return process from the decision to return to long-term reintegration (see Figure 3). An additional time dimension arises from answers to questions pertaining to changes in life situations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some retrospective questions were asked to capture the situation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2.5. Data on the reintegration of women returnees

The reintegration of women remains largely a marginal topic in the academic literature on return migration (see chapter 8). The StarthilfePlus Study II therefore uses a mixed-methods approach. To develop a more in-depth analysis of the reintegration process of women, trained staff from the IOM

Figure 3. Return process and survey data



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, authors' own depiction.

offices²⁵ in Lebanon, Armenia as well as the Arabic-speaking and Kurdish-speaking regions of Iraq each conducted five qualitative interviews with women returnees. Country selection was based on the reintegration status criteria in accordance with the StarthilfePlus Study I (Schmitt et al., 2019), on the number of participants in the study and pragmatic considerations. Armenia and Lebanon represent the extremes of the reintegration status at the time of the first survey (Schmitt et al., 2019:59), and Iraq is the country with almost half of all participants in the first survey (45%). Additionally, in-person interviews were readily feasible in these countries due to the size and the geographical distribution of IOM offices. The women were drawn from the participants pool in the quantitative survey. In the interviews, the women reported on their return experience, the reintegration strategies they follow and the challenges they are faced with.

The semi-structured interviews included open-ended questions on the following topics: return decision, return assistance, reintegration over time, social integration and onward migration intentions. Interviewers were also able to ask follow-up questions, depending on the flow of conversation (see Helfferich, 2011). The interviews were predominantly conducted face to face, either at IOM country offices or in the households of the women interviewed. All 20 interviews were transcribed with the consent of the women interviewed, anonymized and then translated into German. The analysis was conducted by means of a qualitative content analysis with deductive categories consistent with the interview template and inductive subcategories identified therefrom (see Kuckartz, 2016).

The StarthilfePlus Study II gains insights on the reintegration of women through a combination of quantitative and qualitative interview data (see chapter 8). Because this study uses binary sex categories, it does not represent the full range of sexual characteristics, gender identity and/or expression.²⁶

25 Conducting interviews with migrants is a core activity of staff members in the country offices for which they are trained. They are also familiar with living conditions in the country of return and have the necessary cultural understanding, including knowledge of the local language.

26 Hence, gender is not represented. This presents the risk that the complexity of gender differences and their impact on life experience is not depicted (Döring, 2013) and potentially different reintegration experiences and possible vulnerabilities cannot be identified.

3.3. Selectivity and empirical relevance of the StarthilfePlus Study II

The StarthilfePlus Study II is one of the first research projects on return and reintegration in the German context to include a quantitative survey with a relatively high number of returnee respondents.

The study includes returnees in several countries. Additionally, the StarthilfePlus Study II explores the experiences of returnees at two points in time. They were last interviewed between October 2020 and January 2021. Since then, the political and economic circumstances in several sample countries have changed significantly, such as the Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan in August 2021 or the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022. Such rapid changes, which may have influenced the living situation of returnees after January 2021, cannot be depicted in this study. Nevertheless, the results of this study remain valuable. The study can depict the diversity of reintegration conditions and the variation in reintegration experience of returnees. The longitudinal design allows for an analysis of the reintegration process, whereby different groups – divided by sex, age, place of return or other factors – can be considered.

In addition to the academic insights gained on longer-term reintegration, the study provides impulses for reintegration assistance. However, it is not an impact evaluation of the StarthilfePlus programme, since it was not possible to draw on a randomly selected control group.

The results of the StarthilfePlus Study II must be considered in light of some methodological limitations. These stem from the difficulty in reaching returnees for quantitative surveys and the research design thus required. To reach more returnees, the first survey was linked to the institutional procedure of the return programme, StarthilfePlus. This institutional anchoring of the survey results in two key challenges: on the one hand, the risk of socially desirable responses; and on the other hand, the selectivity of participants. The surveying of returnees through IOM raises questions about the social desirability in response behaviour, since those

receiving assistance were surveyed by the assisting institution. Returnees were already in regular contact with the IOM country offices due to their involvement in the StarthilfePlus programme, and IOM as an international organization was familiar to them. The underlying assumption for the telephone surveys and the semi-structured interviews with women returnees was that IOM generally enjoys a base level of trust among returnees due to previous assistance provided. That trust facilitates contact and increases the willingness to participate.²⁷ Especially in the interview setting with women returnees, the expertise of IOM staff in interacting with returnees during a volatile reintegration situation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic was an advantage. On the other hand, however, previous experiences with IOM, the incentives offered and the hope returnees may have had for further assistance could encourage social desirability in the responses of participants. To mitigate this, respondents were explicitly informed that additional assistance services based on participation in the interview were precluded. They were further informed beforehand about the voluntariness and the confidentiality of the information provided.

At the same time, the survey strategy of reaching participants limits the population to returnees who have collected the second StarthilfePlus instalment and have thus made use of the full assistance envisaged by the programme. The institutional framework of the survey therefore restricts the group of people about whom statements can be made. Those returning without StarthilfePlus assistance and those who did not collect the second instalment were not considered for the survey. The study is thus unable to shed light on the reintegration processes of people who have returned without governmental assistance or those who did not make use of the full extent of StarthilfePlus assistance.

Apart from one exception, all returnees who participated in the second survey were living in the same country as they were during the first survey. No information is available on persons who could not be reached for the second survey. There is no information on whether this group is particularly mobile or show other special characteristics. Beyond mobility, there are other possible selection effects, such as regarding the extent of reintegration. Comparing individuals who have only participated in the first survey with those who were reached for the second survey does not show a systematic selection of respondents to the second survey (see Text Box 1). Furthermore, through the weighting of survey data, systematic biases regarding the place of return, sex and age are balanced.

27 The relationship between the implementing IOM office and returnees is not always free from frustration and conflict. There are many possible causes, including ambiguities and complex implementation regulations of different return and reintegration programmes in different countries. Depending on the place of departure, returnees can receive different assistance options at the place of return. Although these programmes are conceived to ensure transparency and avoid corruption, misunderstandings based on expectations about the scope of assistance services, occasionally arise (see Paasche, 2018; Strand et al., 2011).

Text box 1. Possible selectivity of respondents from the second survey

The returnees who participated in both the first and the second survey (group A) do not seem to differ systematically from those who were only reached in the first survey but could not be reached for the second (group B). To gather indications on the possible selectivity of participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II (group A), an evaluation is made on whether the respondents in group A and group B differ according to the information from the first survey (on average eight months after their return) in key areas of their lives – regarding their employment situation, social integration and intentions for onward migration – and their assessment of the StarthilfePlus programme.

The analyses indicate that the StarthilfePlus Study II does indeed reach people with different reintegration statuses at the time of the first survey. It does not appear, however, that a disproportionately high number of better-integrated individuals participated in the second survey. As such, the share of those employed at the time of the first survey (self-employed, temporary or permanent employment) is equal in both groups, at 39 per cent. Group A, whose data is analysed in the StarthilfePlus Study II, were somewhat more satisfied with their relationships with friends and family at the time of the first survey (group A: $m = 4.20$; group B: $m = 4.06$), whereby this small difference is significant.^a

The analysis furthermore shows that the StarthilfePlus Study II reaches both those who wanted to stay at the place of return at the time of the first survey, as well as those who wanted to leave the place of return again. Persons with migration intentions did not drop out of the second survey disproportionately often. For example, the proportions of those who wanted to migrate again under any circumstances, or would only consider regular migration, were almost equal (group A: 28%; group B: 32%). Similarly, about three in four respondents in both groups reported wanting to migrate again sometime in the future.

Almost all respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance from the StarthilfePlus programme approximately eight months after their return (group A: 90%; group B: 87%). In both groups A and B, the proportion of those who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied was only 2 per cent. The average rating also differs only slightly between the groups. Although this difference is significant,^b it is determined by a small deviation in the most positive rating. As such, participants in the first survey did not decline to participate in the second survey due to dissatisfaction with the programme.

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, authors' own text.

Notes: ^aThe scale of the variables used measures from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). A t-test shows that the average assessment differs significantly at a significance level of 1 per cent.

^bA t-test shows a significant difference at a significance level of 5 per cent.

4

Profiles of the respondents

At a glance

- Participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II form a heterogeneous group. The share of returnees by sex and age groups differs in part considerably between the countries of return. Female participants make up 35 per cent of the weighted total sample, ranging from just over 10 per cent in Afghanistan and Nigeria to over 60 per cent in the Russian Federation. A large proportion of interviewees are young and middle-aged male participants, whereas the average age of the female participants interviewed is higher. The average age also differs among sample countries; 33 years in Afghanistan and 48 years in Armenia, for instance.
- In the second survey, returnees in both rural and urban regions were reached. More than half of all respondents live in cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. However, the size of the city or town of residence differs markedly from country to country. In Afghanistan, for instance, about half the respondents live in places with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, whereas more than 80 per cent of respondents in Nigeria live in large cities of over 500,000 inhabitants. Since the first survey, about 1 in 10 respondents has moved within the country.
- A large proportion of respondents departed Germany on their own. However, female study participants departed Germany with their family far more frequently. Around 40 per cent of respondents who were single at the time of departure (the first survey) have since married and started a family. Approximately half the respondents have children under the age of 16.
- On average, respondents live with approximately five other household members. Regardless of marital status, 58 per cent of returnees live in extended households, which include other relatives beyond the immediate family.
- The initial motivations of respondents to migrate to Germany are diverse. Many fled due to fear of violence. Other frequently mentioned reasons were the hope for better medical care, an improved financial situation or a brighter future for their children.
- Proximity to family and friends in the country of return and uncertainty regarding the legal status in Germany are the most commonly mentioned reasons for return. Over half of the interviewed returnees spent less than two years in Germany.

To contextualize the results of the quantitative study, it is important to understand the sociodemographic characteristics and the context of migration of the respondents. Sociodemographic characteristics include sex, age or the country of return, for instance, and also possible additional aspects, such as

the place of residence, marital status, household size and number of children. The context of migration, on the other hand, includes the reasons for the initial migration, the duration of stay in Germany and the motivations for return.

4.1. Sex and age

As previously discussed in the research design chapter, the results of the sample at hand are weighted according to sex, age and place of return. In the weighted sample, a large proportion of the respondents is below the age of 35 (see Table 5), accounting for almost half of the sample. Males between the ages of 35 and 49 account for almost another quarter of the respondents. Not even a fifth of the respondents is above the age of 50. The share of men and women in this age group is about equal, while the share of men is around double that of women in the younger age groups.

Table 5. Sample by age and sex, in per cent

Age groups	Share of females	Share of males	Total share
18 to 34 years	14.3	32.7	47.0
35 to 49 years	12.2	23.2	35.4
50 years and older	8.3	9.4	17.6
Total	34.8	65.2	100

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, weighted.

It should be noted, however, that certain sociodemographic groups account for a large proportion in the weighted sample as well, and that results should not be regarded in isolation from the particularities of the sample. Answers from respondents in Iraq, for instance, account for approximately 40 per cent of the overall results, and more than half of the men (55%) in the under-35 age group live in Iraq.

The sociodemographic characteristics of study participants differ markedly from country to country (see Table 6). Most study participants returned to the country of their nationality (99.6%). In some countries, such as Armenia and Ukraine, the participation rate of women and men in the second survey is comparable. In Nigeria and Afghanistan, on the other hand, mostly men shared their return and reintegration experiences in the context of this study. The weighted age distribution also differs considerably between respondents in different places of return. On average, respondents in Armenia are the oldest ($m = 48.4$), and about half the respondents belong to the over 50 age group. Respondents in Afghanistan are the youngest on average ($m = 32.6$). There, two of three respondents belong to the under-35 age group. In Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria and the Russian Federation, about half the respondents fall into this age group. In Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine, on the other hand, many participants are between 35 and 49 years old.

Table 6. Age and sex distribution by country of return

Sex		Place of return	Age			Mean age	
Female	Male		<35	35–49	50+	Mean	SD
11.0%	89.0%	Afghanistan	66.9%	27.9%	5.2%	32.6	9.4
50.1%	49.9%	Armenia	25.5%	25.4%	49.1%	48.4	15.5
33.6%	66.4%	Azerbaijan	37.0%	45.2%	17.7%	39.5	10.8
34.6%	65.4%	Georgia	42.3%	45.5%	12.2%	38.4	9.7
22.5%	77.5%	Iraq	53.7%	32.6%	13.6%	36.7	11.7
29.6%	70.4%	Lebanon	53.5%	31.8%	14.7%	36.8	12.1
12.4%	87.6%	Nigeria	53.0%	39.8%	7.2%	35.8	7.8
63.5%	36.5%	Russian Federation	48.2%	36.0%	15.8%	37.9	11.3
51.0%	49.0%	Ukraine	29.6%	46.9%	23.5%	41.1	9.6
34.8%	65.2%	Total	47.0%	35.4%	17.6%	38.4	12.0

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: N = 906, weighted. SD = standard deviation.

4.2. Place of residence and mobility

Around 35 per cent of respondents live in large cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, followed by small towns with up to 50,000 inhabitants (see Figure 4a).²⁸ In Iraq, where about half of all respondents live, almost a third say they live in large cities. In Azerbaijan, a particularly large number of returnees live in moderately sized cities, whereas in Armenia, almost half live in small towns. Respondents in Afghanistan live in cities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants comparatively often. In Nigeria, on the other hand, more than 80 per cent live in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (Figure 4b).

The respondent pool for the second survey consisted almost exclusively of people who had stayed in their country of return. Of all the study participants, only one person has moved to another country since the first survey. About 12 per cent (110 persons) have moved within their country of return since the first survey. Among those who have moved within the country, no clear migration pattern can be discerned, with respondents moving from urban to more rural regions and vice versa.

²⁸ Study participants who have moved since the first survey were asked about the size of their new place of residence. Many respondents were not able to make a statement in this regard. For respondents who did not move since the first survey, data from the first survey was used.

4.3. Marital status, household size and children

The marital status of the respondents was collected at two points in time; first, shortly before departure in the framework of IOM processing data, and again during the second survey in the context of the StarthilfePlus Study II (see Table 7). The marital status of respondents does not differ systematically from the population or those who were not surveyed. Around half of the respondents in the second survey were married at the time of departure.

Since departure, the marital status of many returnees who participated in the second survey has changed. Almost 40 per cent of previously single returnees have since married, and about 10 per cent of previously divorced or widowed returnees have remarried.

The share of those married has thus increased since departure from Germany. Approximately three years after return, close to two thirds (62%) of respondents are married. More women than men say they are divorced or widowed. The share of married persons is higher among men than among women. Among the unmarried men, most are single.

Almost two thirds of the respondents who participated in the second survey left Germany alone. This includes almost all respondents who were single at the time of departure, as well as more than a third of those who were married. Yet the share of persons who returned on their own varies markedly depending on the country of

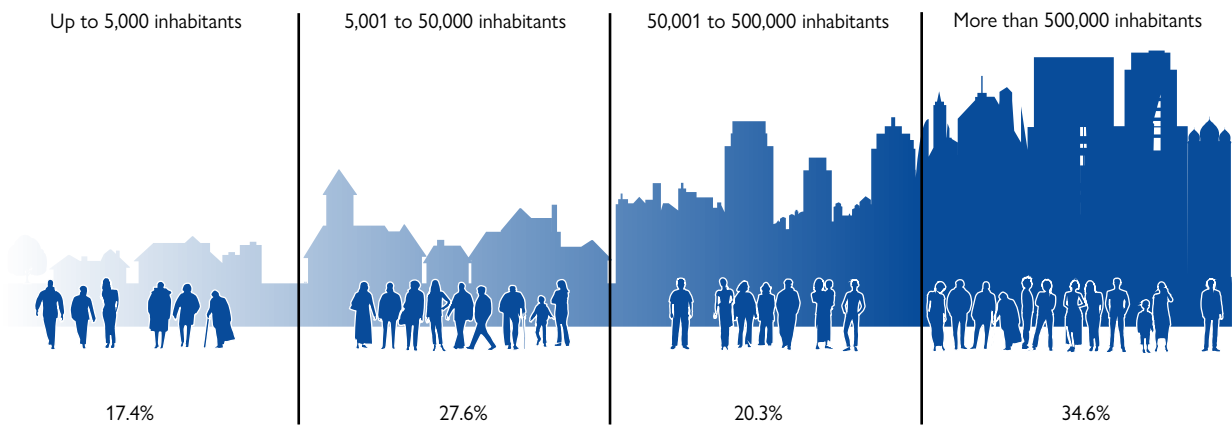
Table 7. Marital status of respondents at the time of the second survey, in per cent

Marital status	Female		Male		Total	
	Before departure	Second survey	Before departure	Second survey	Before departure	Second survey
Single	30.7	13.4	45.8	27.3	40.6	22.4
Married	48.9	52.8	51.9	67.3	50.8	62.2
In a relationship	0.0	1.5	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.3
Divorced	9.1	19.5	0.9	3.1	3.7	8.8
Widowed	9.3	11.5	0.6	1.0	3.6	4.7
Others	2.1	1.3	0.7	0.1	1.2	0.5

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 905, weighted.

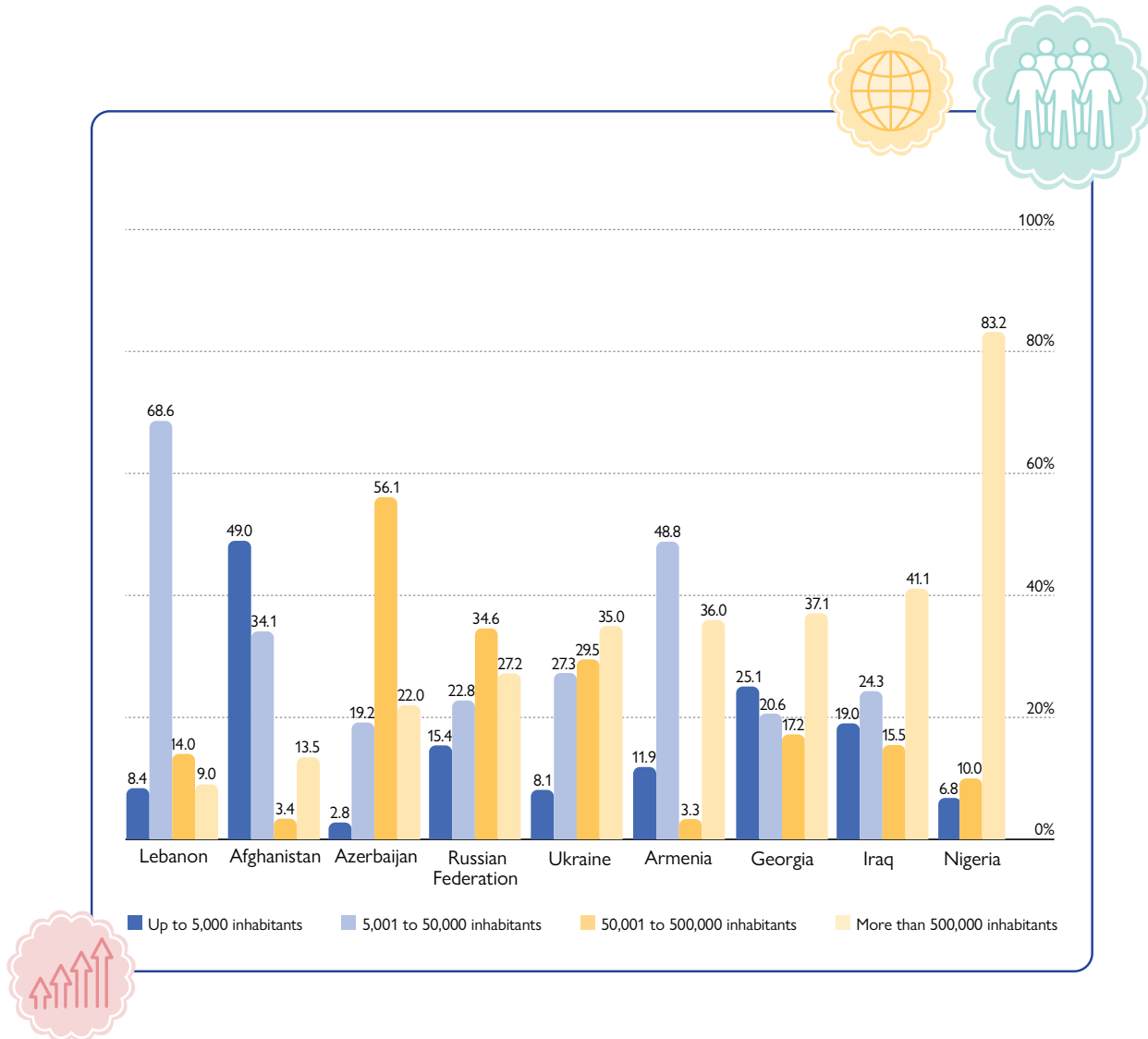
Figure 4a. Respondents by population of the place of residence, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 674, weighted.

Figure 4b. Population of place of residence by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 674, weighted.

return and gender. Respondents returned on their own to Nigeria, Afghanistan and Iraq particularly often, whereas many respondents in the (former) Commonwealth of Independent States returned as a family unit. Female respondents departed with their families much more frequently than male respondents.

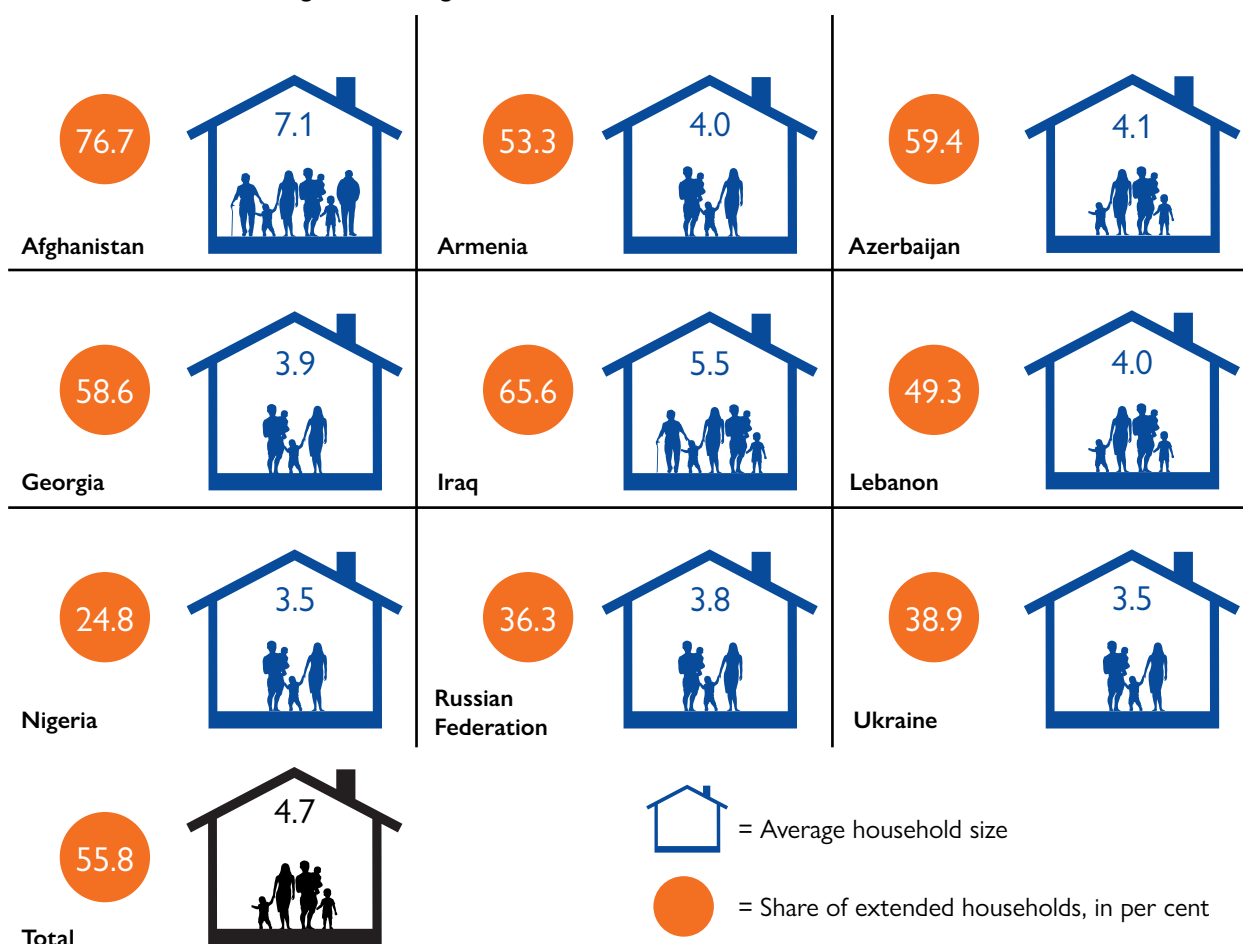
Regardless of marital status and departure modalities – alone or with family – on average, respondents live in a household with five people. With four members, the households of female respondents are, on average, slightly smaller than those of male respondents, with 5.2 persons. This is because many male respondents live in countries, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, in which the average household size of returnees is the largest.

In these countries, the share of extended households is also the highest (see Figure 5). The term *extended household* refers to households that include members beyond the respondent and a partner or children below the age of 16. Overall, about 58 per cent of respondents live in extended households. Respondents without children also often live in extended households.

Almost half of the participants in the second survey have children under the age of 15. Respondents living in Iraq, Azerbaijan and Armenia have relatively few children on average, while those in Afghanistan and the Russian Federation have more. At 56 per cent, the share of those without children is slightly higher among women²⁹ than among men (approximately 51%). Furthermore, women have, on average, fewer children below the age of 16.

29 The women in the sample are on average older than the men.

Figure 5. Average household size and share of extended households



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 896 regarding average household size and n = 895 regarding share of extended household, weighted.

The number within the house relates to the average size of the household in persons, while the orange circle relates to the share of extended households in per cent. For example, the average household size overall is 4.7 and approximately 56 per cent live in extended households.

4.4. Migration context

Every migration story is unique to the individual and is, beyond sociodemographic aspects, influenced by personal experiences, challenges and positive events (Erdal and Oeppen, 2017). To view the reintegration process within this broader context, it is important to consider the migration history and experiences of returnees (Cassarino, 2004; Macková and Harmáček, 2019). As such, within the framework of the first survey, participants were asked about their initial motivations to migrate, the course of their migration – including their stay in Germany – and their reasons for return. To understand the underlying contexts of mobility, respondent’s motivation to migrate to Germany, their duration of stay in Germany and their return motivations will be discussed.

4.4.1. Migration motivations

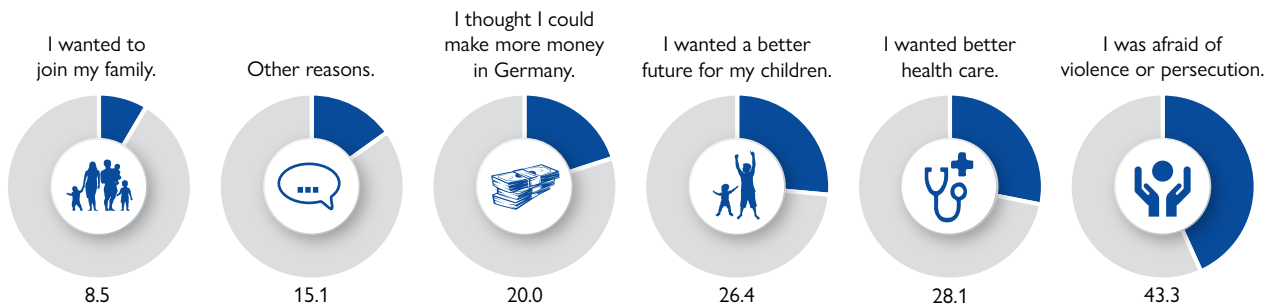
The initial motivations of respondents to migrate to Germany were diverse (see Figure 6). At the time of the first survey, around 43 per cent of respondents

said they fled out of fear of violence or persecution. Other reasons frequently mentioned were the hope for better access to medical care, a better future for their children and improved financial prospects. Respondents indicated different motivations for migration in different countries. Participants in Lebanon and Nigeria migrated to Germany due to the hope for a better financial situation or a better future for their children particularly often. Most respondents in Armenia said they migrated to Germany for better medical care or to join their families. Many respondents in Afghanistan, Iraq and Ukraine fled due to fear of violence.

4.4.2. Duration of stay in Germany

Almost 57 per cent of respondents spent less than two years in Germany (see Figure 7). Slightly more than one third (37%) lived in Germany for two to four years. Only about 6 per cent stayed for more than four years. Those returnees who stayed up to two years in Germany were reached particularly often for the second survey. Returnees who spent more than two years in Germany, by contrast, are

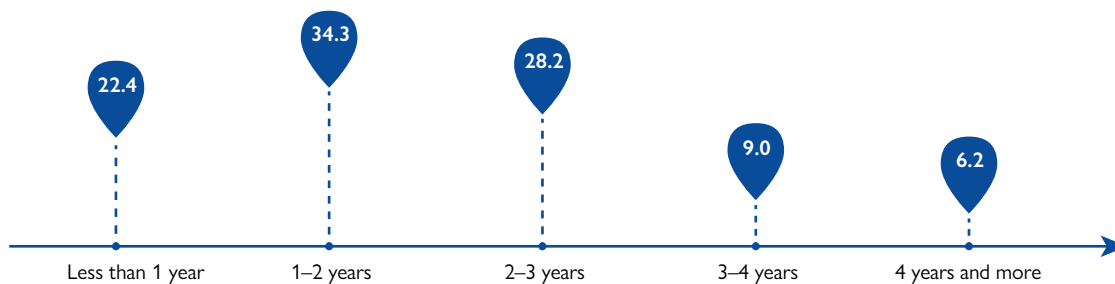
Figure 6. Reasons for migrating to Germany, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, multiple response question.

Note: n = 876, weighted.

Figure 7. Duration of stay in Germany of the respondents, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, weighted.

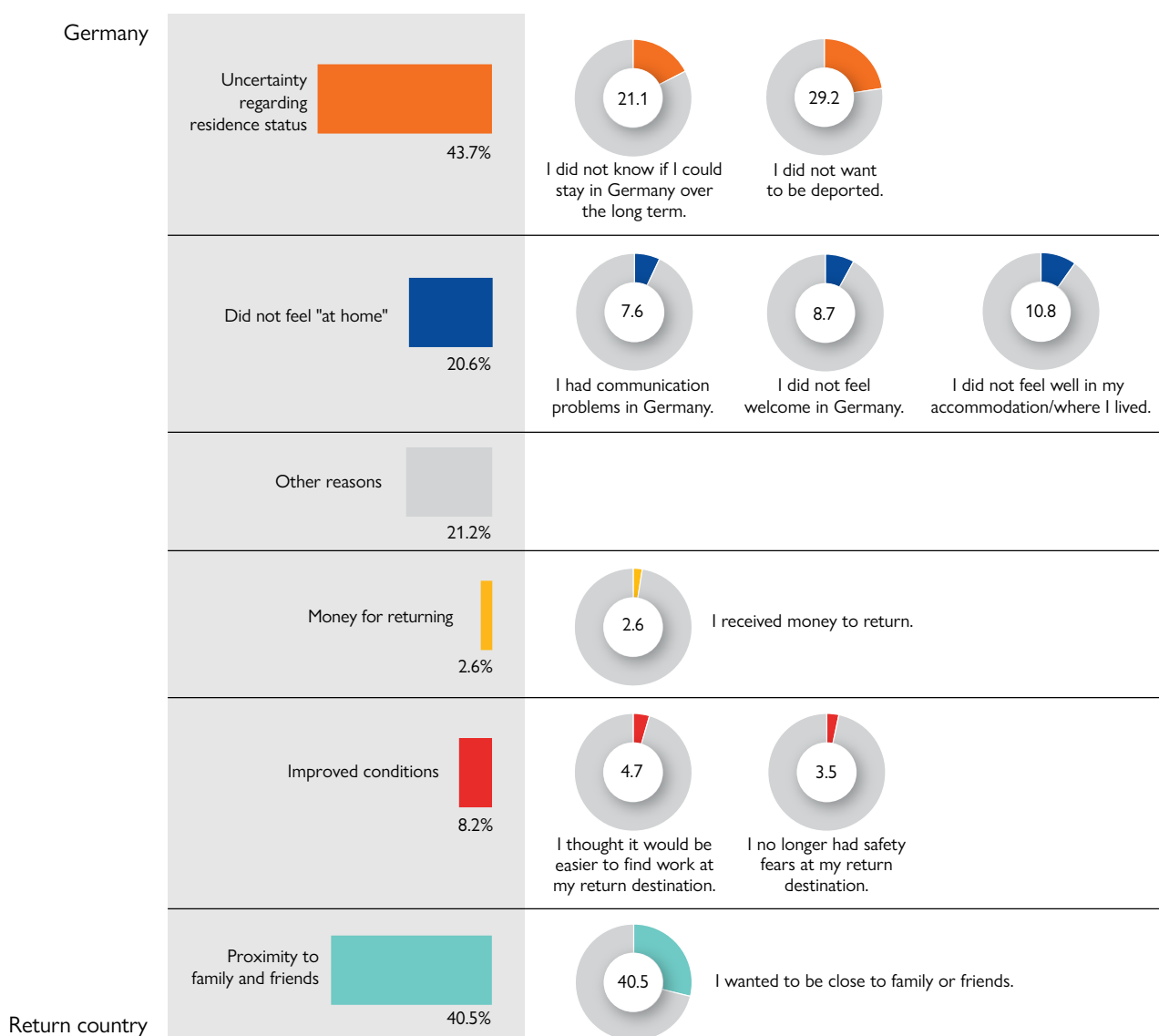
somewhat underrepresented in the second survey relative to the first.

4.4.3. Return motivations

In the first survey, respondents most frequently said their decision was motivated by their uncertain legal status in Germany and their desire to be close to family and friends (see also Schmitt et al., 2019) (see Figure 8). An uncertain legal status was particularly relevant for respondents in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lebanon and Ukraine. Respondents in Nigeria and Afghanistan most frequently mentioned the desire to be close to family and friends. However, the fear of a negative reaction from family and friends

can also impede or delay a return. Returnees in Nigeria particularly expressed having concerns about their decision to return because of possible negative reactions from family and friends. For many respondents, difficulties in everyday life in Germany, such as dissatisfaction with their accommodation, the feeling of not being welcome and communication problems also played a role in their decision to return. Respondents in Lebanon and Iraq mentioned these factors especially frequently. Respondents in Afghanistan more frequently mentioned that return assistance was relevant in their decision. Additionally, at the time of the second survey, they had the perception that the situation in Afghanistan had improved.

Figure 8. Return motives of respondents, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, multiple response question.

Note: n = 884, weighted.

5

Structural reintegration

At a glance

- About three years after return, structural conditions remain a challenge to reintegration for many study participants. These include the security situation, the frequent lack of trust in the police and judiciary, as well as limited access to public and medical services, or their poor quality.
- Participants' satisfaction with the security situation has decreased since the first survey. Assessments of the security situation differs markedly between return countries. Respondents in Lebanon and Afghanistan are particularly often dissatisfied with the security situation.
- More than half the participants said they could not fully rely on the police and justice system. On average, faith in the police and justice system is lowest in Lebanon and Nigeria. Respondents in Armenia and Azerbaijan, however, rate the judiciary more positively.
- Respondents' views of access to public services are relatively evenly divided, with roughly one third rating access as poor, one third as fair and one third as good. Respondents in Nigeria and Lebanon rate access to public services particularly poorly. A significantly higher percentage of returnees living in more rural areas are dissatisfied with access to public services.
- Reported access to medical care has decreased since the first survey. The quality of the services offered is often rated as rather poor. Access and quality, however, differ markedly from country to country. In many cases, respondents also report limited access to specialized psychological support.
- About three quarters of the respondents live in a private flat or house. One in five lives with relatives or friends. Relatively few respondents live in shared housing or other types of accommodation. Overall, the quality of accommodation appears to be acceptable for the respondents. Three out of four rate the housing situation as fair, good or very good.
- Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic does not seem to have limited the respondents' access to all basic services. For example, only a few appear to have had their access to educational institutions affected by the restrictions.

As previously discussed, structural factors are key for sustainable reintegration. The results of Black et al. (2004) show, for instance, that security is one of the most important factors in the decision for or against return. The central role of security remains after return. How security is understood, however, differs among respondents. Thus, Koser and Kuschminder (2015) argue that the feeling of having returned to a safe environment is fundamental for a sustainable return. They further emphasize the importance of a subjective perception of security for reintegration. At the same time, perceptions of political security in the context of reintegration include the reliability of, and trust in, structural and State-related elements such as reliance on the judicial system. Both factors were explored in the StarthilfePlus Study II.

In addition to governmental structures, individual access to, and the quality of goods and services to meet basic needs are also crucial (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo³⁰ and UNHCR, 2003; Arenliu and Weine, 2016). Access to public goods and formal institutions that provide public services or social assistance usually requires the determination or recognition of identity. This is particularly important for school attendance, interactions with government agencies and access to the health-care system. Those without recognized identity documents are therefore often in a particularly precarious situation. Approximately three years after returning, almost all respondents (99.6%) report possession of recognized identification documents.³¹ Lack of identification is thus rarely a barrier to access for respondents. The following section will take a closer look at perceptions of security, reliance on the police and judiciary, access to public services and education, access to medical care, including specialized psychological support, and the housing situation.

5.1. Sense of security

As part of the StarthilfePlus Study, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the security situation in their region on a scale from 1 (very

dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) in both 2018 and 2020 (see Figure 9).³² On average, respondents' satisfaction has decreased slightly since 2018 (2018: $m = 3.48$; 2020: $m = 3.33$). About one third of the respondents assess the situation as unchanged, while almost 40 per cent view the situation as being slightly better or slightly worse than in 2018.³³ For more than a quarter, however, the situation appears to have changed more drastically. Accordingly, 10 per cent of respondents rate the security situation in 2020 as being at least two points better than in 2018, while 16 per cent of participants rate it worse by at least two points.

Women rate the security situation better than men at both points in time (2018 – women: $m = 3.60$, men: $m = 3.41$; 2020 – women: $m = 3.51$, men: $m = 3.23$). Although the average satisfaction with the security situation has also decreased among women over time, this negative change is more pronounced among men.

The assessment of the security situation improved among respondents in only three countries between 2018 and 2020: Georgia, Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Respondents in all other countries report a decrease in their perception of security on average (see Figure 9). This trend, however, differs markedly both between and within countries. The security situation in Lebanon appears particularly challenging for respondents. At both survey times, study participants assess the security situation on average as the worst in Lebanon, and perceptions of security in the country demonstrate the most significant decrease over time. In addition to structural conditions at the respective place of return, subjective perceptions of security could also play a role (Koser and Kuschminder, 2015).

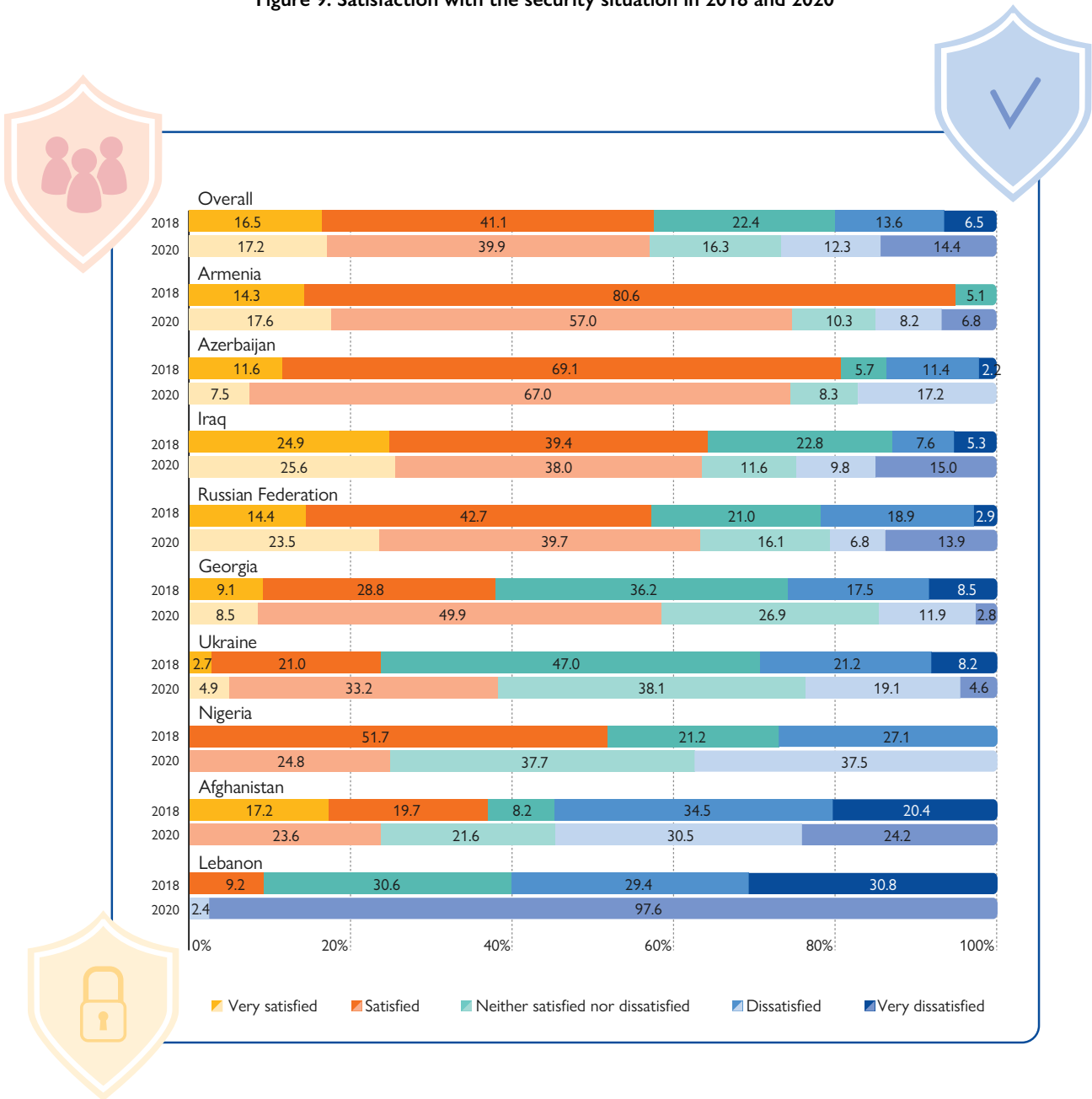
30 References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

31 Because regulations can vary between countries, the types of documents accepted as a recognized identification document were not defined for this question.

32 This report repeatedly compares data from the first and second surveys. The number of valid answers may differ marginally depending on the survey. To be able to depict the reintegration experiences both eight months and three years after return as precisely as possible, and also independently of each other, the report contains the data of all persons who answered the questions at the time of each survey. The divergence from an analysis with only those persons who answered in both surveys is minimal, and after an examination of the values, a general comparability is ensured throughout. To increase readability, the report does not present a parallel analysis of only those persons who responded to both surveys.

33 Change by 1 point on a 5-point Likert scale (+1/-1).

Figure 9. Satisfaction with the security situation in 2018 and 2020



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

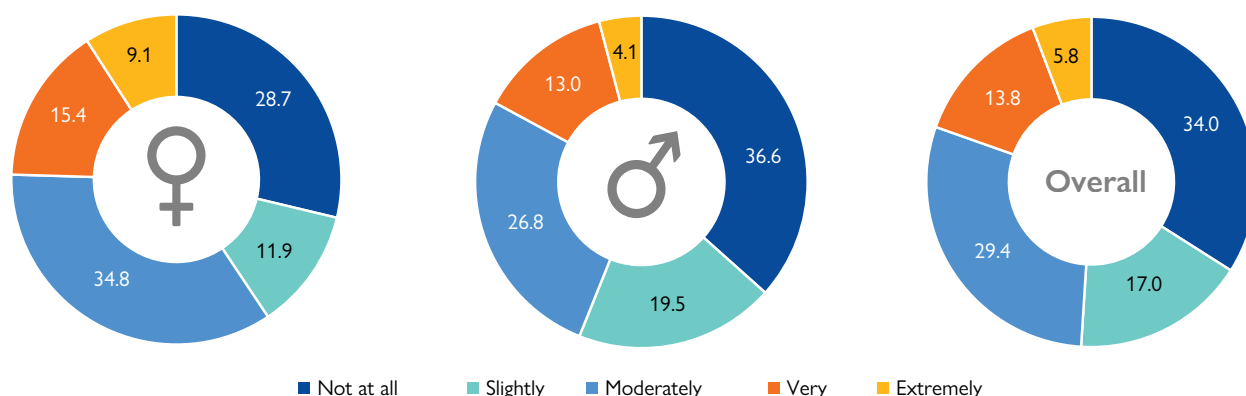
Notes: First survey n = 896; second survey n = 874, weighted. The question differed between the first and the second survey.

5.2. Reliance on police and justice

Alongside assessments of the security situation, reliance on State judicial and security instruments also play an important role for returnees

(Kuschminder, 2017). Overall, survey responses indicate that participants have little trust in the judicial system in their country of return. More than half the respondents (51%) say they do not rely on the police and judiciary at all, or only slightly. While both male and female respondents have little trust in the legal system (see Figure 10a), more men do

Figure 10a. Reliance on the police and justice system by sex, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

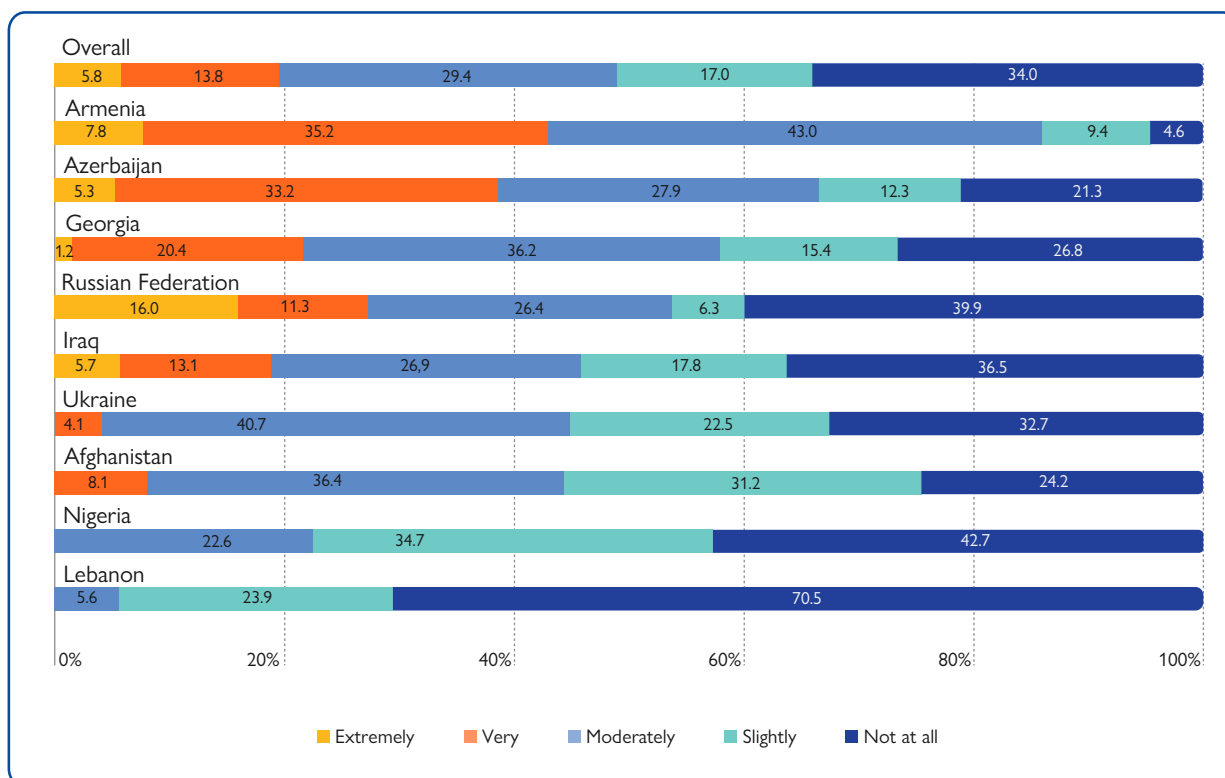
Notes: n = 783, weighted in order of average rating.

not rely in the legal system (37%) or only slightly (20%) than women (29% no trust; 12% slight trust). Overall, not even one fifth of respondents has very much or strong trust in these institutions.

Respondents' reliance on the judicial system differs depending on the country in which they live. Average trust in the police and judiciary is lowest in Lebanon (m = 1.35) and Nigeria (m = 1.80). In both countries, none of the respondents say they have very much or strong trust in the police and

judiciary. In Nigeria, 77 per cent of respondents trust the police and justice system slightly or not at all. In Lebanon, the assessment is worse still. There, almost all respondents express a low level of trust in the legal system and simultaneously rate the security situation as very poor (see Figure 10b). Respondents in Armenia (m = 3.32) and Azerbaijan (m = 2.89), on the other hand, rate the judicial system more positively, with 43 per cent and 39 per cent respectively, saying they have very much or extreme trust in the judiciary.

Figure 10b. Reliance on the policy and justice system by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: n = 783, weighted in order of average rating.

5.3. Access to public services and education

Access to public services can also play a role in the structural integration of returnees and was therefore explored within the framework of the second survey. Since access to public services can differ markedly depending on the country of return and location within the country, the question mainly targets personal assessment of access to public services.

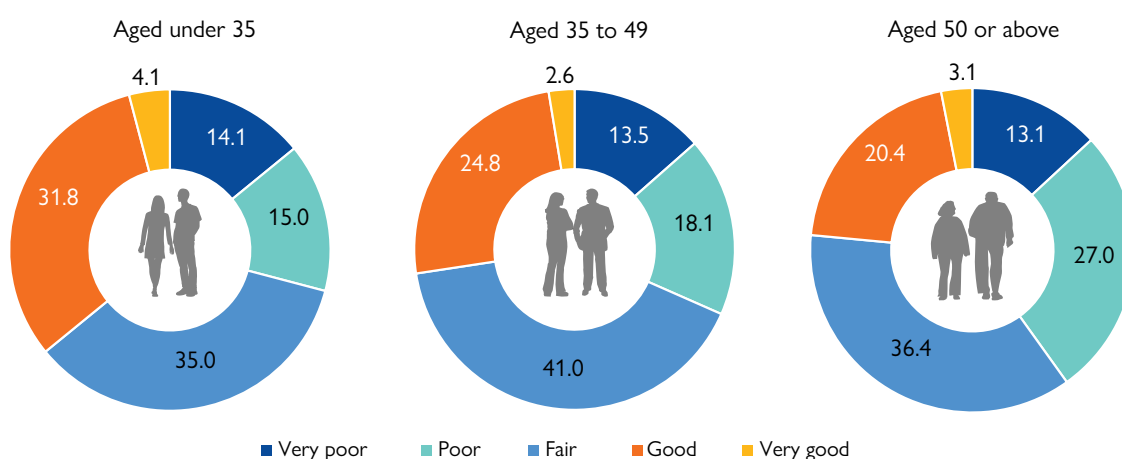
Respondents' assessment of access to public services varies widely and is relatively evenly divided between those saying access is (very) poor (32%), fair (37%) and (very) good (31%). The results also show that respondents over the age of 50 report a comparatively limited access to public services (see Figure 11a). This group most frequently rates their access to public services as poor (27%, compared to 15% of the young, and 18% of the middle-aged respondents).

Respondents rate access to public services very differently across sample countries (see Figure 11b). Reflecting the political and economic situation at

the time of the survey, participants in Lebanon are particularly negative about their access, with 84 per cent rating it as poor or very poor. Access to public services is also challenging in Nigeria, with over half of respondents (58%) rating it as (very) poor. A different picture emerges in Georgia and Afghanistan, with 58 per cent and 67 per cent of respondents respectively, saying they have (very) good access to public services. These different assessments may be influenced by individual needs and the role of public services in the respective local contexts. Respondents living in rural areas and small towns more often report very poor access to public services (15% and 14% respectively) than those living in towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants (6%).

Access to education is also an important dimension of structural reintegration and relevant to the entire migration process. Almost all respondents with school-aged children say that their children attend school (95%) or would attend school without the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 4 per cent of respondents say that none of their children attend school. For about 1 per cent, only some of their school-aged children attend school. Accordingly, access to educational institutions is available to almost all respondents with children.

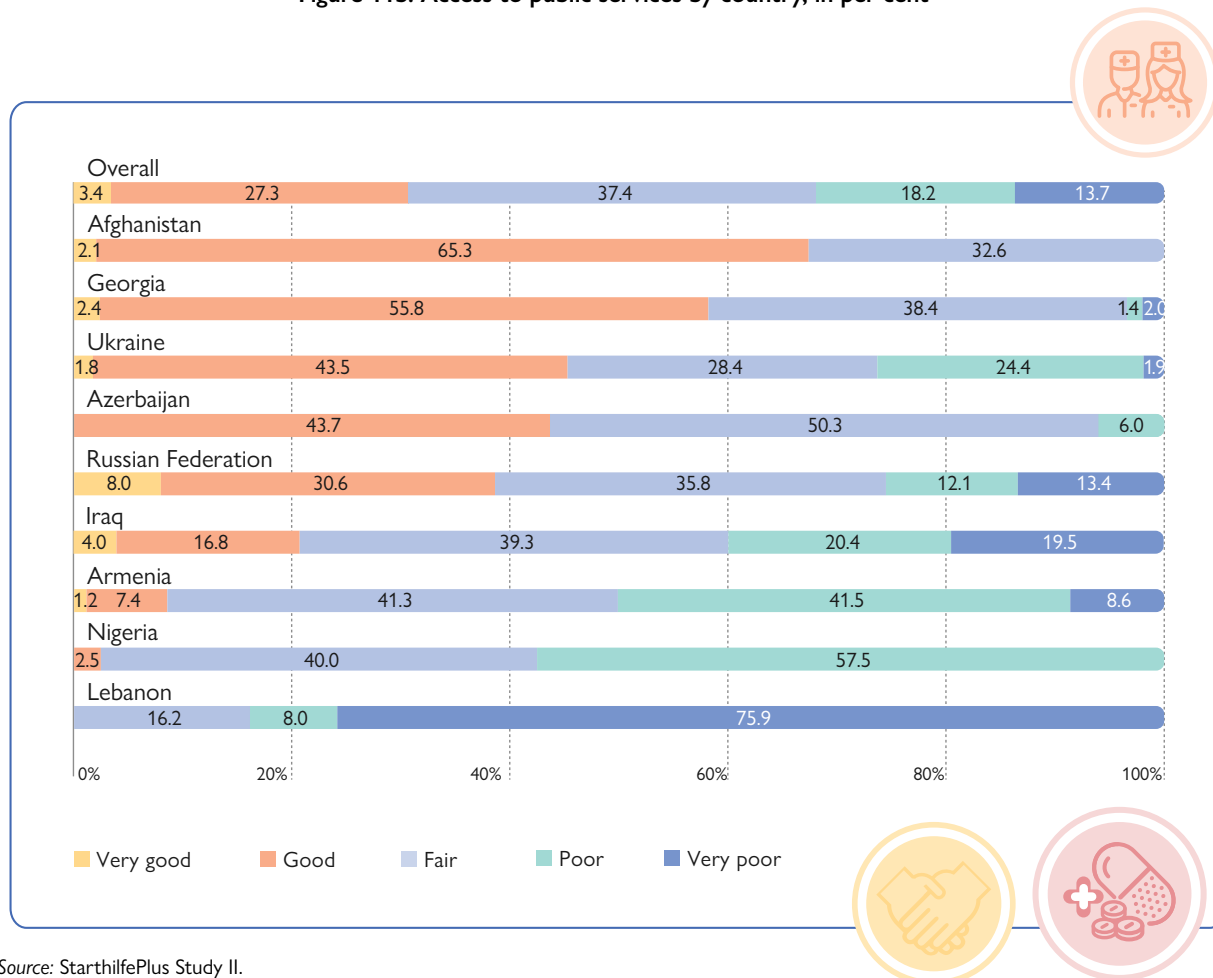
Figure 11a. Access to public services by age, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: n = 882, weighted.

Figure 11b. Access to public services by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: n = 882, weighted.

5.4. Health care

Especially since the outbreak of COVID-19, the resilience of health-care systems and the availability of medical services have been a major focus. After return, the ability to see a doctor when needed, and thus to meet basic health needs, is an important element of the necessary structural (pre)conditions at the local level for sustainable reintegration. This not only includes the availability of doctors but also the costs of medical care and the quality of services provided. However, access to medical care is not sufficient if the care provided is inadequate (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006; Derosé et al., 2007). To investigate these aspects, returnees were asked about the quality of health care in their countries of return along with their personal access. As such, respondents were asked in both 2018 and

2020 whether they would be able to see a doctor should they fall ill. In the second survey, they were additionally asked whether the quality of care was acceptable and whether they had access to specialized psychological support if needed.

Approximately 82 per cent of participants said they can see a doctor in case of illness. An additional 5 per cent say they would normally have access to a doctor but currently do not due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the respondents, 13 per cent say they do not have access to medical care.

On average, respondents report decreased access to medical care since the first survey. While 91 per cent of respondents said they had access to medical care in 2018, that number dropped to 82 per cent in the second survey. The drop in access was particularly strong among women, with

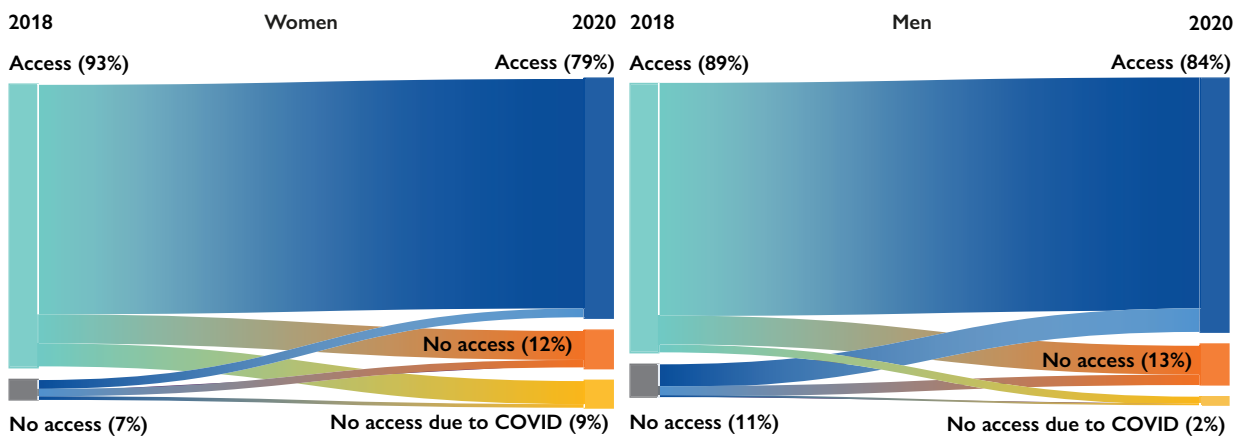
93 per cent reporting access to health care in the first survey and just 79 per cent in the second. Among men, 89 per cent reported access to medical care at the time of the first survey and 84 per cent in the second (see Figure 12). This decline can mainly be ascribed to access being more restricted for women due to the COVID-19 pandemic (9% of women versus 2% of men reported so). The study also makes clear that middle-aged respondents had less access to medical care than other age groups at both points in time and that access has worsened comparatively often for this group.

Access to health-care services differs from country to country. Around 20 per cent of returnees surveyed in Iraq and 35 per cent in Lebanon report not having access to a doctor, regardless of the restrictions imposed in light of COVID-19. By contrast, almost all returnees in Afghanistan, Armenia and the Russian Federation have access to medical care. Individual access to health care has changed over time. In Georgia, Nigeria and the

Russian Federation, several respondents say they did not have access to the health-care system at the time of the first survey, but around three years after returning, they are able to make use of medical care. At the same time, access to medical care has decreased for other respondents who were able to see a doctor in 2018 but were no longer able to do so around three years after returning. In Azerbaijan, Iraq, Lebanon and Nigeria, this applies to more than 15 per cent of the respondents.

Country-specific health-care structures likely play a central role when it comes to access to medical care. In Armenia, for example, health care is provided by the State, and all nationals are entitled to it (IOM, 2020). In Lebanon, nationals can receive health care at affordable prices, but prices depend on health status and on the insurance programme selected (IOM, 2021b). No public health insurance system is available in Iraq, yet all nationals have access to health services and can be treated in private or public facilities. Care in public facilities is often more affordable, but quality is better in private facilities (IOM, 2019c).

Figure 12. Change in access to health care between 2018 and 2020, overall and by sex



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

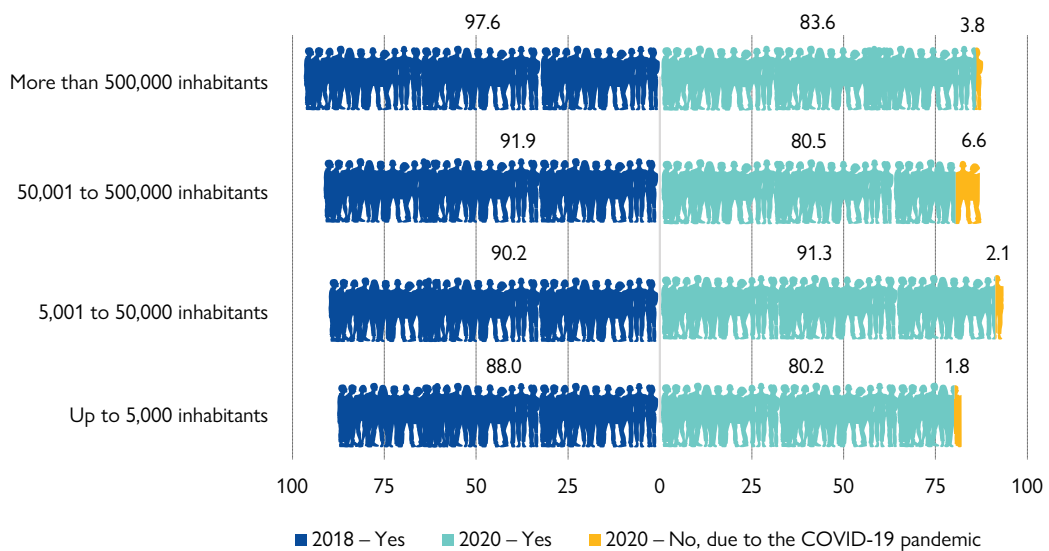
Notes: n = 849, weighted.

Access to health care does not just differ by country, but also by the size of the place of residence (see Figure 13). At 18 per cent, the share of respondents who – regardless of pandemic restrictions – reported a lack of access to a doctor at the time of the second survey is particularly high in places with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. This figure lies at 7 per cent in small towns and at 13 per cent in medium-sized and large cities. At the time of the first survey, the urban–rural divide regarding access to health-care systems was particularly evident, with access improving in parallel with city size. At the time of the first survey, 88 per cent of respondents in rural areas, 90 per cent in small towns, 92 per cent in medium-sized cities and 98 per cent in large cities said they had access to a doctor.

Along with national and local infrastructures, access to health care also appears to be linked to the economic situation of respondents. Those whose income does not cover daily living expenses report more often to not be able to see a doctor.

The second survey also inquires about the quality of health care (see Figure 14), and, as with other structural factors, the assessments vary (m = 2.82 on a 5-point Likert scale). While only 4 per cent of respondents rate medical care as very good, the share of those rating medical care as very poor is, at 13 per cent, considerably higher. Around a quarter of respondents assess available health care to be good (23%), another quarter say it is poor (23%) and 36 per cent see it as fair.

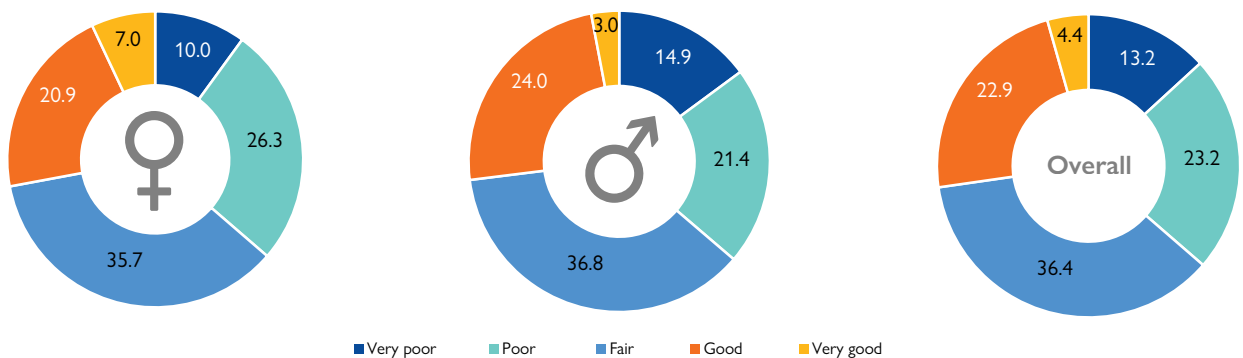
Figure 13. Access to health care in 2018 and 2020 by population of place of residence, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: 2018: n = 659; 2020: n = 647, weighted.

Figure 14. Quality of health care by sex, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: n = 707, weighted.

In some countries, even though most respondents say they have access to medical care, they view the quality as being rather poor. Over a fifth of respondents in Iraq and in Ukraine rate the quality of medical care as very poor, while 12 per cent of those in the Russian Federation also rate medical care as very poor. Still, 14 per cent of respondents in the Russian Federation also rate medical care as very good. Accordingly, it seems that the situation of returnees also differs greatly within countries.

To achieve greater insight into the different aspects of the health-care system and access to social services, participants were additionally asked about access to specialized psychological support. Especially in the context of return migration, mental health and psychological support are important (von Lersner et al., 2008). Study participants were asked about their desire for specialized psychological support, and 24 per cent of respondents said they have the desire for such (n = 862). Those who indicated a desire for specialized psychological support (n = 197) were additionally asked about the extent to which they have access to such services. As such, only respondents with the wish for specialized psychological support were asked about their access (see Annex).

Overall, a large share of those respondents who desire specialized psychological support do not have access to it (78%). This is especially true for women (see chapter 8). Regarding age groups, middle-aged respondents have the best access to psychological

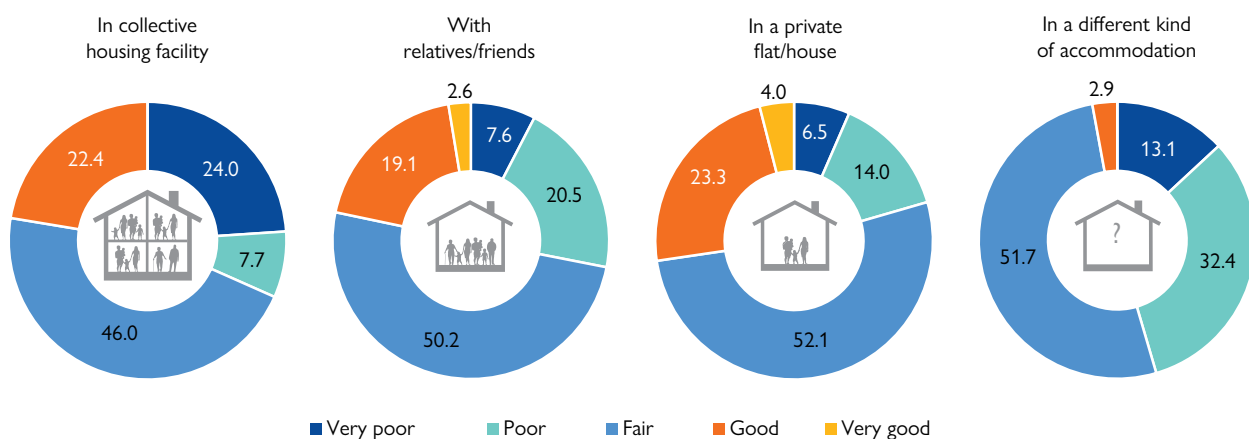
support (28%), while 21 per cent of those under the age of 35 and only 7 per cent of those above the age 50 report having access to specialized psychological support.

5.5. Housing situation

The housing situation of returnees and their families is another indispensable structural component in the reintegration process (Kuschminder, 2017). Approximately three years after returning, most respondents live in a private flat or house (72%). About one fifth lives with relatives and friends (18%). Very few respondents live in shared accommodation (3%) or other living arrangements (7%). There were no differences between men and women in either the housing situation or in accommodation quality.

Young respondents live with relatives and friends somewhat more frequently, and respondents over the age of 35 in a private flat or house. Overall, the quality of accommodation appears to be acceptable for respondents. More than half rate housing conditions as fair and a further 24 per cent as (very) good. Only 16 per cent rate the quality of their housing as poor and another 8 per cent as very poor. The housing situation is rated as particularly good by respondents who live in a private house or flat (see Figure 15). Those living in shared accommodation and other forms of housing, on the other hand, have a negative view of their housing situation.

Figure 15. Type and quality of accommodation, in per cent



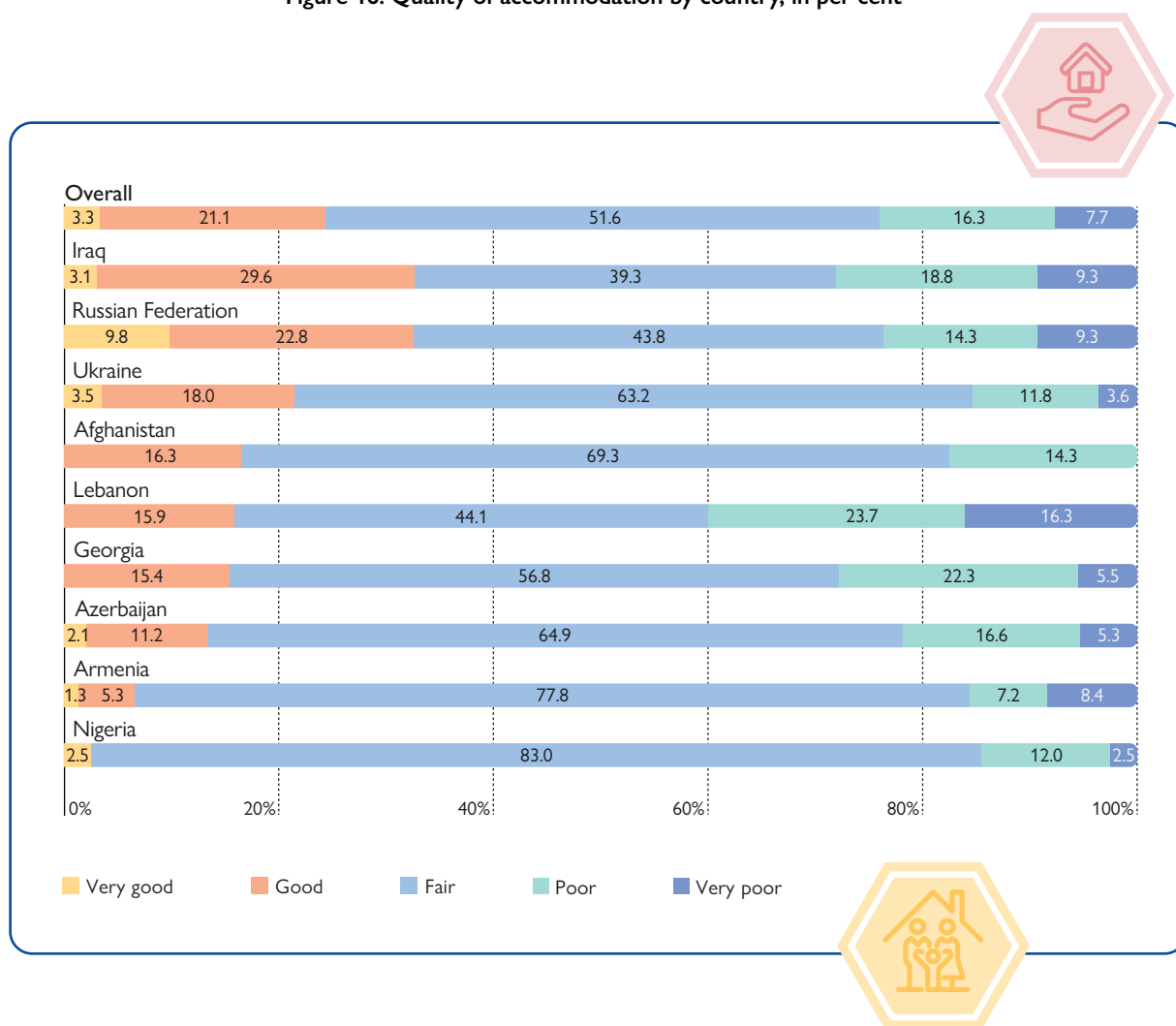
Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: N = 905, weighted.

In Azerbaijan, Georgia, Nigeria and the Russian Federation, more than 80 per cent of respondents live in a private flat, while not even half do in Ukraine. Views of accommodation quality also vary depending on country of return (see Figure 16). Participants in Lebanon rate their housing situations particularly poorly (m = 2.60), with 24 per cent saying they live in poor conditions, and another 16 per cent saying the conditions they live in are very poor. Despite the predominance of private living quarters, study participants in Georgia also take a

poor view of their living situations (m = 2.82). While only 6 per cent report very poor conditions, another 22 per cent report poor conditions. Respondents in Ukraine (m = 3.06) and the Russian Federation (m = 3.10) rate the quality of housing best on average. It is notable, however, that returnees in the Russian Federation have extremely divergent views of their housing conditions, with 10 per cent saying they are very good and 9 per cent saying they are very poor. In Iraq, too, assessments differ significantly between the respondents.

Figure 16. Quality of accommodation by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Notes: N = 906, weighted.

6

Economic reintegration

At a glance

- Approximately three years after return, nearly two thirds of the respondents receive independently generated income from employment, self-employment or agricultural activity. The share of those reporting gainful employment has increased significantly over time. However, many of those who have work say they are looking for other employment opportunities due to poor working conditions or low earnings. About 1 in 10 of those occupied are repeatedly employed for short periods by different employers.
- Although many respondents have independent income at their disposal, three out of four find it difficult to meet their daily needs and that of their financial dependants. Many live in large households in which several people can contribute to the household income. As such, not only the personal income situation of respondents, but also that of the entire household must be considered.
- Some respondents are in a precarious economic situation. About 13 per cent of respondents are entirely reliant on support outside the household or do not generate any income. Overall, two out of three respondents are (very) dissatisfied with their economic situation.
- More than a third of respondents say they are able to borrow money when needed. Women have less access to credit than men. The ability to borrow money depends considerably on the country of return.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the economic situation of the respondents. Around one in three respondents has lost part of their income, and almost all report greater difficulty in meeting everyday expenses since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Returnees can only develop future perspectives in their country of return if they are able to generate a stable income and – also with the support of immediate social networks – they are able to sustain their livelihoods (Koser and Kuschminder, 2015:16; Fransen and Bilgili, 2018:11; Loschmann and Marchand, 2021:1034). The income situation should always be considered within a broader context because the economic dimension extends beyond the individual and includes the immediate household and acquaintances. Sole reliance on external sources of income, such as family and friends not

living in the same household, including support from family members abroad (remittances³⁴), or on State or other social subsidies, may indicate a less sustainable economic reintegration. To take these economic interrelations into account, the following section not only addresses the income

³⁴ *Remittances* include cross-border payments between private persons. In the European Union context, this relates primarily to financial transfers from migrants to beneficiaries in the country of origin (European Migration Network, 2018:290).

and employment situation of respondents and their access to financial credit, but also the ability to maintain livelihoods in the context of household structures. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will also be considered. In conclusion, respondents' personal perceptions of their economic situations will be presented.

6.1. Income situation of respondents

The following section analyses the income situation of respondents approximately three years after return. For this purpose, income sources are surveyed, and respondents are each allocated to one income group. Subsequently, respondents' occupational situation is examined based on their employment situations both about eight months and about three years after their return. Beyond considerations pertaining to the individual, the composition and income structures of the households where respondents live will then be discussed.

6.1.1. Sources of income and respective income groups

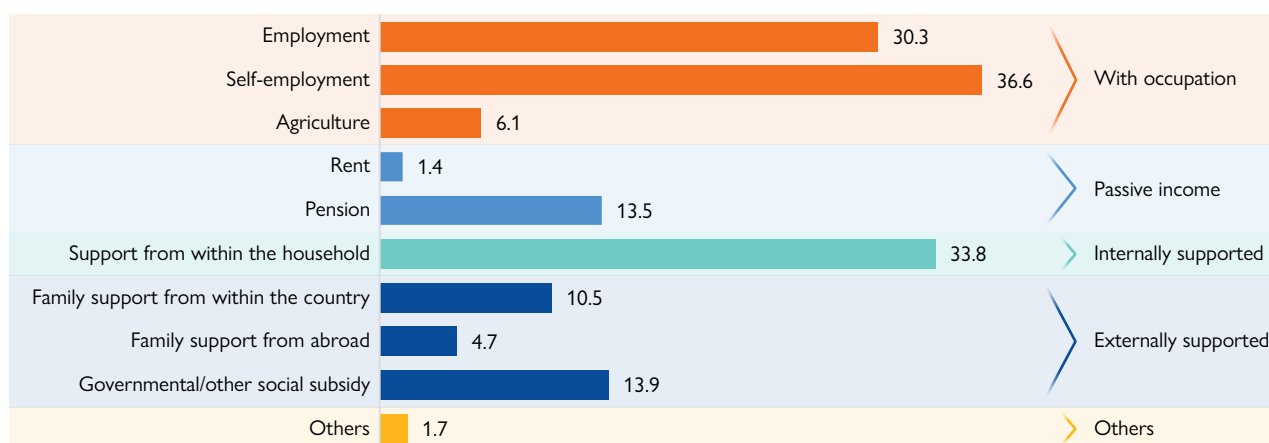
The second survey gathered information regarding income sources (see Figure 17), with respondents able to provide multiple answers.

Many respondents (58%) draw income from a single source, 28 per cent from two sources and 9 per cent say they receive income from three or more sources.³⁵ Frequently mentioned sources of income are self-employment (37%), support from within the household (34%) and income from employment (30%). Additional sources of income include State or other social subsidies (14%), pension (14%) and support from family outside the household, but within the country (11%). Rarely mentioned, by contrast, is income from agriculture (6%), family assistance from abroad (5%) and rent (1%).

Sources of income were categorized for the following analysis, and respondents were each assigned to a corresponding income group (see Table 8). Persons with income from agriculture, employment or self-employment have been assigned to the group of those with occupation (income from work). Persons without occupation who receive income from pensions or rent are assigned to the group of those with passive income (income, but not from work). These two groups – those with occupation and those with passive income – generate income independently and are not necessarily dependent on others for their income.

³⁵ Of the respondents, 6 per cent did not choose any of the available sources of income (60 out of n = 897).

Figure 17. Sources of income with respective income groups, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, multiple response.

Notes: n = 897, weighted.

Table 8. Income groups of respondents, in per cent

Self-generated income	
With occupation	61.9
Rent/pension	9.3
Not self-generated income	
Internally supported	15.3
Externally supported	7.4
No income	
No income	5.6
Other income	
Others	0.6

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 897, weighted.

Returnees relying on household-internal income – from partners or family members living in the same household, for example – belong to the internally supported group. Finally, persons who do not receive income from within the household but receive support from outside the household – from family within or outside the country, or through State or other social subsidies – form the externally supported group.³⁶ Despite being able to report income from various sources, respondents were assigned to only one of the groups.³⁷

Self-generated income

Most respondents (62%) receive income from agricultural activity, employment or self-employment, and thus belong to the group of those with occupation. This share is considerably higher among men (75%) than among women (38%). The vast majority of those with occupation (89%) generate their income from only one of the three occupation forms. One (1) in 10 respondents is also active in a second form of occupation, and 1 in 100 receives income from all three forms of occupation. Receiving income from multiple sources could indicate a diversification of income. This is a known strategy among low-income earners in countries with limited economic stability to increase resilience in the face of economic shocks (Alobo Loison, 2015). Consequently, this could be an indication that a single source of income is not sufficient to make ends meet sustainably.

Self-generated sources of income also include passive income from pensions³⁸ and rent. Of the respondents, 9 per cent generate income from these sources without any income from active occupation. For about half of these respondents, pensions are the only source of income, while income from rent often represents supplemental income only.

Non-self-generated income

Around 15 per cent of all respondents do not generate their own income but are supported by household members. Women are particularly often part of the group of the internally supported (women: 28%; men: 9%).

Of the respondents, 7 per cent do not generate their own income and are not supported by household members. They receive their income exclusively from external sources, such as family within the country or abroad, or from other social subsidies. Furthermore, a large share of this group receives income from just a single external source and may therefore be in a particularly vulnerable economic situation. This group accounts for 6 per cent of all respondents.

³⁶ The few people (1%) who only report income from other sources are not assigned to any of the groups mentioned.

³⁷ Respondents with income from multiple sources were assigned to the group with the highest degree of independence. Accordingly, respondents who receive income from both employment and support from within the household, for instance, were assigned to the group of those with occupation.

³⁸ Some young respondents also report pension as a source of income, especially in Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation. This could be the result of misunderstandings stemming from language differences or translation.

Groups without income

Of the respondents, 6 per cent do not mention any of the specified sources of income. A large share of this group, however, states that other people regularly contribute to their household income. Overall, only 1 per cent of respondents say they are entirely without income or other financial support.³⁹

6.1.2. Employment situation

The following section will take a closer look at the employment situation of respondents aged 18 to under 65. Although around two thirds of the respondents (64%) have an occupation around three years after return, the results show that gainful employment does not necessarily guarantee a durable and satisfactory income.

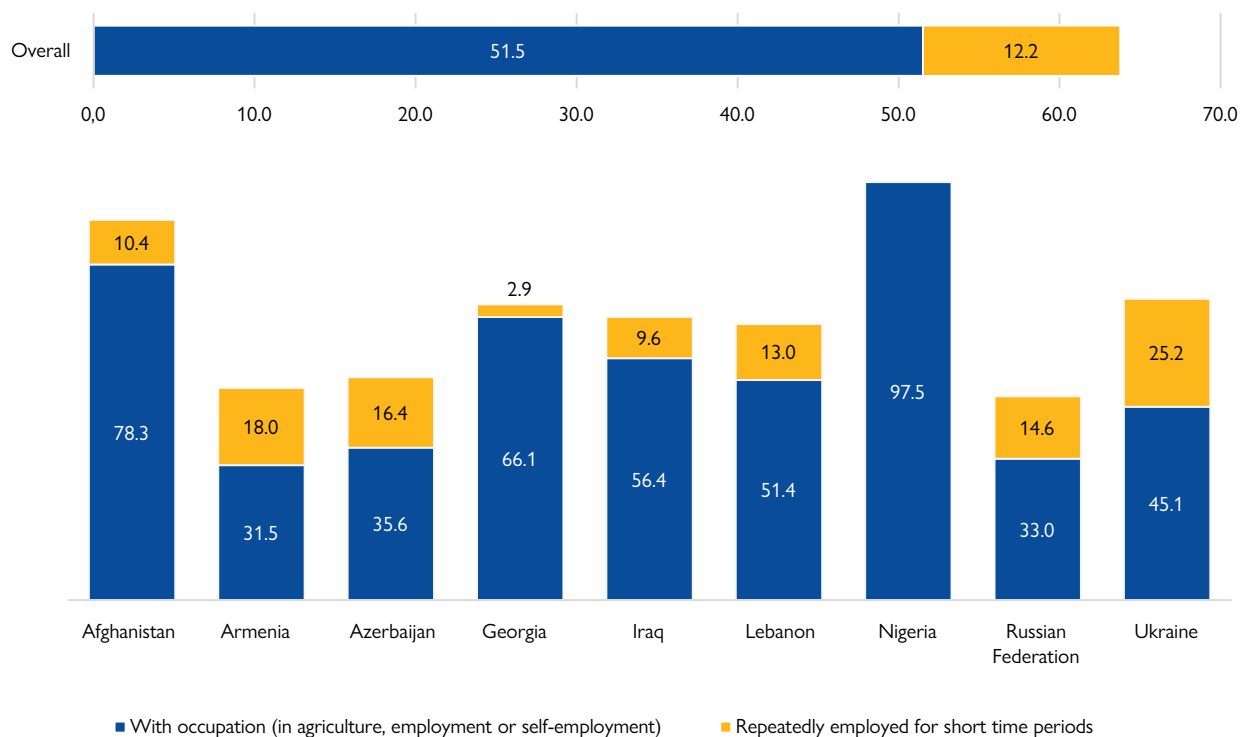
Employment situation at the time of the second survey

The share of respondents who generate income from employment, self-employment or agriculture differs considerably from country to country. In Nigeria, for instance, almost all respondents (98%) are occupied around three years after returning (see Figure 18). In the Russian Federation (48%), Armenia (50%) and Azerbaijan (52%), on the other hand, only about half the respondents are occupied.

Those respondents who reported receiving income from employment were asked about their working arrangements, that is, whether it is permanent or temporary and changing. Around 1 in 10 of those employed (12%) is repeatedly employed on a short-term basis with different employers. Around a quarter of those employed in Ukraine, and around one fifth in Armenia, are repeatedly employed for short periods of time. On the other hand, none of the respondents in Nigeria, and 3 per cent in Georgia report the same.

³⁹ The largest share of these returnees lives in Azerbaijan and Iraq.

Figure 18. Employment situation of respondents below the age of 65 approximately three years after return, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 861, weighted.

Employment situation over time

Overall, the share of those people aged 18 to 65 reporting occupation is higher three years after the return than it was eight months after return (see Figures 18 and 19).⁴⁰ While at the time of the first survey, 41 per cent of study participants between 18 and 65 said that they held an income-generating occupation by the time of the second survey, that share had increased to 64 per cent.⁴¹ This rise can be discerned across all countries. In Georgia and Afghanistan, for instance, where the largest absolute growth was recorded, the share of persons in occupation more than doubled. Among those who already held income-generating occupation around eight months after returning, no clear trend regarding employment can be discerned (n = 306).

40 Because the two surveys questioned respondents differently about their employment situations, only a limited comparison between the two studies is possible. Still, the results indicate changes in economic reintegration over time.

41 In this survey, this includes people who state that they are employed or self-employed full-time, as well as those who intermittently or temporarily work for different employers. In addition, people who are engaged in agriculture also fall into this category.

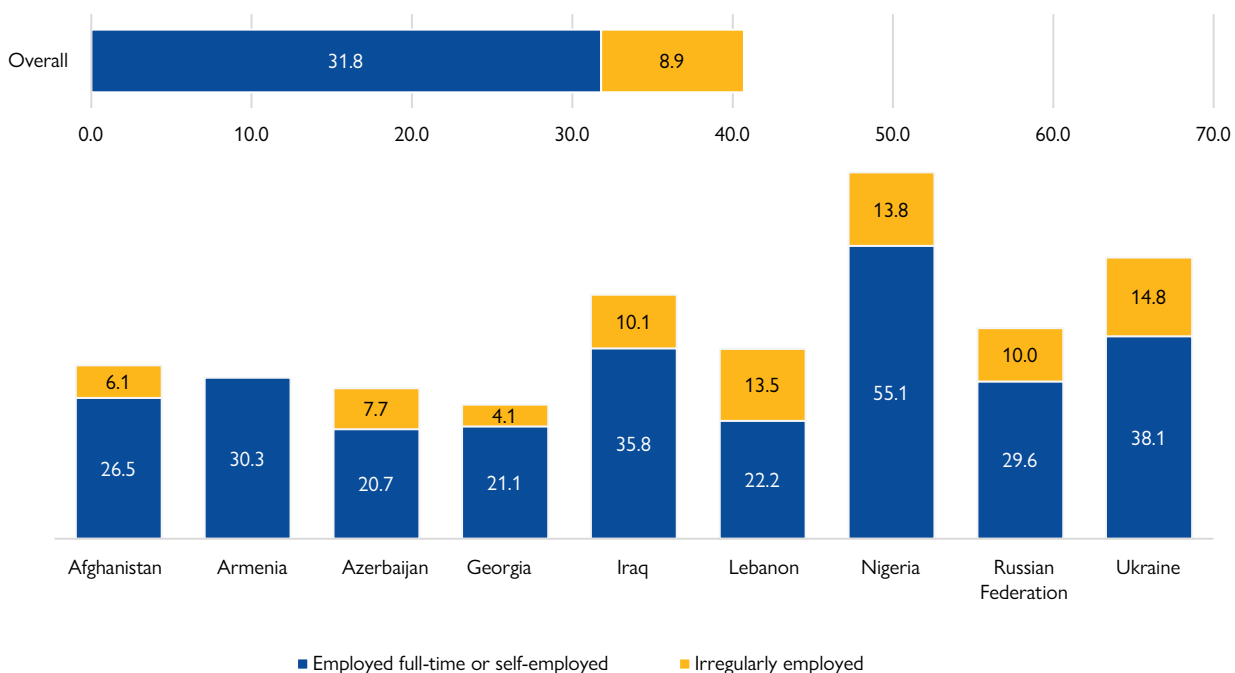
At least 15 per cent⁴² of respondents in this group had a permanent employment relationship and are later only employed temporarily with different employers. Increasingly difficult economic conditions could be a major reason for such results, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.1.3. Search for employment

Even though the number of respondents with income-generating occupation has increased over time, the employment situation of many respondents appears inadequate around three years after return. In the group of those with occupation, 48 per cent say they are currently looking for new employment. The reasons mentioned are as follows: (a) dissatisfaction with the salary they earn (45%); (b) type of current employment (11%); and (c) working conditions (6%). An additional 32 per cent of those who generate income from occupation say

42 Due to differences in questions and filtering between the surveys, it is possible that not all persons employed temporarily or in other forms of insecure employment were recorded in the second survey. Hence, the actual share of respondents in less secure employment situation than in 2018 could be higher.

Figure 19. Employment situation of respondents below the age of 65 approximately eight months after return, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 865, weighted.

they are looking for work because of unemployment. This seemingly contradictory statement can mostly be attributed to returnees who say they generate their income from self-employment and suggests that their income situations are often unstable, and they are looking for more stable employment.

6.1.4. Households: Composition and income structure

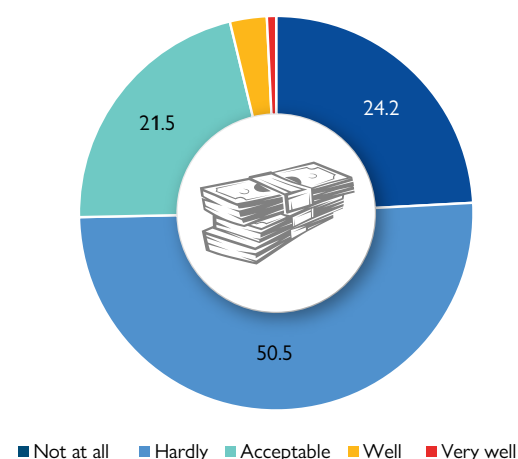
The responses from survey participants illustrate the importance of economic contributions from additional household members for the overall income situation. As highlighted in chapter 4, respondents live with an average of four to five other people ($m = 4.7$) and about half have children under the age of 16. Many respondents (58%) live in extended households in which several people are able to contribute to household income but nevertheless depend on this joint income. Still, household and income structures vary greatly in these extended households. While a significant share of respondents live in households in which most members contribute to income, more than a quarter live in households where the income of a few people must cover the daily living expenses of many others.

To conclude, it is apparent that the income situations of individual respondents differ markedly approximately three years after return, at both the individual and household levels. While many returnees generate income independently, many rely on the income of other people. And individual income situations are highly dependent on household contexts. In some households, for instance, returnees live alone and generate their income independently, while in others, respondents must support many other people with their income. Additionally, economic obligations may extend beyond the respondent's own household and include relatives, friends and neighbours. As such, it is important to consider that returnees who supported their family and relatives during their stay in Germany through remittances may be expected to continue such support after a return (Collier et al., 2011). In light of these considerations, the following section takes a closer look at respondents' ability to cover daily expenses in greater detail.

6.2. Making ends meet

Approximately three years after returning, many returnees have difficulties sustaining their livelihoods with the income they generate. About three quarters of all respondents report that they are completely unable or only barely able to get by on their income (see Figure 20). Another fifth rate their income as acceptable, and only about 4 per cent say that it covers daily expenses (very) well. The overall average on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all; 5 = very well) is 2.06.

Figure 20. Ability to cover daily needs with income approximately three years after return, in per cent

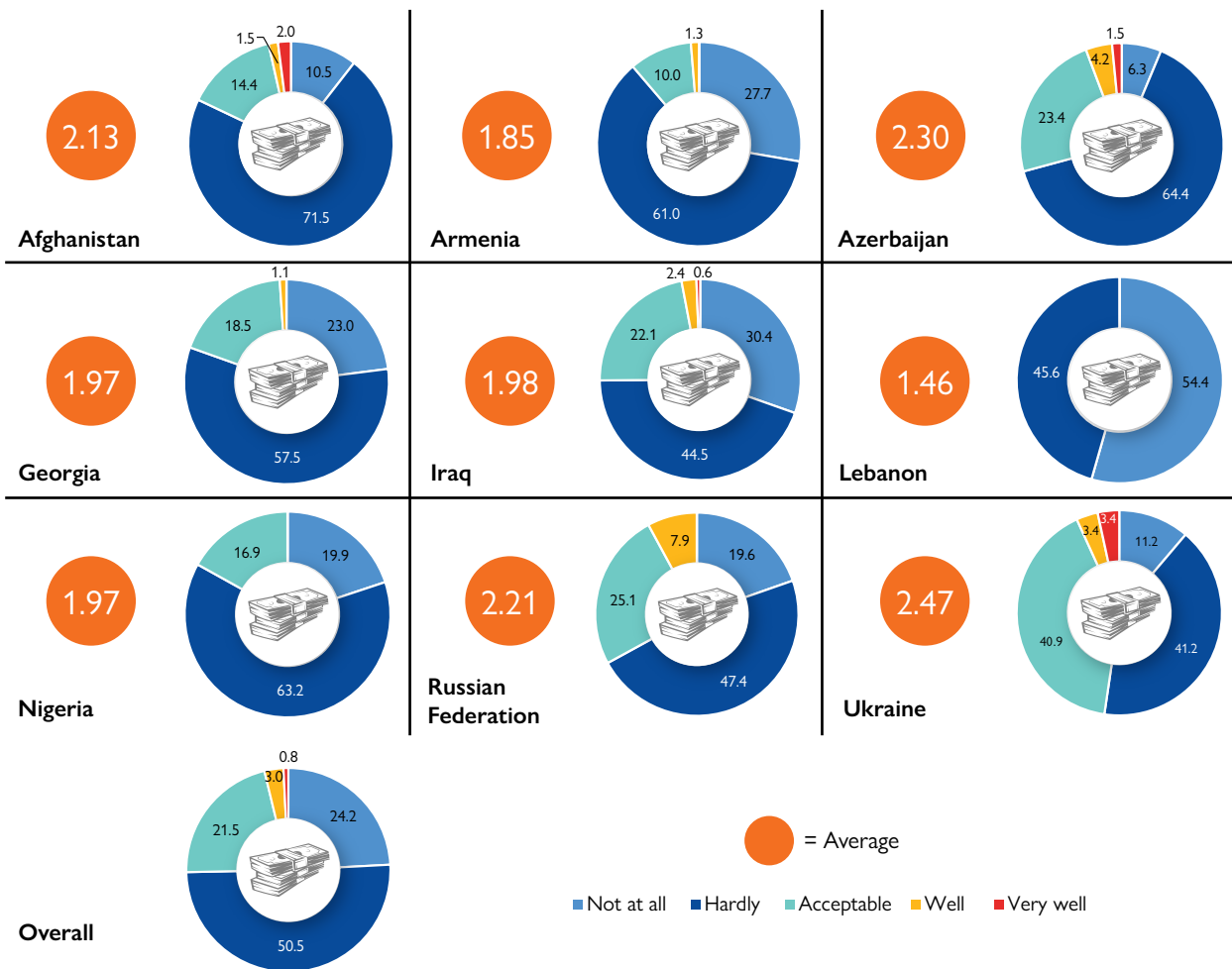


Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: $n = 899$, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

Survey results indicate that the situation is particularly challenging in Lebanon ($m = 1.46$). Respondents in Armenia ($m = 1.85$), Georgia ($m = 1.97$), Nigeria ($m = 1.97$) and Iraq ($m = 1.98$) also appear to be facing economic difficulties. Conversely, returnees in Ukraine ($m = 2.47$), Azerbaijan ($m = 2.30$) and the Russian Federation ($m = 2.21$) are better able to meet their daily needs with the income available to them. In general, it is apparent that meeting daily needs remains a challenge for returnees in all countries, even around three years after return (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Ability to cover daily needs three years after return by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 899, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

6.3. Access to credits and frequency of money lending

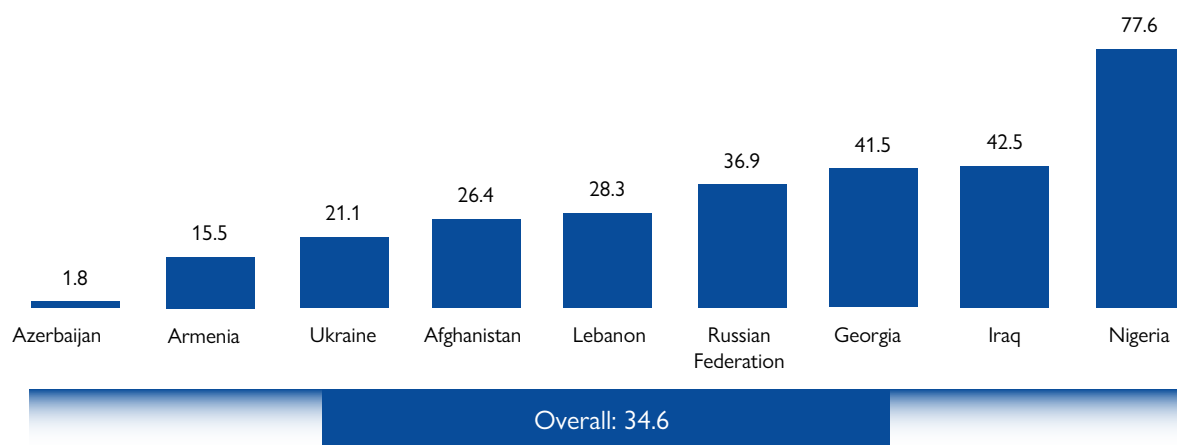
The ability to borrow money to compensate for temporary income shortfalls, or to invest in productive activities such as business establishment and development, can enable long-term economic prospects (see Hazán, 2014; IOM, 2019a). Frequent borrowing can, however, also be an indication of unfavourable economic conditions or spending habits.

Participants were asked about their access to loans and about the frequency with which they borrow money. Overall, more than a third of respondents (35%) say that they can borrow money if necessary.

However, this differs considerably between men and women, with women (26%) having less access to credit than men (39%). Access to loans differs markedly from country to country. While about four in five respondents in Nigeria (78%) report being able to borrow money in case of need, only 2 per cent say they are able to do so in Azerbaijan (see Figure 22).

Respondents who said they had access to loans were further asked about the frequency with which they borrow money. Overall, about two thirds of people in this group borrow money sometimes (37%) or rarely (30%). Another quarter makes use of this option often (13%) or very often (12%). Male and female respondents take out loans with a similar frequency, but no female respondents reported forgoing the option of borrowing money if it was available, while 10 per cent of men said they never

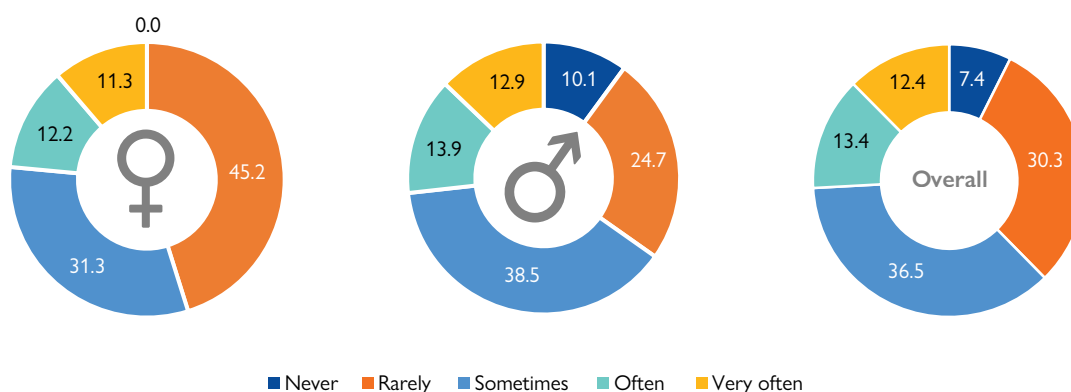
Figure 22. Access to credit by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 836, weighted.

Figure 23. Frequency of borrowing money overall and by sex, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 311, weighted.

borrow money even if they have the option of doing so. Among women, the frequency of borrowing money varies less than among men (see Figure 23).

6.4. The economic situation during the COVID-19 pandemic

The economic situation of survey respondents has been shaped considerably by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, most respondents (71%) say they have lost income since the outbreak of the pandemic, with over half of all respondents (53%) losing more than half of their previous income. Among respondents living with other household

members, 21 per cent say the number of members contributing to household income has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this subgroup (n = 136), more than half say that income from one (54%) or two (7%) household members has been lost since the outbreak of the pandemic. Of the respondents, 26 per cent report their situation has not changed due to the pandemic, while another 14 per cent say that more people are now contributing to household income. In some cases, it is possible that the additional income earners are compensating for the loss of other income in the household due to the pandemic.

The loss of income experienced by many is also reflected in the ability to make ends meet. Four in five respondents (83%) say it has become more difficult to cover their living costs since the outbreak of the pandemic. Among those whose salaries

have decreased because of COVID-19, more than 90 per cent are challenged to make ends meet. Yet even many of those who have not experienced a loss of income report being negatively affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half the respondents (59%) in this group note that meeting daily needs has become more difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This may partly be attributed to the fact that prices for goods and services have increased due to the pandemic, which represents a particular challenge for people in low-income countries (World Bank, 2021:144ff).

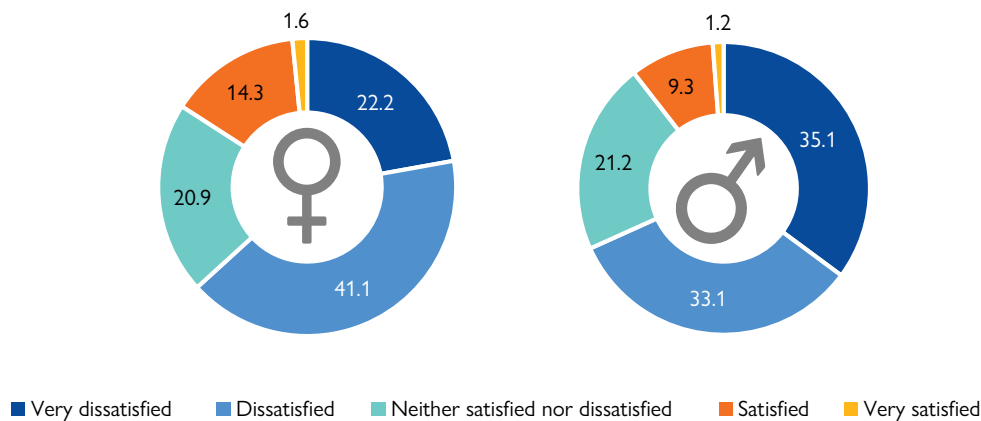
6.5. Satisfaction with one's personal economic situation

The results discussed previously regarding respondents' ability to cover their daily expenses and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are also reflected in their satisfaction with the economic situation in which they find themselves. Around 12 per cent of respondents are (very) satisfied

with their economic situation. The majority of respondents, however, are dissatisfied (36%) or very dissatisfied (31%) (see Figure 24a). On average, women ($m = 2.32$) are more satisfied with their economic situation than men ($m = 2.08$). Thus, women indicate being (very) satisfied more often, while men are more often very dissatisfied with their economic situation. Satisfaction also differs between different age groups, with satisfaction tending to decrease as age increases.

Satisfaction with one's economic situation also differs depending on place of residence. On average, respondents in rural areas ($m = 2.05$) are less satisfied than respondents in more densely populated areas (small towns: $m = 2.17$; medium-sized cities: $m = 2.20$; large cities: $m = 2.23$). Respondents in Lebanon ($m = 1.14$), Nigeria ($m = 1.89$) and Armenia ($m = 1.96$) are, on average, the least satisfied with their economic situations. But even in countries where average assessments of one's economic situation is better, many respondents report being very dissatisfied. These countries include Iraq (42%) and Georgia (30%) (see Figure 24b).

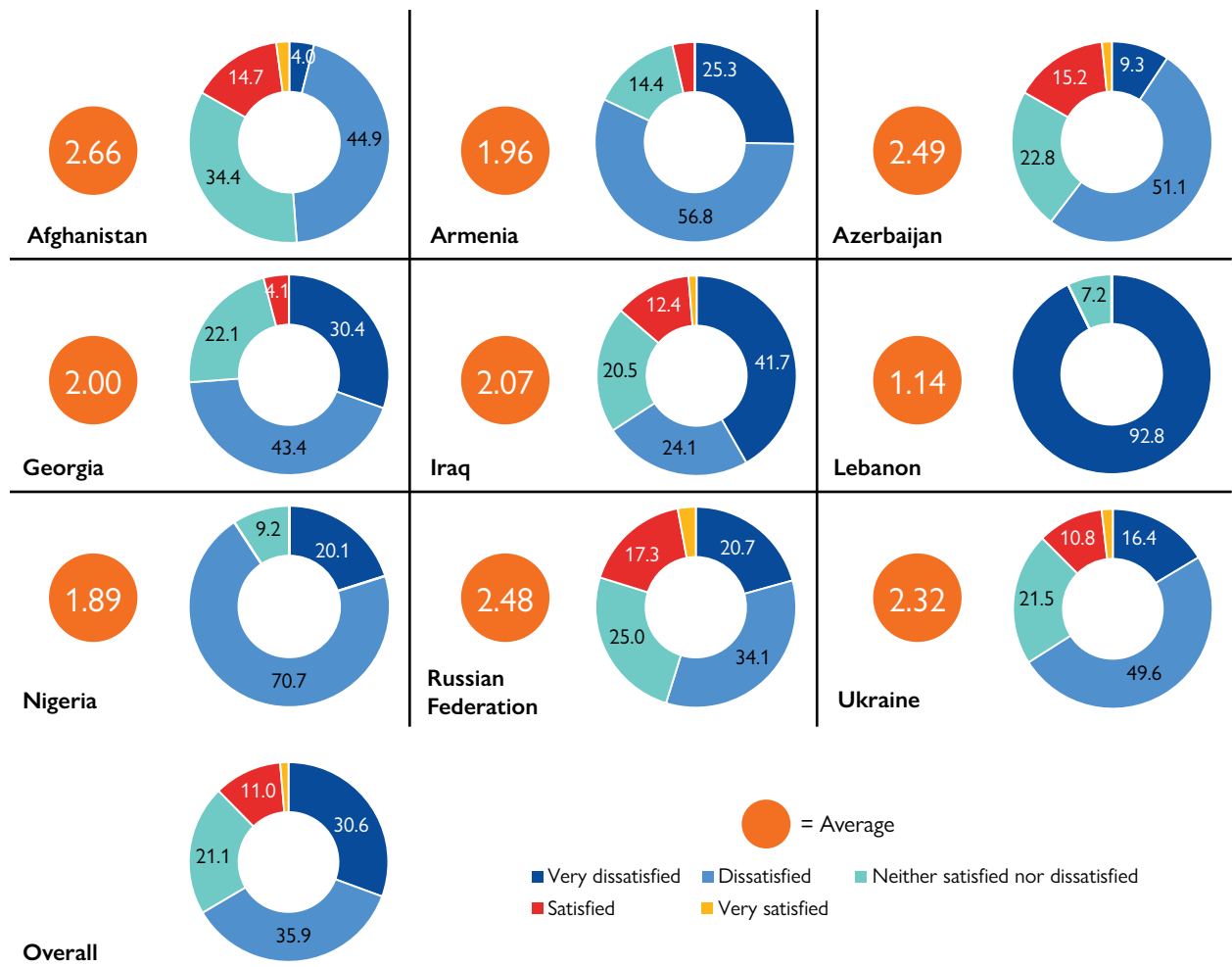
Figure 24a. Satisfaction with the economic situation overall and by sex, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: $n = 874$, weighted.

Figure 24b. Satisfaction with the economic situation by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 874, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

7

Psychosocial reintegration

At a glance

- Most returnees are very satisfied with their social relationships. Overall, satisfaction has increased over time, especially in relation to family and friends.
- Despite this generally high level of satisfaction with social relations, about 38 per cent of returnees feel only slightly or not at all part of their local community. In particular, respondents in Armenia and Lebanon rarely feel a sense of belonging.
- Dissatisfaction with the social environment tends to be associated with lower participation in social activities. Overall, women are less involved in social activities than men and were less often invited to celebrations, weddings and other events before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Two in three respondents report they have never or only rarely experienced discrimination, while almost a third regularly experience discrimination. Respondents in Iraq, Lebanon and Nigeria experience discrimination particularly often, while those in Armenia and Azerbaijan hardly ever do. Respondents most frequently experience discrimination because of their return from Germany. Ethnic and gender discrimination are also reported frequently.
- Overall, one in four respondents would like to receive specialized psychological support. Women express a desire for psychological support considerably more often than men, with every third woman returnee interested in receiving professional support in this area and only one in five men.

Family, friends and the community not only play an important role in the decision to return (see chapter 4.4), but also contribute considerably to the reintegration process. On the one hand, successful social integration can provide support and increase well-being and is therefore generally indispensable for sustainable social reintegration (Cassarino, 2004; Filipi et al., 2014). On the other hand, however, discrimination can lead to marginalization, reduced access to opportunities and

resources, limited social participation and feelings of exclusion. These experiences can vary depending on sociodemographic factors and life stage. While access to psychological support was previously discussed (see chapter 5.4), this subchapter takes a closer look at respondents' desires for psychological support. This chapter contributes to a better understanding of the psychosocial dimension of reintegration.

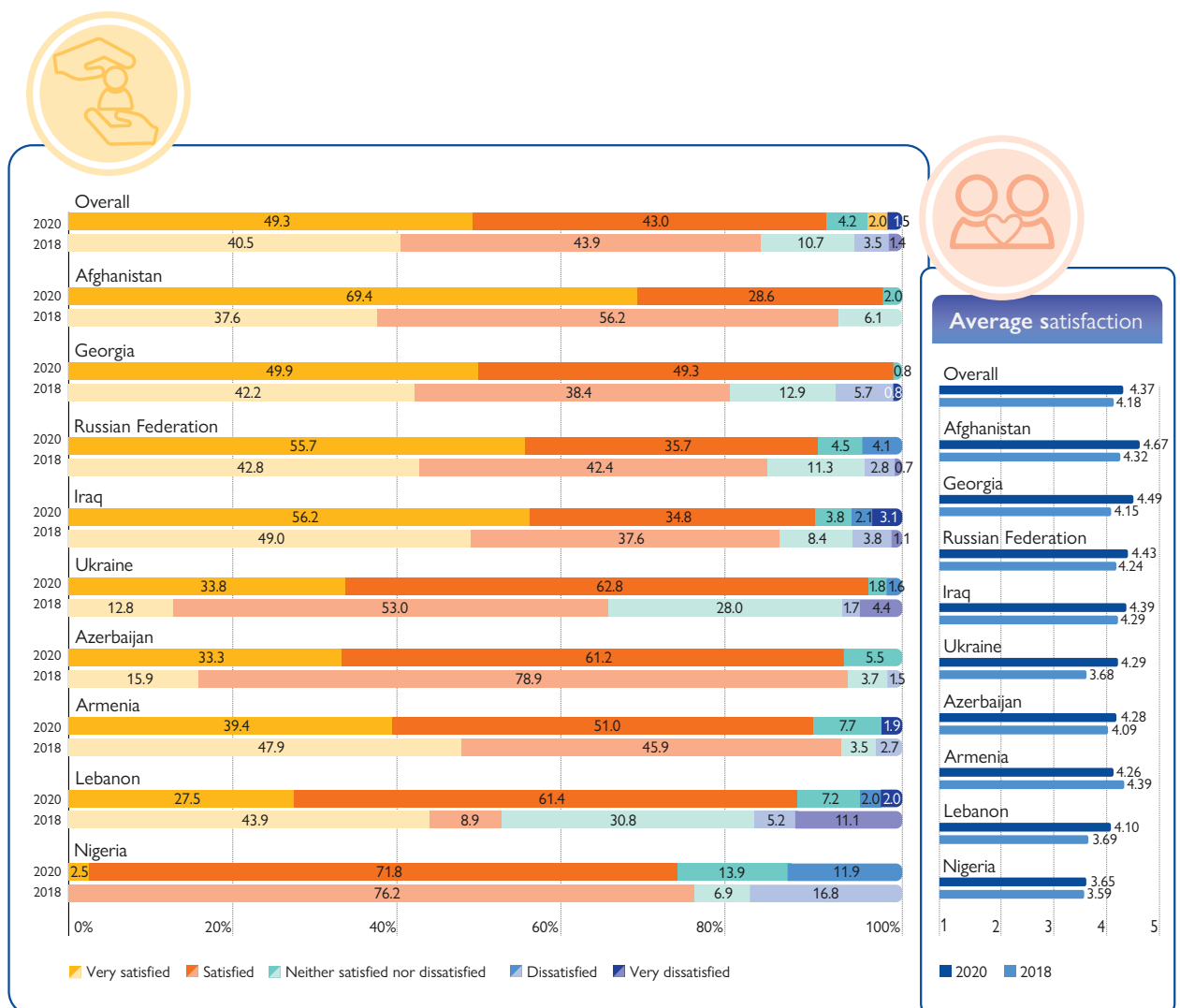
7.1. Satisfaction with relationships with family and friends

When asked about relations with friends and family, 92 per cent of StarthilfePlus Study II participants said they are satisfied or very satisfied three years post return. This finding applies equally to women and men and across all age groups. There are, however, some differences among the respective countries. Relationship satisfaction was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied). Respondents in Afghanistan (m = 4.7) and Georgia (m = 4.5) were more satisfied on average than other respondents (overall m = 4.4).

Respondents in Nigeria (m = 3.6) were among the least satisfied.

While 84 per cent of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships with family and friends in the first survey, that number rose to 92 per cent in the second survey. It can be noted that satisfaction with social and familial relationships has increased in all countries, except Armenia and Nigeria (see Figure 25). Among respondents in Nigeria, satisfaction has remained constant, while respondents in Armenia are less satisfied approximately three years after return, although at 0.1 points, the decline is slight. The largest improvement can be observed in Ukraine. Here, average satisfaction has increased from 3.7 to

Figure 25. Satisfaction with friends and family over time by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

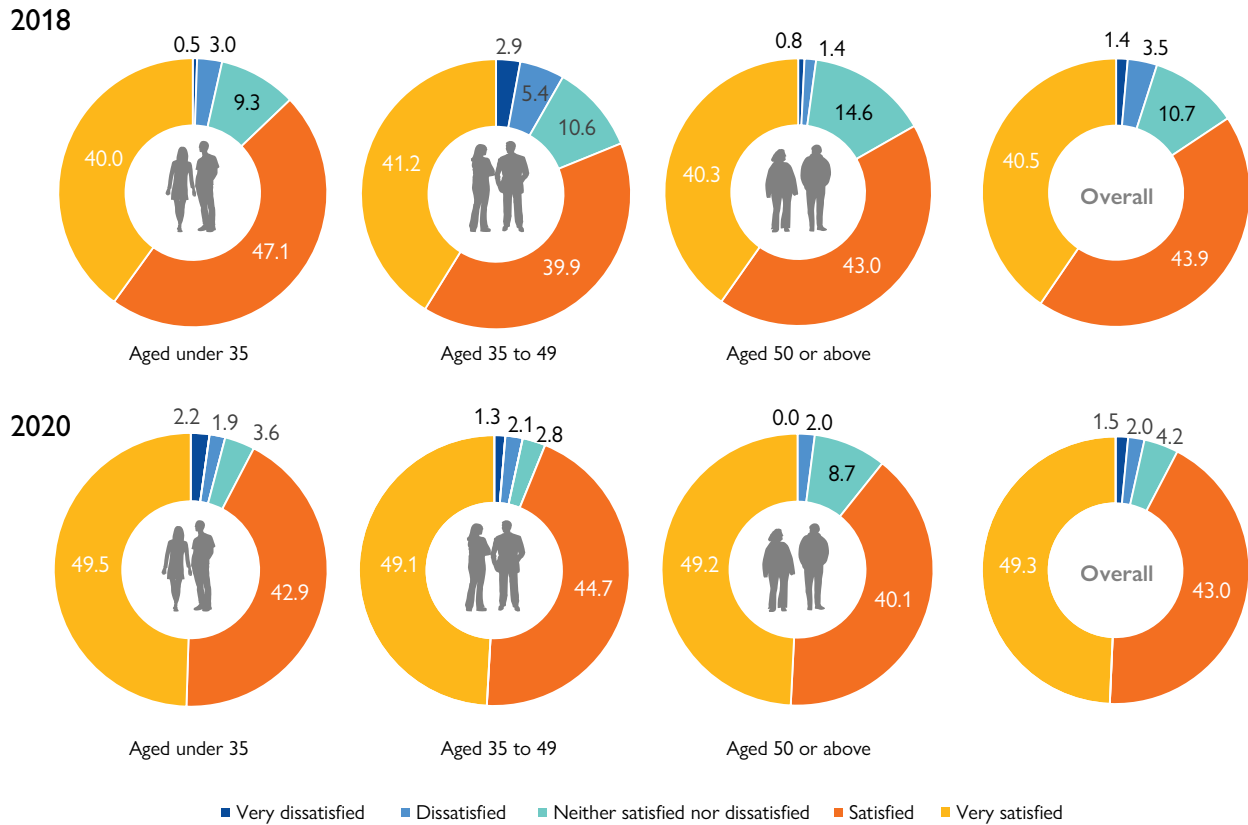
Note: First survey n = 897; second survey n = 900, weighted.

4.3, representing a significant increase in social and familial relationships relative to the other countries.

For both men and women, satisfaction has increased over time (men: 85% to 93%; women: 83% to 91%).

This trend can also be observed across age groups, though the increase is greatest among middle-aged respondents (35 and 49 years). In this age group, the share of satisfied respondents has increased from 81 per cent to 94 per cent (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Satisfaction with friends and family over time by age group, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: First survey n = 897; second survey n = 900, weighted.

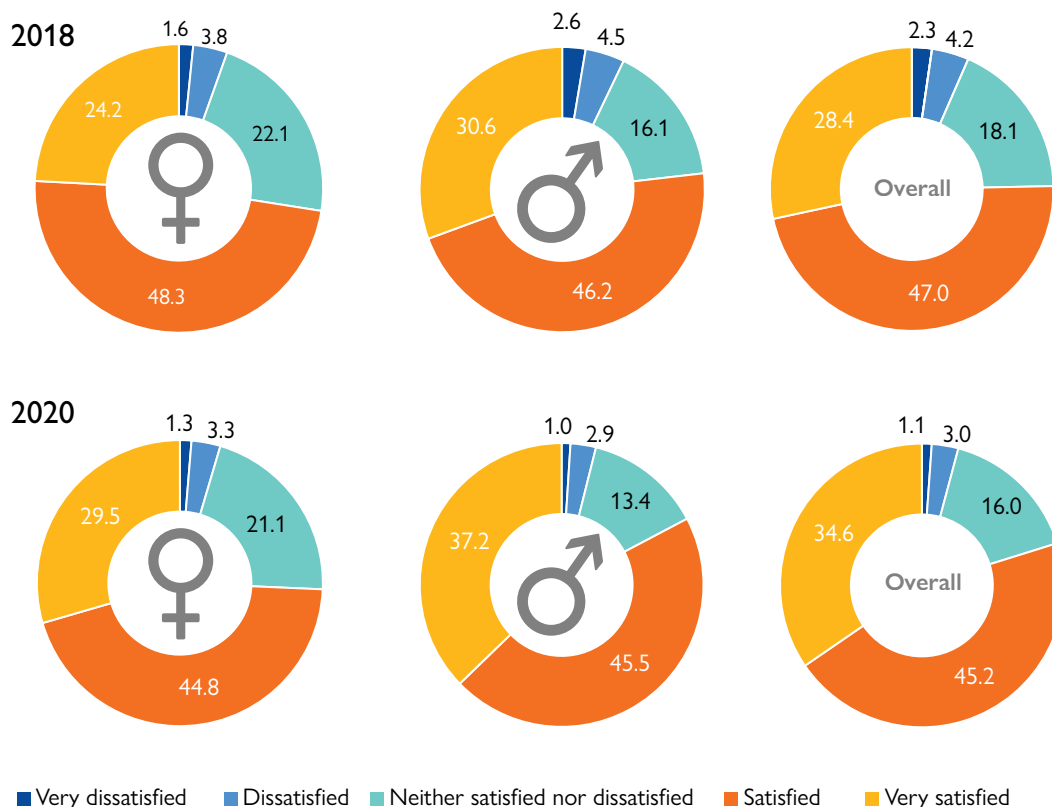
7.2. Satisfaction with relationships in the neighbourhood

Overall, 80 per cent of respondents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships in the neighbourhood where they live (see Figure 27). Here too, an improvement of 5 percentage points can be observed relative to the first survey (75%). The satisfaction among men (83%) is 9 percentage points higher than among women (74%). This higher satisfaction among men was likewise apparent in the first survey, where 77 per cent of men expressed satisfaction against 73 per cent of women. The

difference between men and women has increased slightly over time.

Around 93 per cent of respondents in Azerbaijan and 90 per cent of respondents in Afghanistan say they are satisfied or very satisfied with relationships in their neighbourhood, a far higher share than in other countries, such as Lebanon (38%) and Ukraine (69%). In the first survey, Lebanon (35%) and Ukraine (49%) also produced the lowest levels of satisfaction, with Azerbaijan (89%) and Armenia (98%) at the opposite end of the scale. Relative to the results from the first survey, the share of respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood relations has increased in all countries except the Russian Federation and

Figure 27. Satisfaction with relations in the neighbourhood over time by sex, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: First survey n = 893; second survey n = 868, weighted.

Armenia. On average, the share of those expressing satisfaction has increased marginally in all countries, while the largest increases can be noted in Ukraine (from 49% to 69%) and Afghanistan (from 80% to 90%). The proportion of respondents satisfied with their relations in the neighbourhood has remained constant in the Russian Federation (74%) and has decreased by 18 percentage points in Armenia, though at 80 per cent, satisfaction remains relatively high.

7.3. Social participation

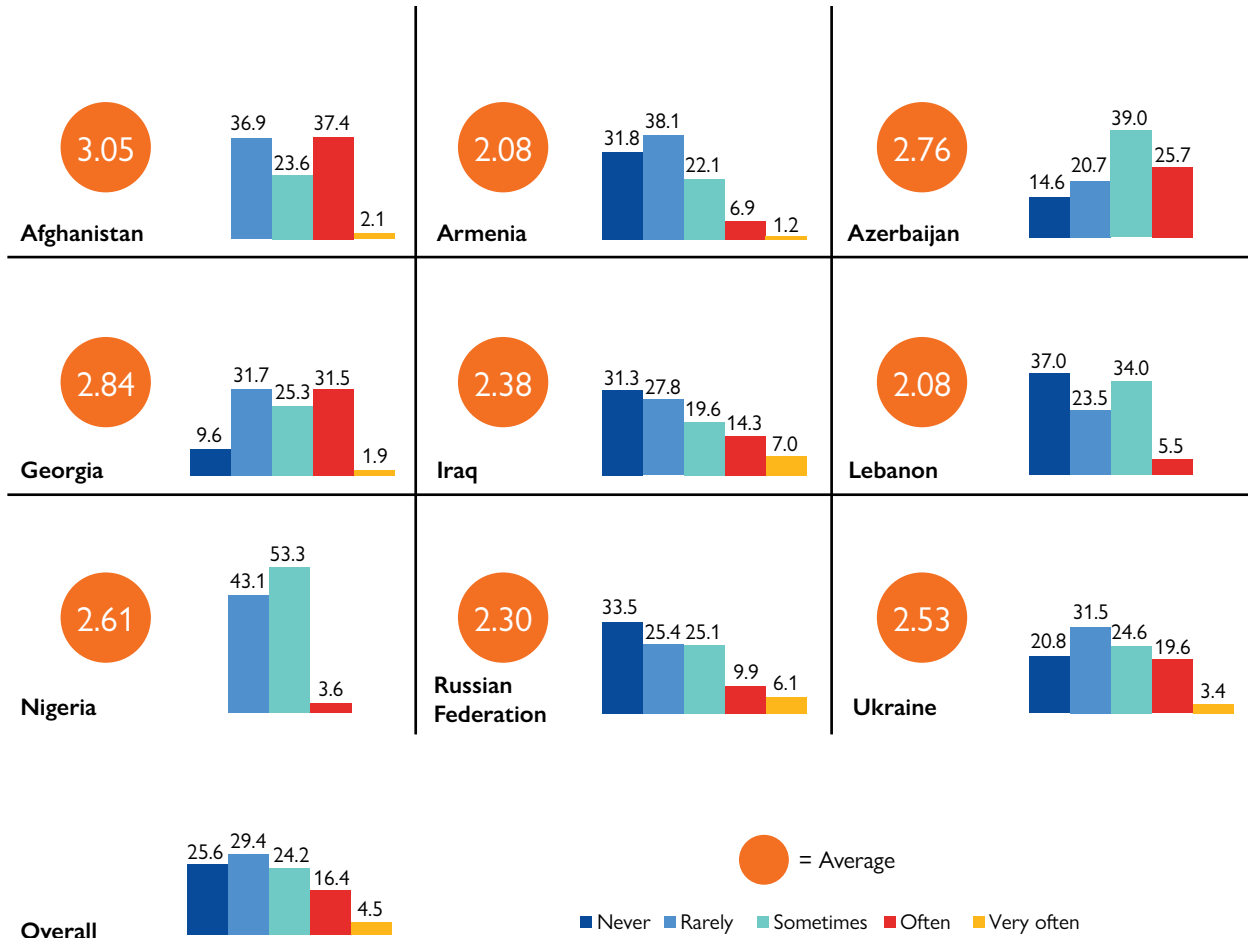
To further examine the dynamics of social reintegration, participants were asked about invitations to and participation in social activities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, 21 per cent of respondents say they received invitations to or participated in social activities often or very often before COVID-19. On the other end of the scale, 26 per cent of respondents say that was never the case for them. Notable differences can be discerned between men and women,

with a considerably lower share of women (14%) saying they participated in social activities often or very often than men (25%). By the same token, 36 per cent of women say they never participated in social activities, with just 20 per cent of men saying the same.

Throughout all age groups, participation in social activities before the COVID-19 pandemic is similar. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = very often), respondents in the under-35 age group and those aged 35 to 49 both produced a mean of 2.5. For respondents aged 50 and above, however, the mean is lower, at 2.2, meaning people in this age group participate in social activities less on average.

Respondents in some countries such as Nigeria participate in social activities rather rarely (96%; see Figure 28). In other countries, returnees are socially engaged at very different levels. Only about a third of respondents in both Iraq and the Russian Federation state that they never participated in social activities before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 28. Social participation before the COVID-19 pandemic by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.
 Note: n = 899, weighted.

7.4. Sense of community belonging

Complementing the question on satisfaction with relationships in the neighbourhood, participants were also asked about their sense of community belonging. Among men, 40 per cent say they have no or little sense of belonging, while 36 per cent of women say the same. Although men are more satisfied with their relationships in the neighbourhood, they are reported to have a lower sense of belonging to the community than women. Overall, the share of all respondents who report a sense of belonging is almost equal to those who do not – with 40 per cent saying they have a (very) strong sense of

belonging, and 38 per cent saying they have little or no sense of belonging. Respondents in Armenia (5%) and in Lebanon (11%) rarely feel they are part of the community. By contrast, the share of respondents with a (very) strong sense of community belonging is comparatively high in Afghanistan (86%) and Georgia (69%).

The sense of belonging reduces as age increases. The mean value on a 5-point Likert scale is 3.1 for people below the age of 35, 2.9 for respondents between 35 and 49, and 2.7 for respondents over the age of 50. As such, while there are no significant differences between the age groups regarding their relations in the neighbourhood, there are differences when it comes to their sense of community belonging.

7.5. Experiences of discrimination

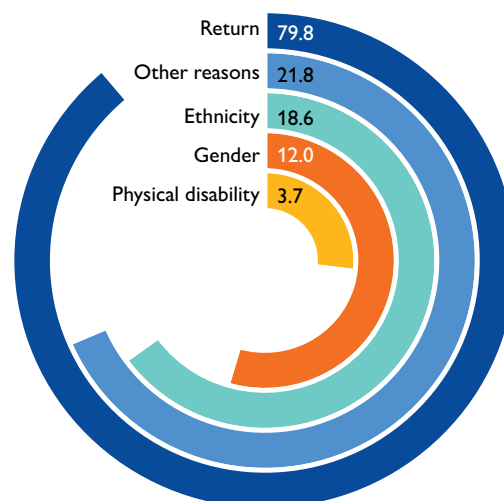
Experiences of discrimination often refer to people being treated in a different way on the basis of their association to a certain social group (Sue, 2003; Kite and Whitley, 2016). These differences in treatment can be expressed in the form of subtle, micro-aggressive behaviour (Sue et al., 2007:274f) or, in more extreme cases, verbal, physical or psychological harassment (Varjonen et al., 2016:281). Any kind of discrimination can impede social integration and the sense of belonging throughout the course of migration (Berry and Hou, 2016), and after return (Kunuroglu et al., 2020). Even perceived discrimination can affect the reintegration process (Kunuroglu, 2021). As such, the extent of discrimination experienced after return is relevant for psychosocial well-being (Hong, 2019) and the reintegration process (Kunuroglu, 2021). Overall, 30 per cent of respondents say they have experienced discrimination after their return sometimes, often or very often. Conversely, most respondents (63%) say they have never experienced discrimination. The frequency of discrimination reported is similar between men and women.

Around 87 per cent of respondents in Nigeria, 42 per cent in Lebanon and 40 per cent in Iraq experience discrimination sometimes, often or very often. By contrast, this share is only 11 per cent in Armenia and 5 per cent in Azerbaijan. Younger people report experiencing discrimination at their place of return more often, with 33 per cent of respondents under the age of 35, 29 per cent of respondents between the ages of 35 and 49, and 22 per cent of respondents over the age of 50 saying they experience discrimination sometimes, often or very often. The results are particularly interesting, since other studies (such as Kunuroglu et al., 2020) have also pointed to generational differences regarding discrimination in the context of migration.

Respondents who said they have experienced discrimination were additionally asked what that discrimination was based on. Return from Germany was noted most frequently (see Figure 29) as the reason for discrimination at the place of return. Other grounds of discrimination mentioned are religious affiliation, political orientation, loss of

employment, economic situation and family or other social constellations.⁴³

Figure 29. Grounds for discrimination by frequency of being mentioned, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 265, weighted, multiple responses possible.

7.6. Need for psychological support

Psychological well-being is essential for overall well-being. To gather insights on the general interest in specialized psychological support, participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II were asked about their need for psychological support.

In the second survey, 24 per cent of all respondents report the need for specialized psychological support (n = 862). A desire for psychological support is expressed by 43 per cent of respondents in the Russian Federation, 33 per cent of respondents in Georgia and 9 per cent in both Afghanistan and Azerbaijan.

Women express the need for psychological support more frequently than men. Of all female participants, 34 per cent indicate a wish for psychological support, while only 19 per cent of men do. Differences

⁴³ Other grounds of discrimination experienced cannot be broken down by country due to the small number of cases.

can also be discerned between the different age groups. Respondents under the age of 35 (22%) and respondents above 50 years of age (20%) express a need for psychological support less often than respondents between the ages of 35 and 49 years (28%).

Overall, the results show that respondents are, on the one hand, largely satisfied with their social relationships, but are, on the other hand,

simultaneously exposed to negative social influences. These include experiences of discrimination or a weak sense of belonging. Taken together, the results from the three thematic areas – the structural, the economic and the psychosocial dimensions – provide insight into the complexity of the reintegration experiences of respondents.

8

Reintegration from the perspective of women

At a glance

- Female study participants are highly motivated to build their lives actively and autonomously at the place of return. However, they are confronted with diverse gender-specific challenges, such as in the labour market or in access to medical care. They may also face gender-based discrimination in their social surroundings.
- Female returnees less often have an income from employment. Around three years after return, only 38 per cent of women are occupied. The employment rate among men, however, lies at 75 per cent.
- The relatively lower economic activity of women following return is generally not the result of an individual decision to perform unpaid care work in the household. In the qualitative interviews conducted with 20 women in Armenia, Iraq and Lebanon, most female returnees express a desire to be employed and contribute to the family income.
- Obstacles in the labour market are particularly high for women. Female returnees, in particular, highlight the obligation to look after children or care for sick family members, which limit their employment opportunities. Women working in the service industry or in sales frequently lost their jobs due to business closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. A promising opportunity for women affected by unemployment appears to be the establishment of an own microbusiness.
- Women less often report to have access to medical care at the place of return. Women interviewed for this study predominantly care for the health of their children, partners or close relatives. Given the high costs of medical care, the women interviewed tend to put their own medical needs aside and do not make use of medical care at all, or only do so at a later time.
- Around a third of the surveyed women voice the need for psychological support at their place of return, almost twice the share for men. At the same time, women have access to psychological care less often. In the qualitative interviews, women described the COVID-19 pandemic and the precarious security situation as particularly distressing.
- Men are more satisfied with their relations in the neighbourhood than women. Among men, satisfaction increases by 6 percentage points over time, but no such increase can be observed among women. It seems likely that women's migration experiences play a role in their more critical views of their social environments. Particularly, women in Iraq and Lebanon clearly mention that they only became aware of gender-specific restrictions and prejudices in public life after their return.

Migration research indicates that migration experiences differ between women and men (Curran et al., 2006; Mahler and Pessar, 2006; Silvey, 2006; Sinke, 2006; and Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 2006). Because return processes are part of international migration movements, they, too, could exhibit gender-specific differences. In gender-sensitive research on return, the predominant focus is often on intentions to stay and/or return (Bueno, 1996; Sakka et al., 1999; Vlase, 2013). Results of such studies show that women are more likely to want to stay in the country of immigration, while men more frequently consider the option of return (Hansen, 2008; Vlase, 2013). This is because women and men have unequal positions, obligations and responsibilities, which lead them to perceive the topic of return differently (Buján, 2015). For example, women may want to stay in the country of immigration because they fear returning to patriarchal family structures (Vlase, 2013).

The different social positions of men and women not only influence return decisions, but also the process of reintegration (Czaika et al., 2019). The reintegration process can also be influenced by the different needs of men and women (United Nations Development Programme and International Civil Society Action Network, 2019). Recent studies have found, for instance, that access to health care, a sense of belonging and a sense of security are of great importance to women returnees (Lietaert, 2020; Seefar, 2019). A study conducted on returnees in six countries by the University of Maastricht moreover identifies clear obstacles for returnee women in their economic reintegration and their social integration in the family and neighbourhood (Diker et al., 2021). The analyses on reintegration in this study predominantly highlight differences between women and men respondents in their economic reintegration and access to health care (see chapters 5 and 6).

Although gender differences are repeatedly addressed in some reintegration studies, the experiences of women are often only explored peripherally (Girma, 2017). Institutional return assistance also frequently reflects a more traditional understanding of gender roles, in which men returnees are more likely to approach the funding institutions on behalf of the household, while the specific reintegration needs of women are not regarded. At best, funding approaches identify single women or girls as particularly vulnerable groups (Olivier-Mensah

et al., 2020). Yet to address gender asymmetry in research and practice, and to develop approaches for gender-sensitive reintegration assistance, it is important to identify the potentials and assistance needs of women returnees as precisely as possible. This chapter contributes to that effort by discussing three central questions:

- What does the economic participation of women look like after return?
- What are women's experiences with medical care at the place of return?
- How are returnee women integrated socially?

Women account for 35 per cent of the weighted survey sample. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews with a total of 20 women in three return regions supplement the survey data. Of these, 5 interviews are with women returnees in Lebanon, 10 with women in Iraq and 5 with women in Armenia.

8.1. Economic participation

Access to the labour market and economic reintegration at the place of return are essential components of the reintegration process (Loschmann and Marchand, 2021; Lietaert, 2016:chapter 6). Studies show that women returnees are less likely to have income-generating employment than men returnees (Schmitt, et al., 2019; Mercier et al., 2016). On the one hand, this limited access to the labour market may be intentional, in situations where women decide to perform unpaid work in the family context – so-called care work. On the other hand, it can lead to dependencies and prevent independent reintegration (Carr, 2014).

Returnees who receive income from agriculture, employment or self-employment are categorized in this study as having an occupation; see chapter 6). Overall, 62 per cent of respondents are occupied approximately three years after their return. But there are notable differences between men and women. At 38 per cent, women are occupied considerably less often than men (75%), which means that income from own employment is available to women less often. Instead, they are much more likely to depend on the income of other household

members, on support from family members living in the same country or abroad, or on the support from the State (see Figure 30).

The qualitative interviews⁴⁴ with returnee women indicate that women's economic inactivity after return is rarely due to an individual decision to take on unpaid care work in the household. Out of 20 women interviewed in Armenia, Iraq and Lebanon, only two women say they are not interested in income-generating employment due to their current life situation – small children in the household or old age. All other women express a desire to be employed and contribute financially to their families' income. But obstacles to joining the labour market are particularly high for women (see also Mercier et al., 2016). Some women say they had to relinquish employment because of obligations to care for children or for sick family members (see also Diker et al., 2021:77).

For example, a returnee in Iraq says:

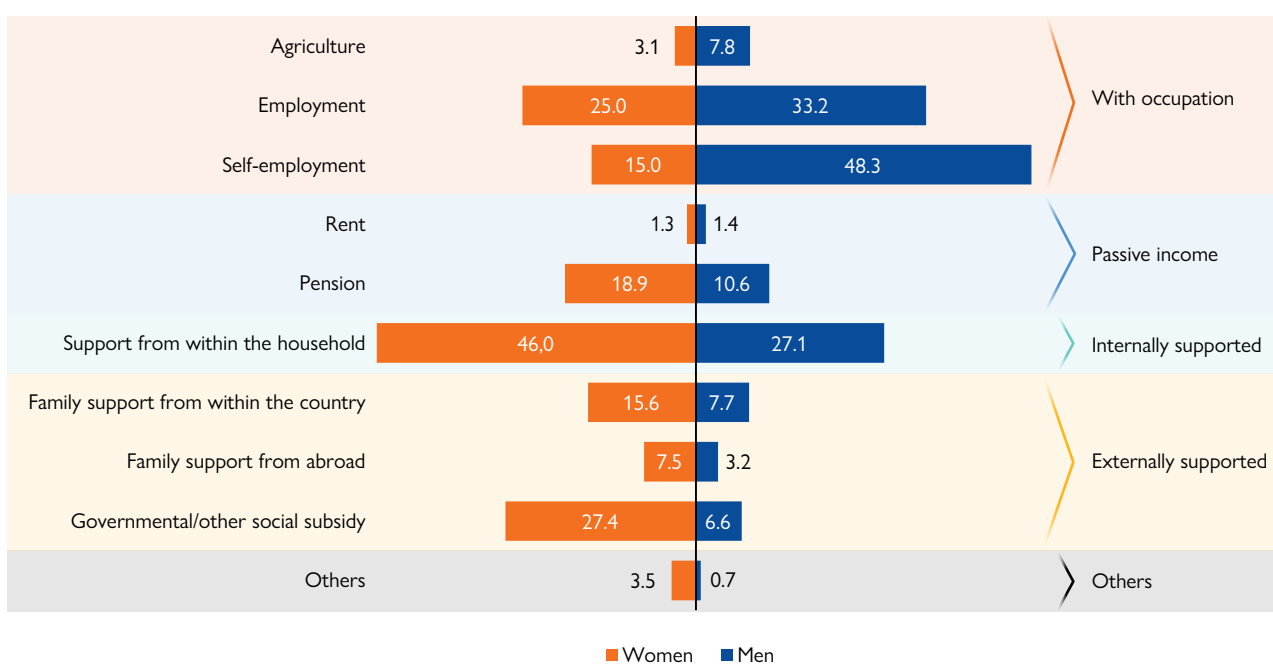
- I wanted to finish my studies, but I could not. I also wanted to work. The first year, I worked in a tailor shop and was fired. I had a son. There was no one to look after him when I was working, so I took him to work with me all the time, every day. That was the reason for the dismissal. (Kurmanji interviewee 7)

The loss of employment as a reason for current unemployment applies to most of the interviewed women in Iraq, as well as those in Armenia and Lebanon:

- At first, I worked in a cosmetics shop, in sales. Then, the owner closed the shop. Then, I was at home for a while. Then, I worked as an accountant in a company for electrical appliances. Then Corona came, and I had no more work. (Armenian interviewee 4, Armenia)
- My situation has changed, to be honest. I worked for one year. But at the beginning of 2019, when the financial crisis started, the company where I was working could not import anymore, and they laid us off. (Lebanese interviewee 5, Lebanon)

44 Throughout the report, the quotes from qualitative interviews were slightly adapted to facilitate the reader's understanding. This is without prejudice to the content of the quotes.

Figure 30. Sources of income of female and male returnees, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 837, weighted, multiple responses possible.

Given the dissatisfactory employment situation many women describe, it is surprising that women rarely say they are looking for employment in the quantitative survey. While 57 per cent of men were looking for employment at the time of the survey, only 31 per cent of women said they were looking for work. Qualitative data suggests, however, whether they are searching for a job is not a good indicator of women's employment aspirations.⁴⁵ Based on the experiences previously outlined, women see very little opportunities for themselves in the regular labour market, instead developing alternative strategies to generate income. They acquire income from informal economic activities or seek to build an independent livelihood with a microbusiness.

- But I have not stopped doing things. I am in the process of teaching myself manicure. I also go through the markets and help make pickled vegetables or ask the vendors to sell pickled vegetables for me. You can run small businesses along the road. And I continue trying to find work somewhere. Every now and then, I was offered something, but because my daughter was at home and because there was no school, I could not accept anything. (Kurmanji interviewee 10, Iraq)
- God, the most important thing for me would be to be able to work: to have a job to lean on. I would like to have a tailor shop. A shop! A small project I could start, but I have no money. I do not have the possibility.

When asked if they currently go out and look for work, the same respondent replied:

- Where should I look for work? I have no possibility to work. (Armenian interviewee 1, Armenia)

8.2. Medical care

Chapter 5.4 shows that female returnees have access to medical care less often than men. Women are also affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to a greater extent. Accordingly, almost 9 per cent of women report being unable to see a doctor because of the COVID-19 pandemic, while this only applies to 2 per cent of men. The qualitative interviews indicate that the high cost of medical care is an especially high barrier for women. Women in Armenia, Iraq and Lebanon frequently say that their own health takes a back seat to that of their children, partners or close relatives. Because medical care in these countries is sometimes subject to a fee (see chapter 5.4), families save money for urgent health needs. As a result, the women interviewed deprioritize their own health needs and do not make use of medical care at all, or only at a later point in time.

- My biggest problem is the material situation and the psychological situation regarding my nephew's condition. My nephew has epilepsy and needs medication from Switzerland, which is very expensive. If we give him a different medicine, his condition worsens a lot. You know, there is a person who is suffering and you cannot do anything for him. It is absolutely agonizing psychologically. And as I said, we suffer a lot from the material situation. We keep our heads above water, selling things on instalment, that is how we keep ourselves going. I cannot get treatment. I need a dentist; I need to see a doctor for my joints. But I cannot go because now my nephew has priority. (Arabic interviewee 2, Iraq)

Difficult migration and return experiences can lead to stress, pressure and mental illnesses, such as depression and burnout (Seiden, 2020). These psychological strains have a negative impact on the reintegration process. In the qualitative interviews, many women say they experienced psychological distress after return. At the same time, they say they took steps to improve the situation and increase psychological stability. In some cases, this was possible with the support of family and close relatives. Due to the continuously changing difficult circumstances, however, some women were not yet able to reach psychosocial well-being by the time the interview took place.

⁴⁵ This finding is relevant from a methodological point of view. In future quantitative surveys regarding employment and unemployment of women in the region of return, interview questions that have thus far been common should be called into question with a gender-sensitive perspective and reviewed for their validity.

- At first it was really bad, very bad, psychologically. Tense, upset, especially when you do not have a job, sitting at home all day, watching the news about the Coronavirus situation. It was quite bad and depressing. Then, after a few months, we got used to it; we took it more casually. Unfortunately, after that came the war, which was terrible and cruel.⁴⁶ (Armenian interviewee 3, Armenia).

The quantitative data gathered by this study indicate that returnee women mention psychological distress more often than men, with women (34%) reporting a need for psychological support more frequently than men (19%). Still, it is unclear when the need for psychological support arose – whether it existed prior to migration to Germany, whether it is a product of the migration and return experiences, or whether it is related to other biographical stress factors. The marked difference between the statements by women and men may also reflect gender bias, in that different levels of taboos may exist on the topic of mental health. It is important to consider access to psychological care in addition to the subjectively perceived stress when discussing mental health. Around 17 per cent of affected women have access to psychological support, while 27 per cent of affected men have access. This shows a clear disadvantage for women returnees in the area of mental health.

8.3. Social inclusion

In addition to the economic dimension, social inclusion plays an important role in the reintegration process (Arhin-Sam, 2019). This includes social relations in the family context, contacts with friends and in the neighbourhood, and a fundamental sense of community belonging. Reintegration research has shown that female and male returnees experience and shape social contacts in different ways. As such, women are and/or feel more strongly affected by pejorative attitudes present in the social environment in their place of return and often react by retreating and isolating themselves. They also

frequently feel obliged to take on care work. So as not to be perceived as a burden, they care for family members returning with them and for members of the extended family living at the place of return (Chy et al., 2023; Nisrane et al., 2020; Drotbohm, 2015).

In the first survey, conducted approximately eight months after return, study participants said that being close to family and friends was one of the most important motives for returning. Overall, 41 per cent of respondents identified this as a reason for their return. The marked importance of family and friendship ties for returnees is reflected in the high rates of satisfaction with relationships with family and friends after return. Approximately three years after return, 92 per cent of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their relationship with family and friends (see chapter 7). Differences between men and women are comparatively small (91% of women versus 93% of men).

The qualitative interviews with women returnees show that, on the one hand, the satisfaction stems from multifaceted support received from family and friends and also from neighbours. Neighbours help out with missing household items, for example, while relatives may support returnees with food. In addition, relatives and neighbours are important for referring possible employment opportunities. Relationships with family and relatives seem to be of consistently high importance for the well-being of the women interviewed. On the other hand, the emotionally stabilizing and supportive role of neighbourly contacts is described quite differently – from very important to hardly relevant.

Among the participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II, men (83%) are more satisfied with contacts in the neighbourhood than women (74%). Among men, satisfaction increases by 6 percentage points over time. A similar increase cannot be observed among women. These results indicate that in the reintegration process, men are more likely to have a positive view of neighbourhood relations.

The greater dissatisfaction with relations in the neighbourhood among women might be related to women questioning the norms of social life in the place of return more due to their migration experiences to and in Germany. Research shows that migration experiences can change social identity (Olwig, 2012), as well as expectations about what constitutes a satisfactory social life (Arhin-Sam,

⁴⁶ The interviewee is referring to the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which escalated into an armed conflict in September 2020, and then later brokered by a ceasefire agreement in November 2020.

2019; Schurr and Stolz, 2011). Some studies argue that women become aware of gender-specific, social inequalities and discriminatory norms after returning due to a migration-related identity change, which would partially explain their higher dissatisfaction with social relations at the place of return (see, for example, Arhin-Sam, 2019; Kuschminder, 2017; Tuccio and Wahba, 2015; Sacchetti, 2016).

The quantitative findings of this study on experiences of discrimination among men and women support such arguments. Men reported experiencing discrimination stemming from their return more often than women. But the female returnees interviewed (18%) experience discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity or physical impairments more frequently than male returnees (11%).⁴⁷ The qualitative data also reveals that women may, as a result of their migration experiences, develop a critical view of the society they have returned to. It should be noted that women in Iraq and Lebanon are more vocal about their dissatisfaction than returnees in Armenia, who hardly perceive any inequalities. One interviewee in Iraq, for example, talks about how she only became aware of restrictions for women in public life after her return:

- In Germany, I experienced many difficulties, and when I arrived here, I also experienced a lot. There I was on my own, in the city and in the supermarket. Here, it is not like that. I cannot leave the house here. There, I made my own decisions, but here, it's not like that. Now that I am back, it is very difficult for me. (Kurmanji interviewee 7)

An interviewee in Lebanon sees it similarly:

- In Germany, they have appreciation towards women; they have respect. Not like here. Here, when you go out alone, they do not treat you like an old woman to take care of – no. They look at you like that. So, there is little respect. (Lebanese interviewee 1)

The sense of belonging to the community in which respondents live is based, among other things, on the different experiences of solidarity and discrimination previously described. Furthermore, a precarious economic situation and structural factors, such as a strained security situation, can have a negative impact on returnees' sense of belonging.

Women more frequently feel part of the community than men (see chapter 7). About 36 per cent of female returnees report feeling little or no sense of community belonging. Women aged 50 or above years less frequently feel a sense of belonging to the community. Widowed and divorced women also report more frequently that they have no sense of community belonging.

⁴⁷ Men, on the other hand, experience discrimination because of their decision to return considerably more often than women (see chapter 7).

9

Reintegration index: Multidimensional analysis of reintegration

At a glance

- From 2018 to 2020, the reintegration status of respondents has improved over time. In this study, the reintegration status compared over time is measured by five central indicators: (a) access to medical care; (b) assessment of the security situation; (c) employment situation; (d) relation to family; and (e) relation to the neighbourhood. This improvement, however, does not apply to all areas of reintegration equally. While returnee employment and relationships with family and in the neighbourhood appear to have improved, access to medical care and assessments of the security situation have worsened over time. Views of the security situation have especially worsened in Afghanistan, Armenia and Nigeria around three years after return.
- An extended reintegration index calculated on the basis of 16 indicators shows that about one third of participants have achieved an overall high reintegration level about three years after return, while around 16 per cent of returnees have achieved a rather low reintegration level. The predominant obstacles to reintegration are economic challenges and structural circumstances.
- Reintegration and life satisfaction are interrelated, such that returnees are more satisfied with their life the higher the reintegration level they have reached. Approximately three years after return, an average of a third of returnees are satisfied or very satisfied with their life situation at the place of return, while 4 in 10 are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Returnees aged 50 and above are satisfied with their lives markedly less often than younger returnees.
- Around 45 per cent of respondents report that their life situation is comparable to that of people in their social surroundings, while around 10 per cent rate their life situation as better. The remaining 45 per cent rate their life situations as worse. Returnees with a low reintegration level, in particular, assess their situation to be worse, as compared to other people at the place of return.

Reintegration research often focuses on the analysis of individual factors, such as aspects of the economic, structural and psychosocial dimension. At the same time, researchers (such as Black et al., 2004; Koser and Kuschminder, 2017) point out that reintegration, as a multidimensional process, cannot be understood

solely on the basis of individual phenomena, and that different dimensions of reintegration can affect each other. To measure the reintegration of returnees, Koser and Kuschminder therefore advocate the use of an index to reflect the multidimensionality of return and reintegration (2017:264).

The development of an index is an established method for mapping several individual indicators in one value (Schnell et al., 1999:160ff.). For multidimensional constructs such as reintegration, “formative indices” are also used. Through formative indices, indicators that are relatively independent of each other and do not have to relate to a common latent factor can be operationalized and represented together. The calculation of the index thereby reflects a theoretically informed multidimensional construct (see Latcheva and Davidov, 2014). Such an index allows for a comprehensive account of the multidimensional reintegration of returnees and facilitates the comparison of reintegration status at different points in time, as well as the comparison of the reintegration status between subgroups of returnees.

As part of a comprehensive, internationally comparative study, Koser and Kuschminder (2015) developed a Return and Reintegration Index made up of five indicators for each of the three dimensions of reintegration: economic, sociocultural and security. As part of the MEASURE project, the think tank Samuel Hall designed a model to measure sustainable reintegration, with 29 indicators for the three dimensions of economic, social and psychosocial reintegration (Samuel Hall/IOM, 2017; Samuel Hall, 2017; see also IOM, 2019a). To measure the reintegration of returnees assisted by the StarthilfePlus programme, Schmitt et al. (2019:57ff.) calculate an index based on five indicators.

Two indices are calculated in this study to assess the reintegration status of returnees assisted by the StarthilfePlus programme:

- **Five-indicator index:** The first index includes five indicators and is based on the approach of Schmitt et al. (2019). This index is calculated for two different points in time: eight months after return on average and three years after return on average. This allows for an observation of changes in the reintegration status over time.
- **The extended index:** The second index captures reintegration status approximately three years after return in greater detail by looking at a total of 16 indicators. The five indicators from the aforementioned reintegration index by Schmitt et al. (2019) are complemented by adjusted indicators from the MEASURE project

(Samuel Hall/IOM, 2017; Samuel Hall, 2017).⁴⁸

The extended index is useful for comprehensively depicting reintegration status around three years after return and facilitates the comparison of different subgroups of returnees.

9.1. Reintegration over time: The five-indicator index

To measure reintegration over time, indicators from both the first and the second survey of the StarthilfePlus Study are available. The index used for comparison over time includes the three dimensions of economic, social and structural reintegration, in accordance with Schmitt et al. (2019).⁴⁹ To calculate the index, the five central reintegration indicators that were explored in both the first and the second survey, and are therefore useful for observation over time, were used. The indicators pertaining to the individual dimensions receive a different weighting factor, wherein the overall weight for each of the three dimensions is approximately equal (see Schmitt et al., 2019:58). The index has a value range of 0 to 1, and the target value of the sum of all indicators is ≥ 0.6 . A value above 0.6 thus indicates that reintegration can be categorized as satisfactory (see Schmitt et al., 2019:57).

The economic reintegration dimension is determined by employment between the ages of 18 up to under 65 years (weighting factor 0.3) as the central indicator for independent livelihood (see Table 9).⁵⁰

Satisfaction with social relationships with family and friends, on the one hand, and satisfaction with relationships in the neighbourhood, on the other hand, form the social reintegration dimension (weighting factor 0.15 each). Herein, a statement is considered if respondents are (very) satisfied

⁴⁸ Due to the divergent structure of the dimensions of reintegration from Koser and Kuschminder (2015) – economic, sociocultural and security-related reintegration – the indicators presented could not be considered explicitly. Nevertheless, there is overlap in all the indices mentioned with regard to the indicators used.

⁴⁹ These correspond to the three dimensions of reintegration referred to in this study as economic, psychosocial and structural.

⁵⁰ Employment is inquired in the first survey by a question on occupation and in the second survey by a question about income source (see chapter 6.1).

Table 9. Five-indicator index over time

Indicator	Dimension	Weighting factor	Respondents in per cent (first survey)	N	Respondents in per cent (second survey)	N
Employment situation	Economic	0.3	40.7	865	63.8	861
Access to health care	Structural	0.1	89.1	899	82.2	871
Satisfaction with the security situation	Structural	0.3	57.6	896	57.0	874
Satisfaction with relationships in the neighbourhood	Social	0.15	75.3	893	79.8	868
Satisfaction with relationships with family	Social	0.15	84.4	897	92.4	900
Reintegration index	Value \geq 0.6	-	61.6	835	73.5	763

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: Weighted.

with the relationship to family and friends or in the neighbourhood.

The structural dimension of reintegration is equally determined by two indicators. First, the statement to have access to a doctor (weighting factor 0.1) and second, the statement to be (very) satisfied with the security situation (weighting factor 0.3).

The share of returnees exceeding the threshold of 0.6 index points increased in the period between the first and the second survey (see Figure 32) from about two thirds to almost three quarters of all respondents (+12 percentage points). The reintegration of returnees in Georgia and in Ukraine has improved considerably in the period between the two surveys. At the time of the second survey, improvements can also be also discerned for respondents in Afghanistan. The reintegration status has worsened for respondents in Armenia, Lebanon and Nigeria. Developments in Armenia and Lebanon can partially be explained by the political and economic developments in the two countries (economic and political crisis in Lebanon, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan) in 2020.

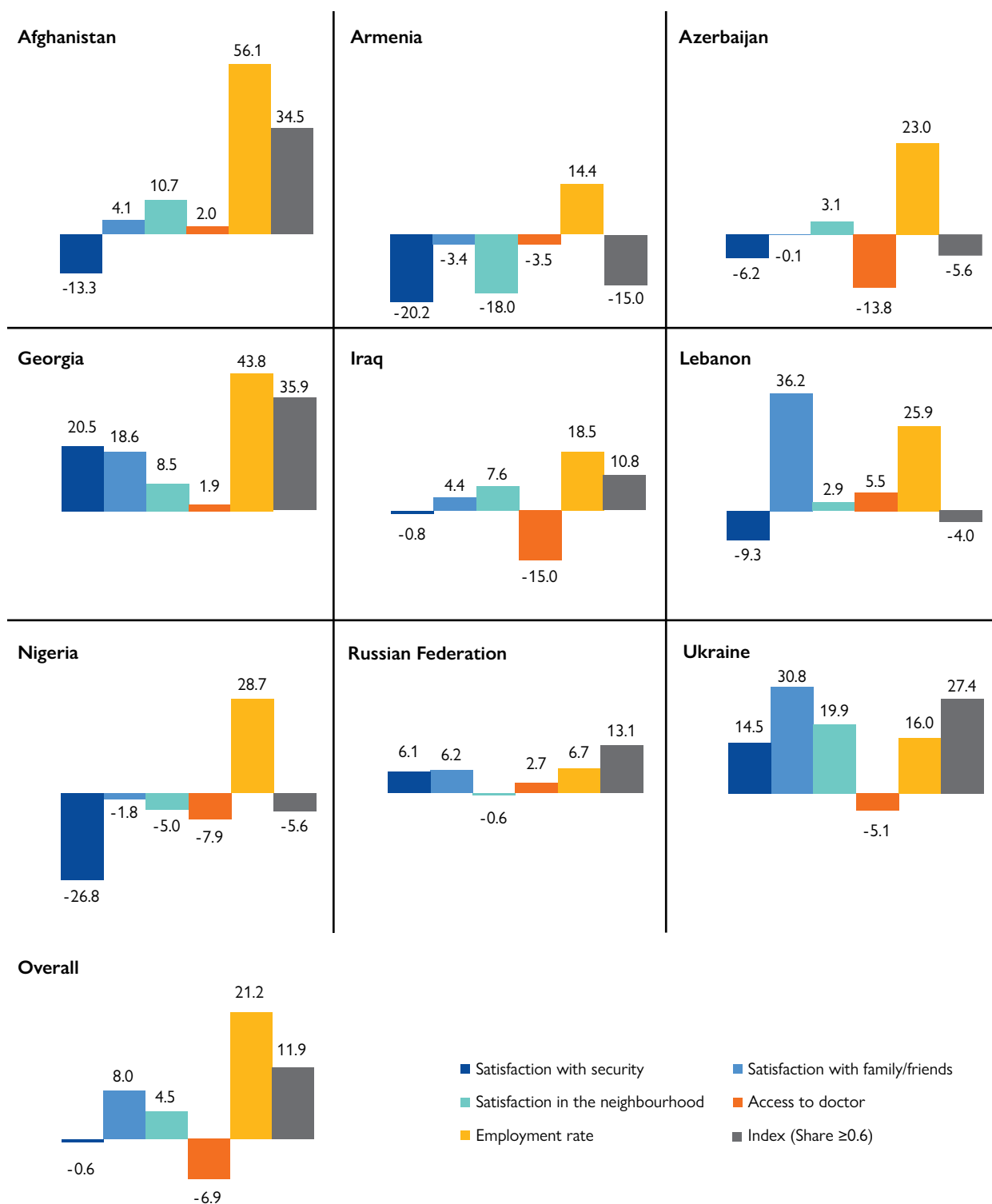
A complex pattern of change underlies the overall positive trend (see Figure 31) and can be explained by the following three developments:

- (a) The employment situation of respondents aged 18 up to under 65 improved considerably from the first survey (41%) to

the second survey (64%). Chapter 6 shows, however, that income-generating activities can also be precarious, insofar as many of those employed find themselves in a difficult economic situation despite earning income.

- (b) Social relationships with family, friends and in the neighbourhood – already rated highly in the first survey – improved further over time. An increase was recorded in Lebanon and Ukraine, in particular.
- (c) The scores of the reintegration index, on the other hand, mostly decrease due to worsening structural conditions locally. Access to medical care has decreased between the first and the second survey by an average of seven percentage points, which is in part attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic (see chapter 5.4). Satisfaction with the security situation has also decreased (by 1 percentage point). In some specific places of return, satisfaction with the security situation has decreased markedly, such as in Afghanistan, Armenia and Nigeria. In Lebanon, all respondents were dissatisfied with the security situation at the time of the second survey (10 percentage points lower). The structural dimension, and especially the security situation, is strongly dependent on macrodevelopments in the country of return, which cannot be substantially influenced by either the returnees or by return and reintegration assistance.

Figure 31. Change in indicators between the first and second survey by country, in percentage points



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = see Table 9, weighted. Columns above the zero line indicate an increase in percentage points at the time of the second survey compared to the situation at the time of the first survey. Columns below the zero line indicate a decrease in percentage points. For example, the employment rate increased by 56 per cent in Afghanistan and by 44 per cent in Georgia.

Differences in the reintegration index between men and women were already apparent in the first survey. Two thirds of men (65%) reached the threshold of 0.6, but just slightly more than half the women (55%). The difference between men and women has increased further over time (men 78%; women 65%). This is mainly attributable to men experiencing greater increases in employment. Furthermore, access to health care has decreased more for women than for men.

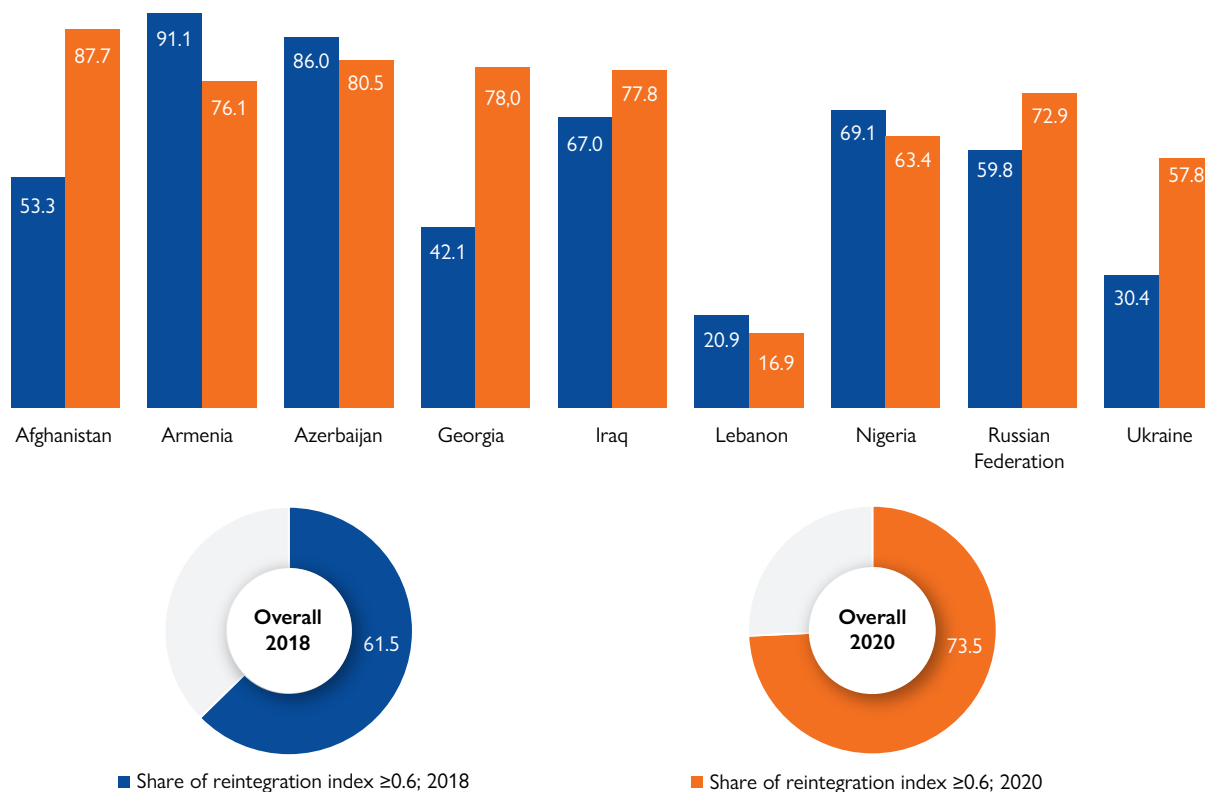
9.2. The extended reintegration index

While the five-indicator index previously discussed can measure changes in key reintegration indicators over time, it only depicts a few indicators in the individual reintegration dimensions. The economic

dimension, for instance, is only represented through employment. It does not, however, indicate whether the income generated is sufficient to cover daily expenses. To represent the reintegration status more comprehensively, an extended reintegration index, with a total of 16 indicators, has been developed based on data from the second survey (see Table 10).⁵¹ This index represents the individual dimensions in greater breadth and allows for a more comprehensive consideration of the reintegration status approximately three years after return. Furthermore, this index enables comparisons between different subgroups of returnees regarding their reintegration status within the various subdimensions or regarding their reintegration as a whole.

⁵¹ Variables previously discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 were used as indicators.

Figure 32. Share of returnees with satisfactory reintegration, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 835 (first survey), n = 763 (second survey), weighted.

Text box 2. Calculation of the extended reintegration index

The extended reintegration index includes the three central dimensions of reintegration: the structural, the economic and the psychosocial dimensions. A sub-index has been calculated for each dimension, providing insights into the reintegration status within that dimension. By means of standardized scaling, each individual unit of the variable is assigned a value from 0 to 1.* The overall index and the three sub-indices are formatively constructed from unweighted indicators as multidimensional theory-based constructs.** To calculate the sub-indices, the mean of the scaled variable values were added and the mean calculated, lying in the range between 0 and 1. Since each of the dimensions has a different number of indicators, the overall index was not calculated directly from the sum of the individual indicators, but as a mean from the previously calculated values of the three sub-indices.

* For variables on a 5-point scale, values are assigned as follows: 0 - 0.25 - 0.5 - 0.75 - 1. Binary variables (the search for employment, for example, or access to psychological support, if needed) have been scored 0 - 1. Special cases, such as income, access to education and access to medical care will be explained separately (see notes a to e).

** A different weighting of the indicators can occur based either on theoretical considerations or statistical results (see OECD, 2008). However, different weighting should be supported by a strong theoretical justification (Schnell et al., 1999:167). Otherwise, "indicators should generally be equally weighted" (Schnell et al., 1999:167; own translation). Due to the numerous different national return contexts and specific return conditions, a uniform a priori weighting has not been applied.

Table 10. Indicators included in the sixteen-indicator index

Indicator
<i>Structural dimension</i>
Access to and quality of medical care ^a
Satisfaction with the security situation
Access to education ^b
Quality of the housing situation
Trust in police and justice
Access to public services
Access to psychological support if required ^c
<i>Economic reintegration</i>
Income source ^d
Ability to cover daily expenses with income
Potential access to credit
Search for employment ^e
<i>Psychosocial reintegration</i>
Satisfaction with relationships with family and friends
Satisfaction with relationships in the neighbourhood
Sense of community belonging
Discrimination at the place of return
Participation in social events

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, authors' own depiction.

- Two variables on medical care are combined for this indicator, wherein access to medical care is rated as 0 – 1 and quality as 0 – 0.25 – 0.5 – 0.75 – 1. Both were combined and the mean value was determined, thereby forming the value range 0 – 0.5 – 0.625 – 0.75 – 0.875 – 1.
- For this indicator, the number of children attending school was examined in relation to the number of potential pupils. In cases where no pupils were present, the indicator was ignored.
- This indicator has a value of 1 if access to psychological support is available, and a value of 0 if there is a need for psychological support but it is not available.
- For this indicator, the respondent or the household's ability to generate independent income is taken into account. Income generated independently through occupation, a pension or rent is generally weighted more strongly (+1) than income from sources outside the household, such as family or State support. A medium rating (+0.5) is assigned in situations where respondents do not earn any income themselves, but such income is generated by the household or external support is available while studying. In such cases, there is an internal household dependency and a greater degree of vulnerability, even though this situation may be based on the family division of labour and/or cultural norms. In instances where no income is generated by the household or the returnee, the source of income is rated +0. Excluded are the rare cases in which returnees only mentioned "other sources of income" or returnees under 63 years of age identified a pension as their only source of income, as well as persons with income from independent employment who stated that they were unemployed.
- A rating of 1 is assigned if the returnee is not searching for employment, and 0 if the returnee is searching for employment, regardless of why the returnee is searching for employment.

The reintegration status of the respondents is categorized into three reintegration levels:

- If respondents reach a score of ≤ 0.4 in a reintegration dimension, the reintegration level is rated as rather low.
- The values of 0.4 to 0.6 attest to a medium reintegration level, with an approximate balance between positive participation experiences on the one hand, and a lack of participation opportunities or negative experiences on the other hand.
- If a respondent's score is ≥ 0.6 , an overall high reintegration level can be assumed.

9.2.1. Average reintegration status three years after return

As measured by the extended reintegration index, overall reintegration levels are neither remarkably high nor notably low (see Figure 33). Overall, the largest group (48%) reach a medium reintegration level. Still, a large share of respondents (37%) has reached a high reintegration level. Overall, only a relatively small share (16%) exhibits a low reintegration level. On average, this group reveals low scores in the economic and structural sub-indexes, in particular.

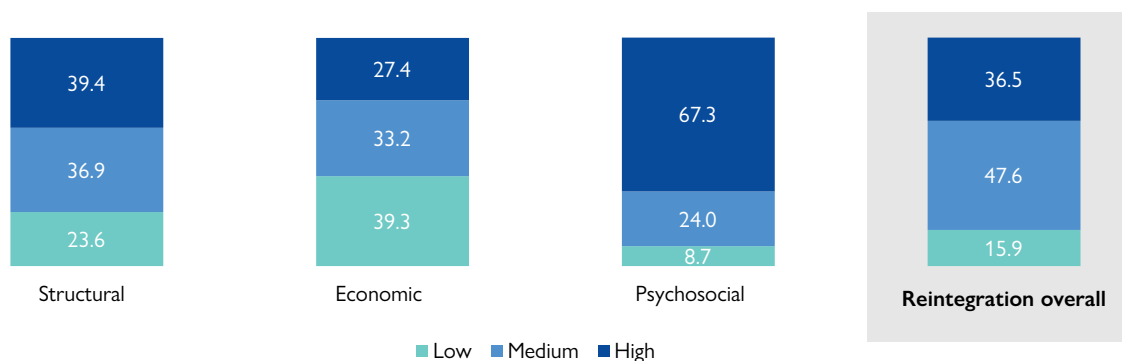
When considering the distribution within the sub-indexes, a mixed image emerges: although the reintegration level in the structural dimension is high

for 4 in 10 returnees (39%), it is medium for another large group, and low level for 24 per cent. Despite visible improvement in the employment situation over time (see chapter 9.1), economic reintegration – if additional factors, such as the ability to cover daily expenses with income earned, are considered – is also at a medium or low level for almost three quarters of study participants. The majority, however, has reached a high level of psychosocial reintegration. For an overall consideration of reintegration, it is therefore useful to not merely consider the economic dimension as a basis for reintegration but to also view the other categories as stand-alone areas.

9.2.2. Reintegration status of subgroups

In Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, respondents generally exhibit an overall high reintegration level (see Figure 34). Still, around 14 per cent of returnees in the Russian Federation, for example, exhibit a low reintegration level. In many countries, the majority of returnees has achieved a medium reintegration level across all dimensions, and in Georgia, close to half of survey participants have achieved a high reintegration level. A significant exception is the reintegration of respondents in Lebanon. The results of the 16-indicator index reveal that almost two thirds of respondents in Lebanon exhibit a low reintegration level. In Afghanistan, by contrast, none of the returnees who participated in the survey exhibit a low reintegration level, and in Nigeria, only 3 per cent have a low reintegration level. Overall, the relatively heterogenous distribution of

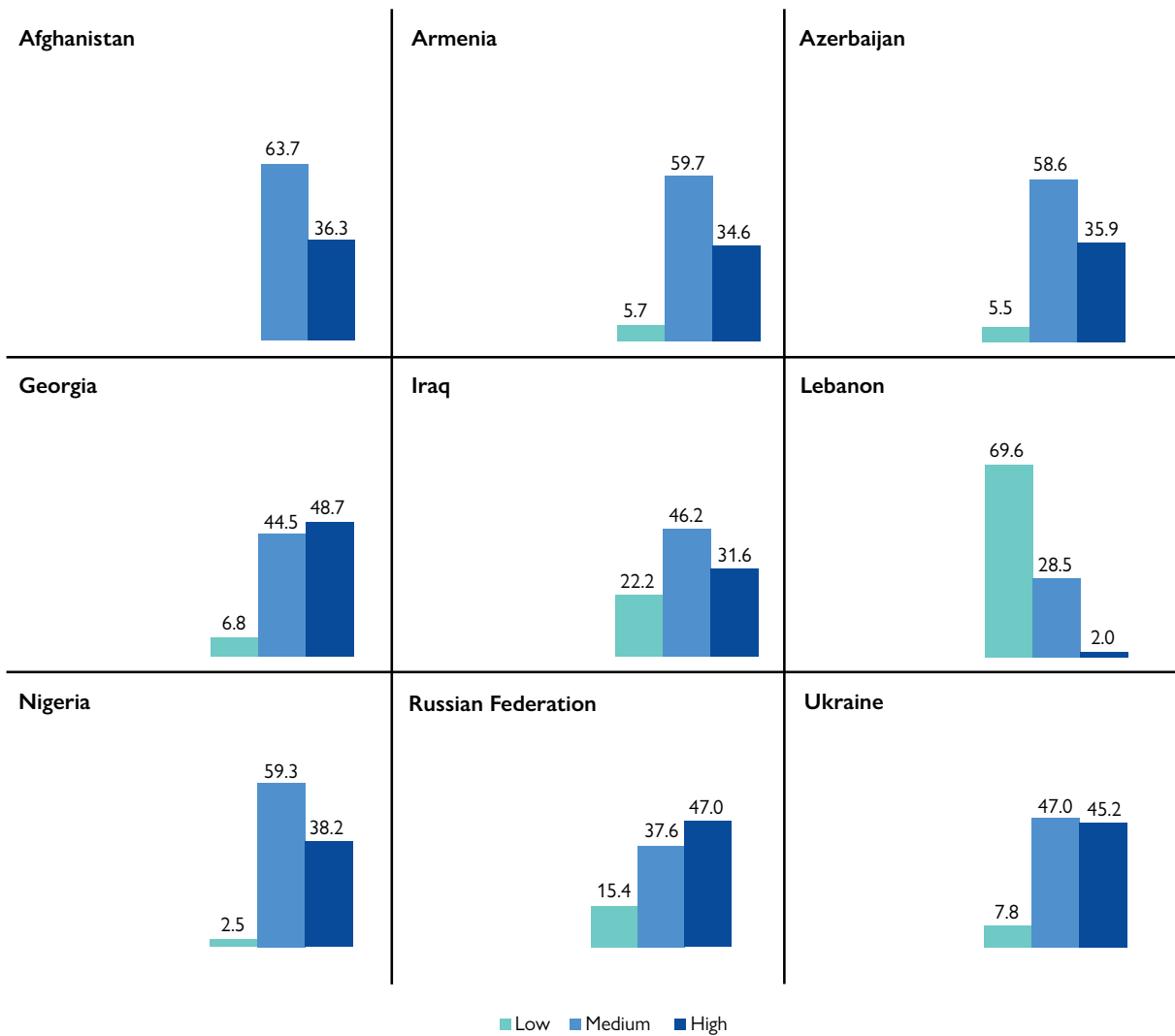
Figure 33. Reintegration indices: Share of reintegration levels, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, weighted.

Figure 34. Reintegration level by place of return, extended reintegration index overall, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.
 Note: N = 906, weighted.

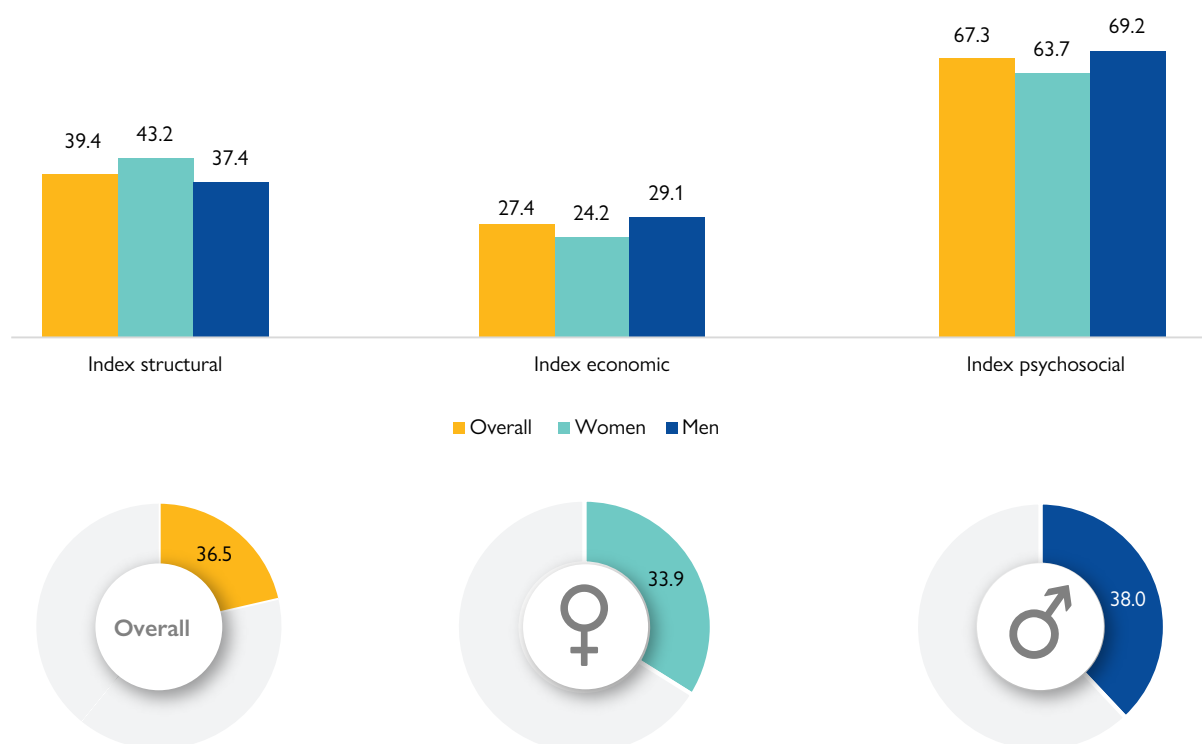
the reintegration status within one country such as in Iraq or in the Russian Federation demonstrates that returnees have very different opportunities and access, even in presumably similar (national) contexts.

Almost no notable differences between the age groups can be discerned when comparing reintegration levels, with the notable exception of the economic subdimension. In that subdimension, 31 per cent of those between the ages of 35 and 49 have achieved a high reintegration level – higher than those under 35 (26%) and those over the age of 50 (25%). Furthermore, the under-35 age group exhibits the highest share of those with a low economic reintegration level (44%, compared

to 27% for respondents over 50, and 39.5% for respondents aged 35 to 50).

Slight differences in reintegration levels are apparent between men and women, with the share of those returnees with a high reintegration level (index value ≥ 0.6), which is higher overall among men than among women (see Figure 35). Men likewise exhibit a high reintegration level in the economic and psychosocial subdimensions more often than women. Conversely, values are higher in the structural dimension among women. This may also be related to the different distribution of men and women in the sample countries, with the share of women in (former) Commonwealth of Independent States countries being above average, but significantly lower in other countries (see Table 6 in chapter 4.1).

Figure 35. Share of women and men with a high reintegration status overall and in different reintegration dimensions, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, weighted.

9.2.3. Reintegration and life satisfaction

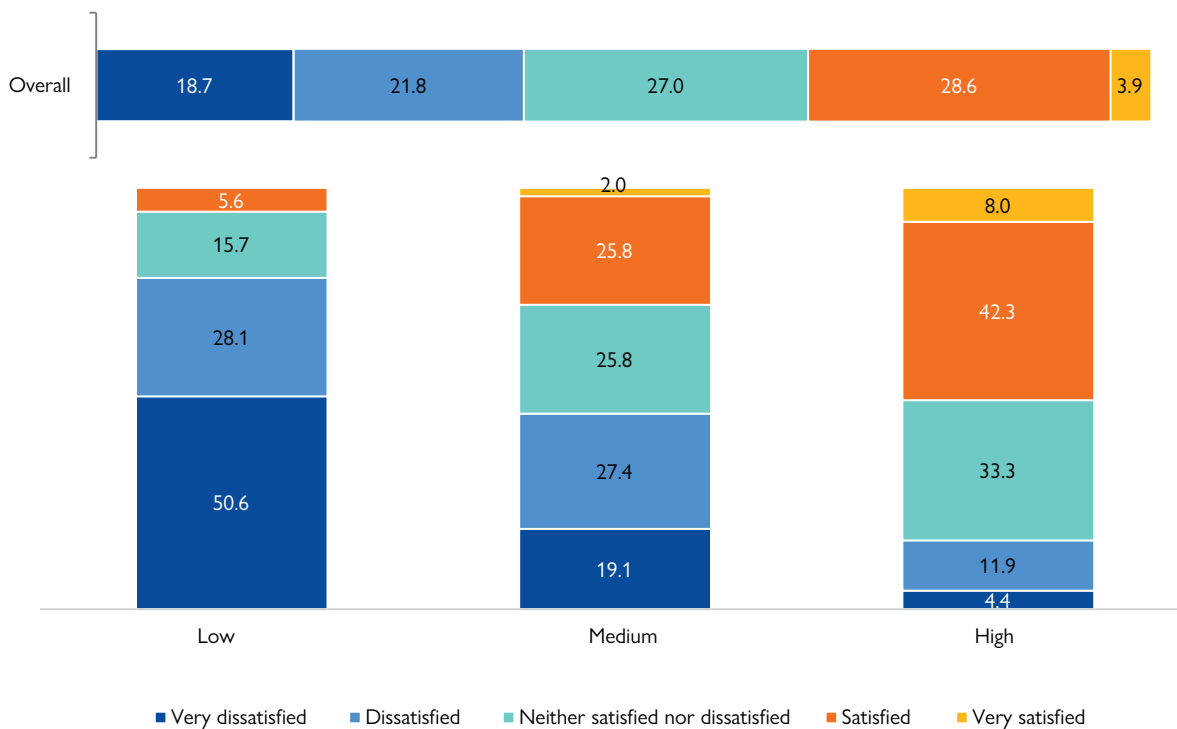
To allow for an overall assessment of reintegration status, the reintegration indexes include several variables from the areas of structural, economic and psychosocial reintegration. A further question on overall life satisfaction addresses subjective perceptions.⁵² While 33 per cent of respondents say they are (very) satisfied approximately three years after return, 41 per cent of respondents say they are (very) dissatisfied. When comparing the assessments of life satisfaction with reintegration levels based on the extended reintegration index, a relatively high degree of congruence can be observed (see Figure 36). The overall index correlates with the subjective life satisfaction relatively strongly

($r_s = 0.50$; $p = 0.000$),⁵³ and there is a statistical relation between life satisfaction and structural ($r_s = 0.45$; $p = 0.000$) and psychosocial reintegration ($r_s = 0.46$; $p = 0.000$), as there is to economic reintegration, though to a lesser degree ($r_s = 0.24$; $p = 0.000$). The higher the reintegration level, the higher the share of respondents that are (very) satisfied. While three quarters (79%) of returnees with a low reintegration level say they are (very) dissatisfied with their life situation, the share of persons that are (very) dissatisfied is considerably smaller at a higher reintegration level (16%), and half (50%) of respondents with a high reintegration level are (very) satisfied with their life situation.

52 The following question was asked: "How satisfied are you currently with your life overall? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?"

53 Correlations were calculated with unweighted data. Either the Pearson correlation (r) or the Spearman rank-coefficient (r_s) was utilized. The latter can usually be interpreted analogous to the Pearson correlation (Strahan, 1982). These correlations depict the strength of the relationship between two variables ranging from +1 to -1. A value of +1 (positive correlation) or -1 (negative correlation) can be interpreted as a perfect correlation. A correlation of 0 shows that there is no association whatsoever. Even though the strength of correlation can be interpreted in different ways, in the social sciences, a correlation between 0.2 and 0.5 depict a medium effect strength, whereas values above 0.5 are considered high, and 0.7 as very high respectively (Kühnel and Krebs, 2001).

Figure 36. Life satisfaction overall and by reintegration level, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 891, weighted.

Approximately three years after return, average life satisfaction varies depending on the place of return (see Figure 37).⁵⁴ In Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, life satisfaction is considerably higher than average. Returnees in Lebanon are less satisfied with their life than the average among all respondents, as they are in Iraq and Georgia, despite a relatively high number of respondents in Georgia exhibiting a high reintegration level. This shows that despite the relatively high correlation between the reintegration status and life satisfaction, reintegration status is not the only factor influencing life satisfaction. At the time of the second survey in 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic may have negatively affected assessments of life satisfaction. Almost 80 per cent of respondents report that the COVID-19 pandemic had a (medium or strong) negative effect on their life situation.

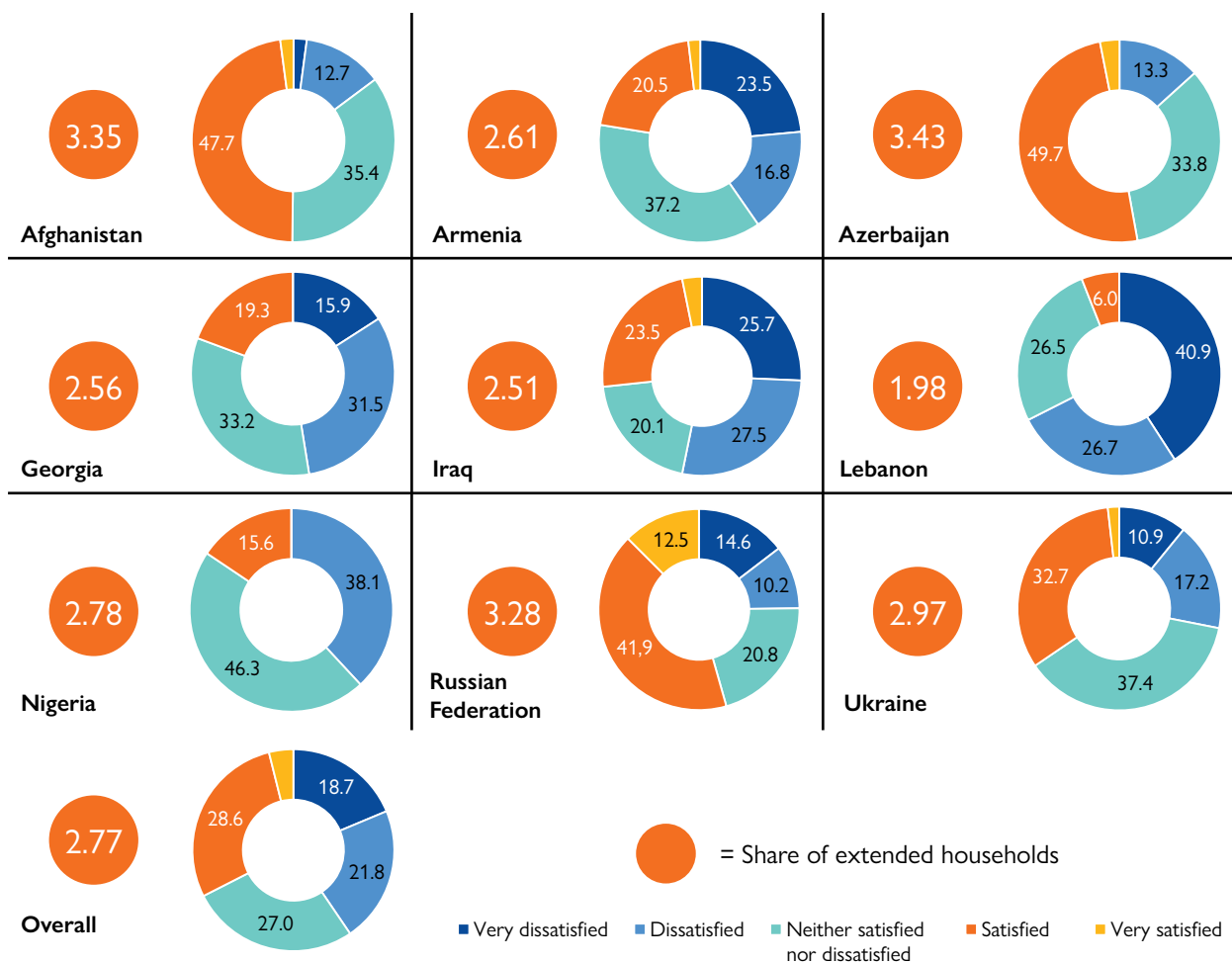
Assessments of life satisfaction may also be related to how returnees view their lives relative to their local social environment ($r_s = 0.51$; $p = 0.000$). Around 45 per cent of respondents say they are in a worse life situation than the general population at the place of return (see Figure 38). Still, the same share rates their situation as comparable and 10 per cent as better.

Overall, there is a positive correlation between reintegration status and returnees' assessments of their life situations in relation to the general population ($r_s = 0.44$; $p = 0.000$) (see also Figure 39). Returnees with a high reintegration level rate their life situation relative to their social environment as similar (60%) or better (15%) more often than returnees with a low reintegration level (16% and 5% respectively).

Additionally, returnees with a higher reintegration level have considered onward migration less often (37%) than those with a low reintegration level (71%). This is reflected in a negative correlation between the reintegration index and onward migration intentions ($r = -0.25$; $p = 0.000$). Finally, people with a medium or high reintegration level are considerably more

⁵⁴ Additionally, it can be observed that in both surveys, men report a somewhat lower life satisfaction than women. At the same time, dissatisfaction grows with increasing age. The share of respondents that is (very) satisfied with their life at the time of the second survey is considerably higher among respondents below 35 years of age (36%), and among respondents between the ages of 35 and 49 (33%), than among respondents above the age of 50 (21%).

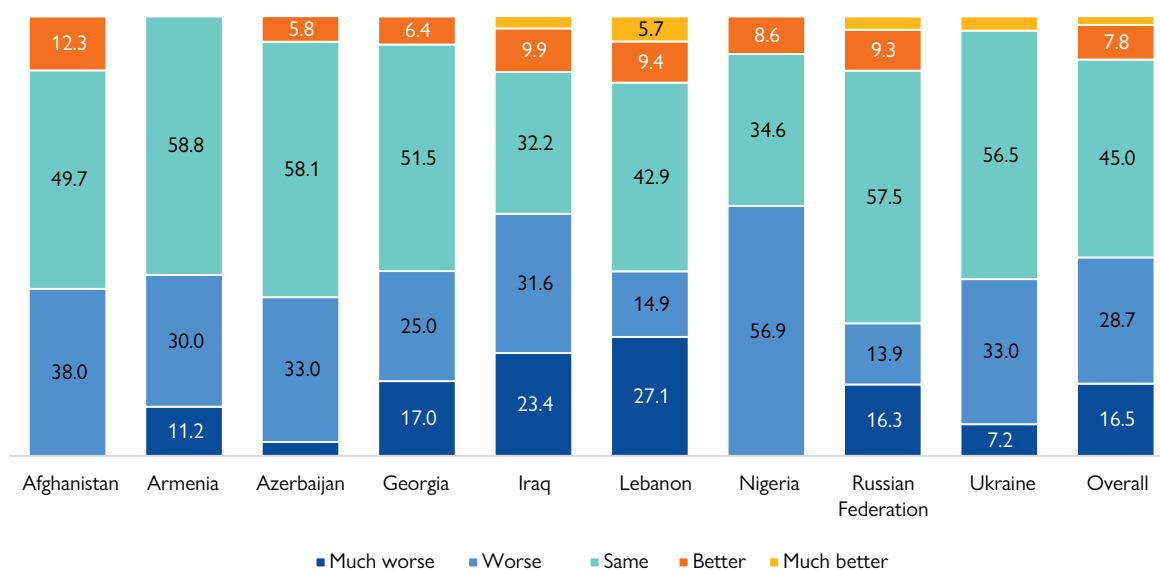
Figure 37. General life satisfaction by country, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 891, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

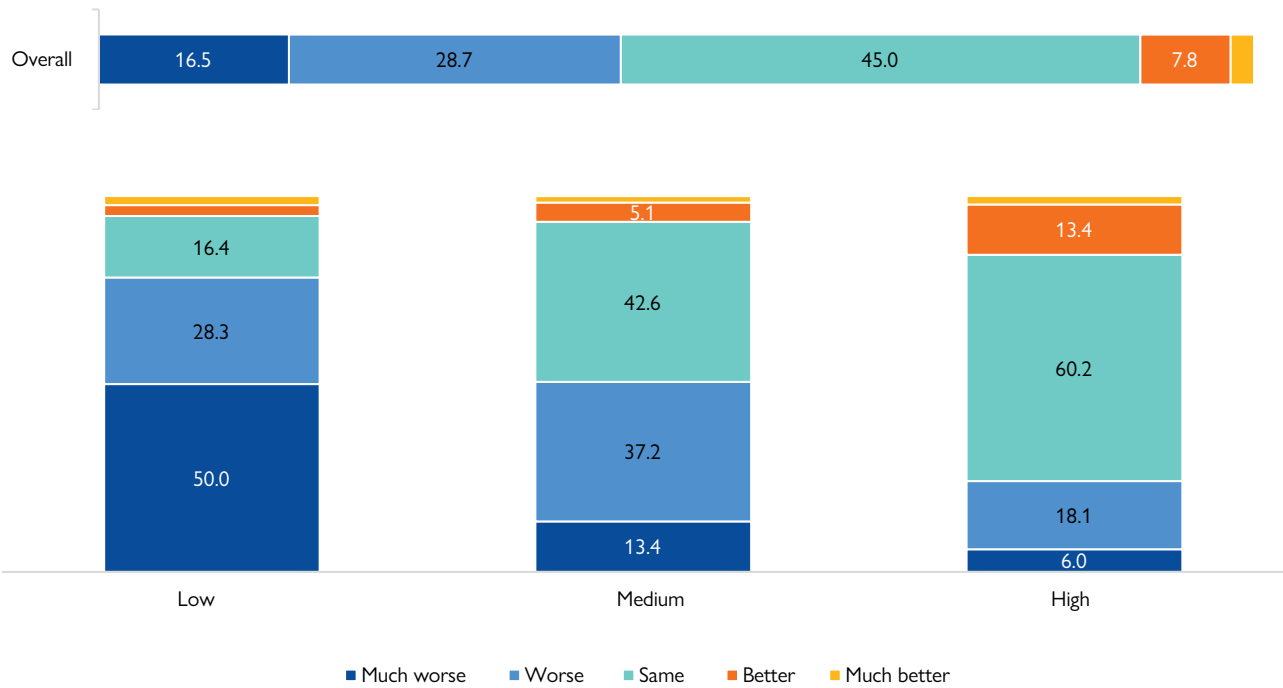
Figure 38. Assessment of own life situation as compared to the local population at the place of return



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 841, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

Figure 39. Comparison to population overall and by reintegration level, in per cent



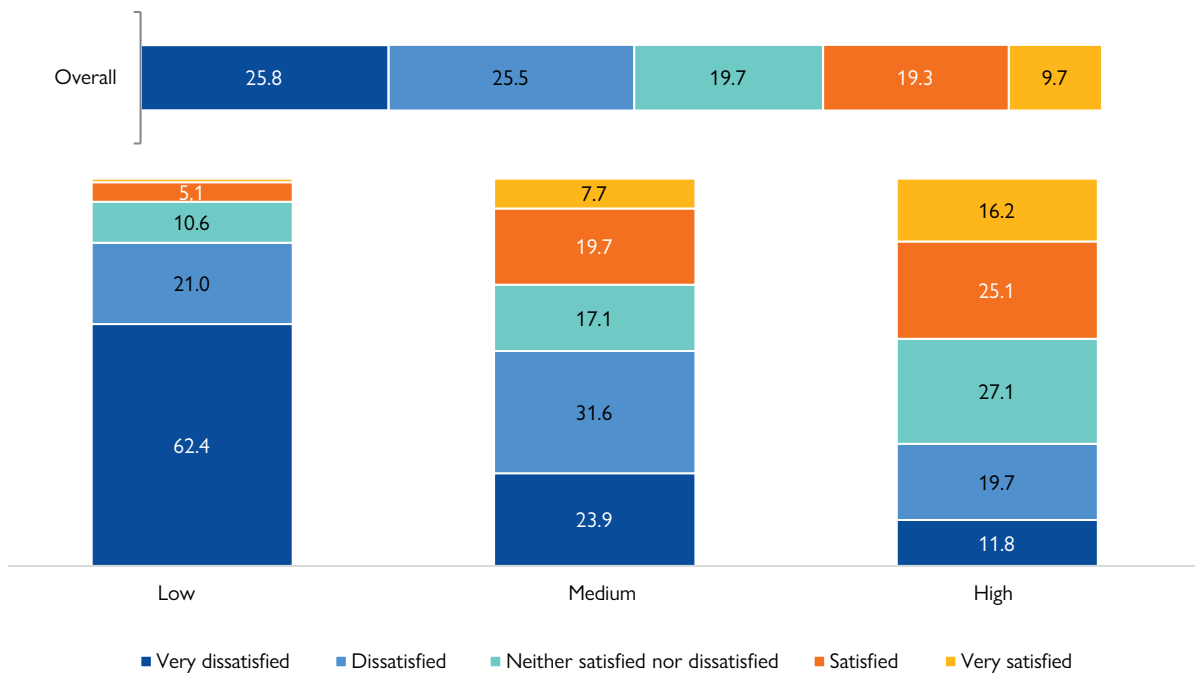
Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 845, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

often (very) satisfied with their return decision (41% with a high level, 27% with a medium level), than persons with a low reintegration level (6%). Conversely, among returnees with a low reintegration level, 83 per cent are (very) dissatisfied with their return, while this only applies to 32 per cent of those with a high reintegration level (see Figure 40). Overall, there is a relation between the extended reintegration index and the overall assessment of return ($r^s = 0.43$; $p = 0.000$), which indicates that a higher index value is related to a higher overall satisfaction with the return.

Overall, although not entirely in accordance, the different subjective assessments of the life situation as well as return and the reintegration index point in the same direction. This especially applies to the relation between life satisfaction and the structural and psychosocial reintegration components. The correlation also applies to but is not quite as strong for economic reintegration.

Figure 40. Satisfaction with the decision to return overall and by reintegration level, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 887, weighted. Values below 4% are not depicted.

10

Use of financial assistance and further assistance needs

At a glance

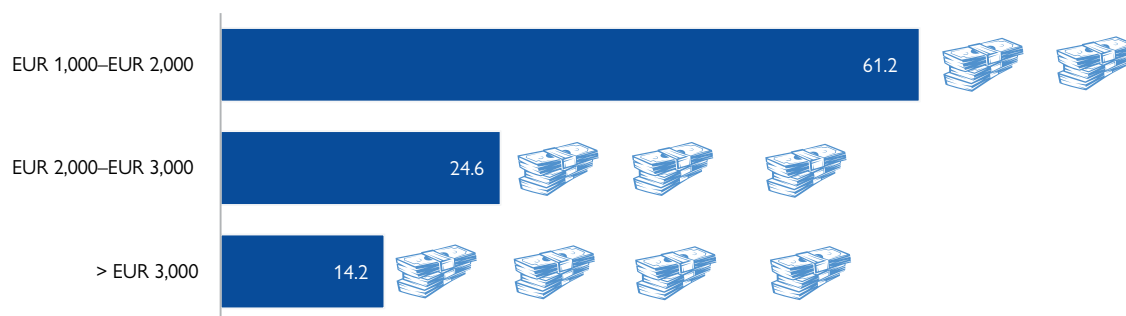
- The financial assistance provided by the StarthilfePlus programme is used situationally by returnees, depending on their individual needs. The financial StarthilfePlus assistance is predominantly used for daily needs and housing and often seen as particularly important in these areas.
- Participants mainly rate the assistance by the StarthilfePlus programme positively. Around eight months after return, 90 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the StarthilfePlus assistance. Approximately three years after return, 85 per cent continue to be satisfied with the assistance offered through the programme.
- Three years after return, most returnees need additional assistance. Beyond the expressed need for additional financial assistance, study participants also said they needed assistance in the search for income-generating employment or in establishing their livelihoods. Assistance in housing or medical care is also important for study participants. Smaller numbers of returnees said they needed assistance in the areas of education and psychological care.

10.1. Reintegration assistance

Reintegration assistance can be provided in different ways, namely as in-kind or monetary assistance, and can address various reintegration needs (such as economic, structural or psychosocial). For return and reintegration assistance, it is therefore important to gain insights into the assistance needs that emerge for returnees in their respective reintegration processes. The following section examines the reintegration assistance provided and returnees' enduring assistance needs.

In 2017 and 2018, the time frame relevant to this study, the Federal Government assisted the reintegration of returnees with two separate monetary assistance instalments. The scope of the assistance depended on the assistance level, which in turn depended on the status of the asylum procedure and the length of stay in Germany. The amount of assistance provided was also linked to household size (see chapter 2). Around 61 per cent of respondents received assistance of between EUR 1,000 and EUR 2,000, depending on household size. An additional 25 per cent received between EUR 2,000 and EUR 3,000. Total assistance exceeded EUR 3,000 for 14 per cent of recipients (see Figure 41).

Figure 41. Received financial assistance per household, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 837, weighted.

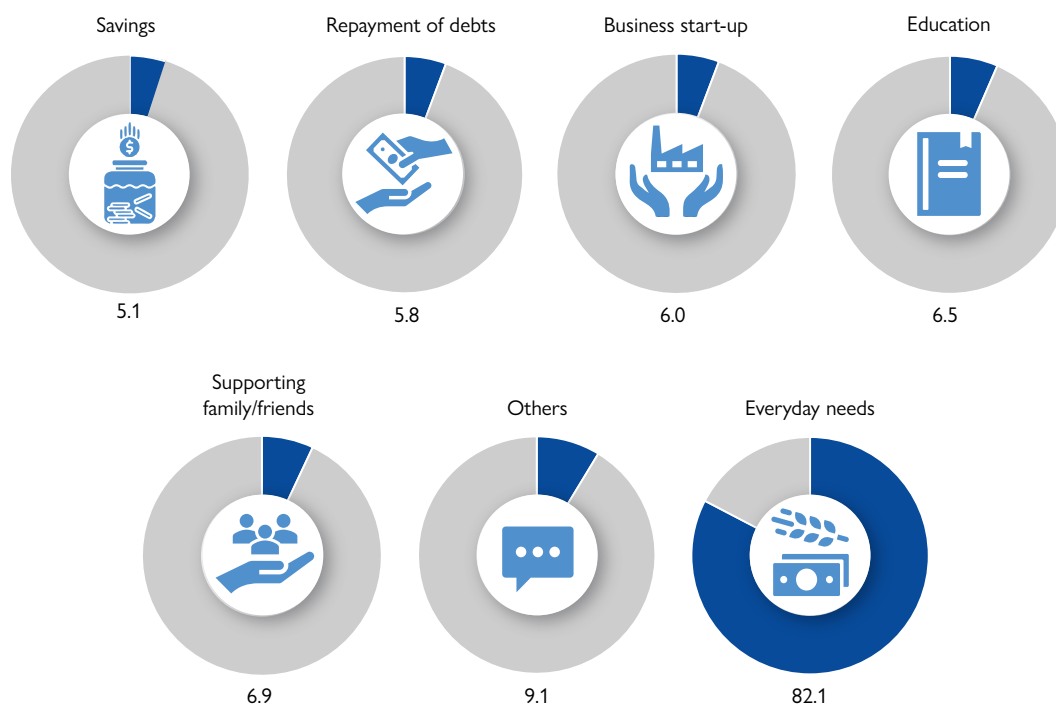
10.2. Use and importance of StarthilfePlus assistance

The first instalment was paid out prior to return and was thus available for the early phase of reintegration, during which the returnees must first orient themselves at their place of return. By the time of the first survey – approximately eight months after return and generally conducted at the collection of the second instalment – around 95 per cent of respondents had spent the first instalment. Four in five participants used the assistance to cover daily expenses (see Figure 42).

Other areas of expenditure included supporting family and friends, education, business establishment and the repayment of debts. Returnees who were employed around eight months after return used the StarthilfePlus assistance to meet daily needs less often than those without employment (76% and 85%, respectively).

Generally, returnees collected the second instalment at the respective IOM country offices around six to eight months after return. Around 97 per cent of respondents had spent the second instalment in full by the time of the second survey, which took place an average three years after return. Less than

Figure 42. Areas of expenditure on first instalment, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 904, weighted.

2 per cent of respondents had only partially, or not yet spent the second instalment, respectively.

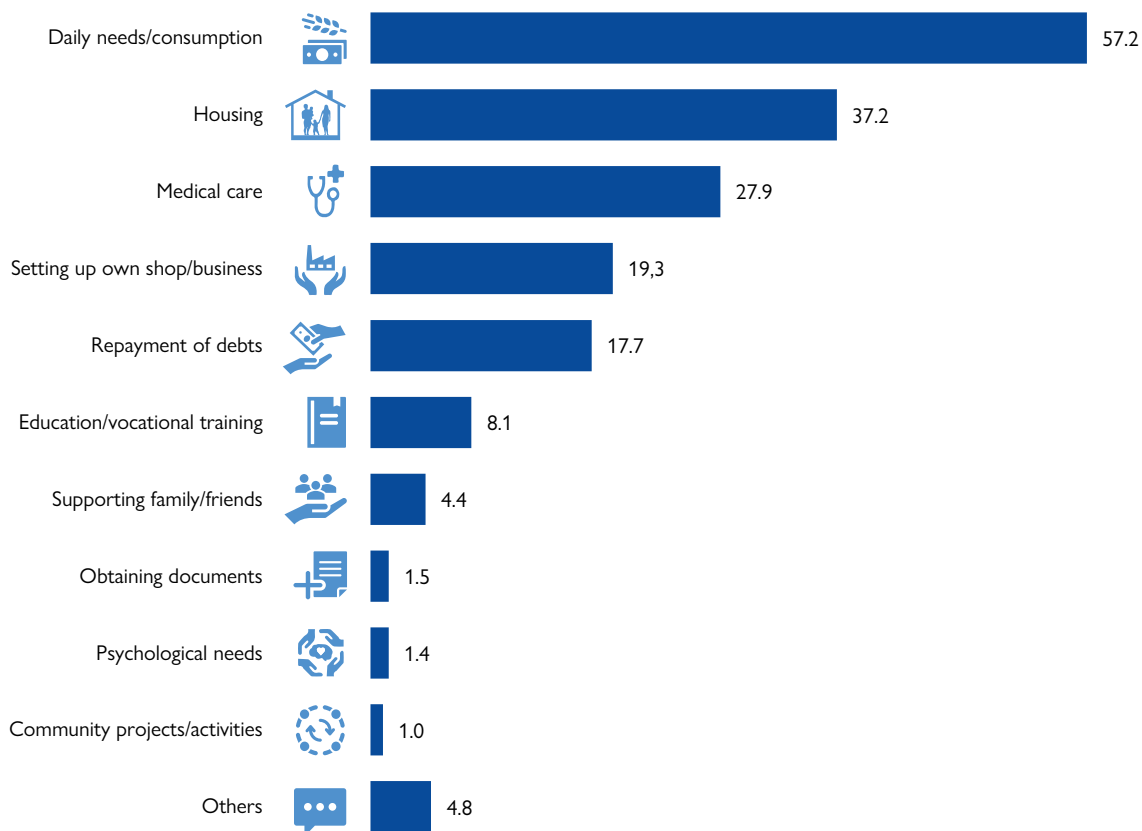
Respondents who had fully spent the assistance were asked in which areas that assistance was important (see Figure 43; 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important)). Almost all respondents (>99%) identified at least one area for which the assistance was important.

The majority of returnees said that the second instalment of the StarthilfePlus assistance – similar to the first instalment – was important for covering everyday needs, such as the purchase of food and hygiene articles. The particular importance of monetary assistance thus appears to lie in the fact that returnees can use the money flexibly, thereby ensuring that everyday needs are met. At 41 per cent, the employment rate was relatively low at the time of the first survey, thereby indicating that financial assistance was a central factor in household income. However, it is not clear from the data

at what point the assistance was spent. It is also possible that the monetary assistance was initially put aside and used at any desired point between the first and the second survey.

Beyond covering daily needs, a large share of respondents regards the second instalment as important or very important to improve their housing situation and for medical care. Around a fifth of respondents who have spent the assistance in full furthermore considers the assistance important for economic purposes, either to repay debts or to establish a business. It remains unclear whether the debt repayment refers to loans taken out before migration, for the purpose of migration or to pay off new loans incurred, for example, in the context of self-employment. For about one tenth, the assistance was important to finance education or further training. Overall, the second StarthilfePlus instalment also appears to have been important for the development of long-term livelihood perspectives. The assistance was only

Figure 43. High relevance of second instalment by area, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 883, weighted. This figure shows the percentage of people who used the funding for each area and rated it as important or very important. The total includes all people who spent the full second instalment, including those who did not use it for any area or did not provide information.

rarely deemed important for document acquisition, psychological care or for participation in community activities. It should not be inferred, however, that these areas are per se unimportant to returnees. As the reintegration assistance is often used for daily needs, housing and medicine, it may be the case that the monetary assistance is not sufficient to cover related needs in areas such as community activities or psychological care.

10.3. Satisfaction with the assistance provided by StarthilfePlus

Assistance from the StarthilfePlus programme was used in full by almost all respondents by the time of the second survey, around three years after return. In retrospect, respondents predominantly assess the assistance provided by the StarthilfePlus programme altogether positively or very positively (see Figure 44). At the time of the first survey, 90 per cent of respondents were (very) satisfied with the programme and only a small share of around 2 per cent were (very) dissatisfied. Around three years after return, satisfaction remains at almost equal levels (85%).

10.4. Use of further reintegration assistance programmes

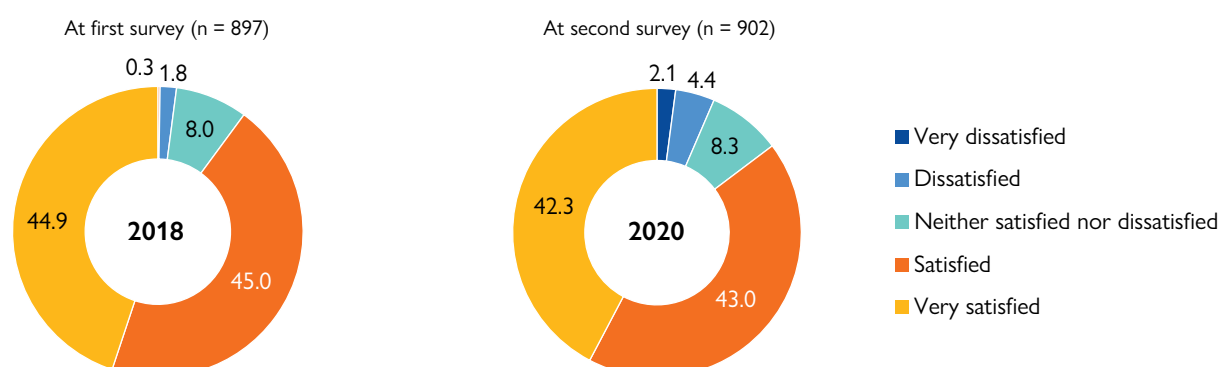
StarthilfePlus is one of numerous German and international reintegration assistance programmes which are implemented in different regions. The BMZ and European Union member States implement reintegration assistance programmes in partnership with one another.⁵⁵ A little over one fifth (22%) of respondents report having received additional assistance beyond the financial assistance provided by the StarthilfePlus programme, mostly from IOM, the GIZ, ERRIN and Caritas.⁵⁶

The additional assistance relates to three areas in particular: housing, business establishment and education or job-related training (see Figure 45). Accordingly, 13 per cent of all respondents received additional assistance in the area of housing, corresponding to more than half of the respondents who received additional assistance. A further 8 per cent received assistance for establishing a business, and 3 per cent of respondents received assistance in the area of education/further training. Additional assistance applies less frequently to everyday or medical needs. Reintegration

⁵⁵ Examples include programmes by the BMZ and the GIZ, as well as – during the period of the survey – programmes of ERRIN.

⁵⁶ More than 30 participants in Iraq mentioned programmes implemented by the service provider European Technology and Training Center (ETTC).

Figure 44. Satisfaction with the StarthilfePlus programme



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 897 (first survey), n = 902 (second survey), weighted.

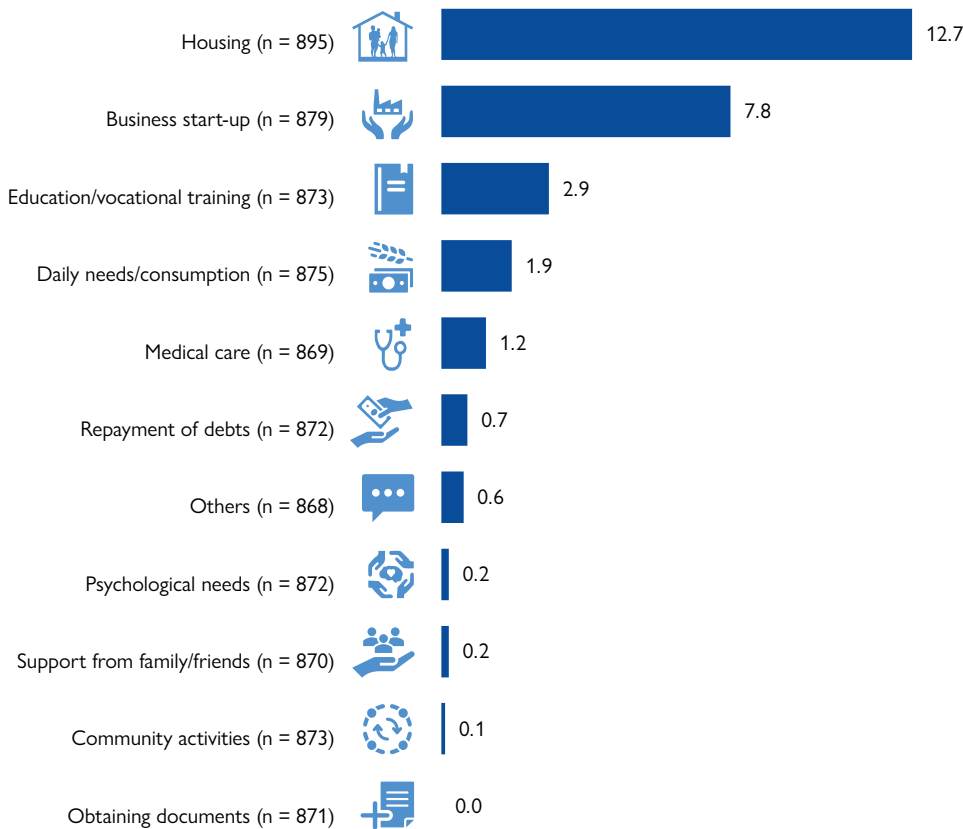
programmes mainly provide assistance aimed at securing livelihoods and, in particular, housing. Combined with the financial assistance of the StarthilfePlus programme, a potentially overlapping funding structure only arises in the area of housing, whereby the housing component of the StarthilfePlus programme may account for a large share of funding in this area. In other areas, the reintegration assistance is complementary: whereas the financial assistance provided by the StarthilfePlus programme is often used to meet daily needs and for medical purposes, other programmes focus more on economic reintegration and education. It should be mentioned, however, that only a small share of participants received additional assistance in this form, with the majority relying solely on assistance from the StarthilfePlus programme.

10.5. Further assistance needs

Reintegration assistance through the StarthilfePlus programme is provided within the first year after return. Other reintegration assistance measures (such as by the Return Centre “URA – The Bridge” in Kosovo³⁰) also predominantly focus on the early phase of return. For research and programme development, however, considerations of long-term reintegration processes and further assistance needs are also important.

Detailed examination of the different reintegration dimensions allows for the identification of possible additional reintegration needs. Economic

Figure 45. Share of persons with additional assistance from other reintegration programmes by area of assistance



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II, weighted.

Note: The respective total number n includes both those respondents who could not make use of any further measures and those who directly answered yes or no to a question about an area of further assistance. Responses such as “don’t know” or “no answer” are excluded.

reintegration support includes assistance aimed at the securing of independent livelihoods, such as assistance in setting up a business and finding employment. The structural dimension includes access to numerous essential goods and services. While individually oriented reintegration assistance is unable to improve the security situation, improvements in access to medical and psychological care, education and further training can be achieved. To support psychosocial reintegration, participation in community activities can be supported.

Most respondents (93%) report needing further assistance beyond the measures already in place. Participants were asked to state in which areas and to what extent further assistance would be important on a 5-point Likert scale (from not important to very important) (see Figure 46).

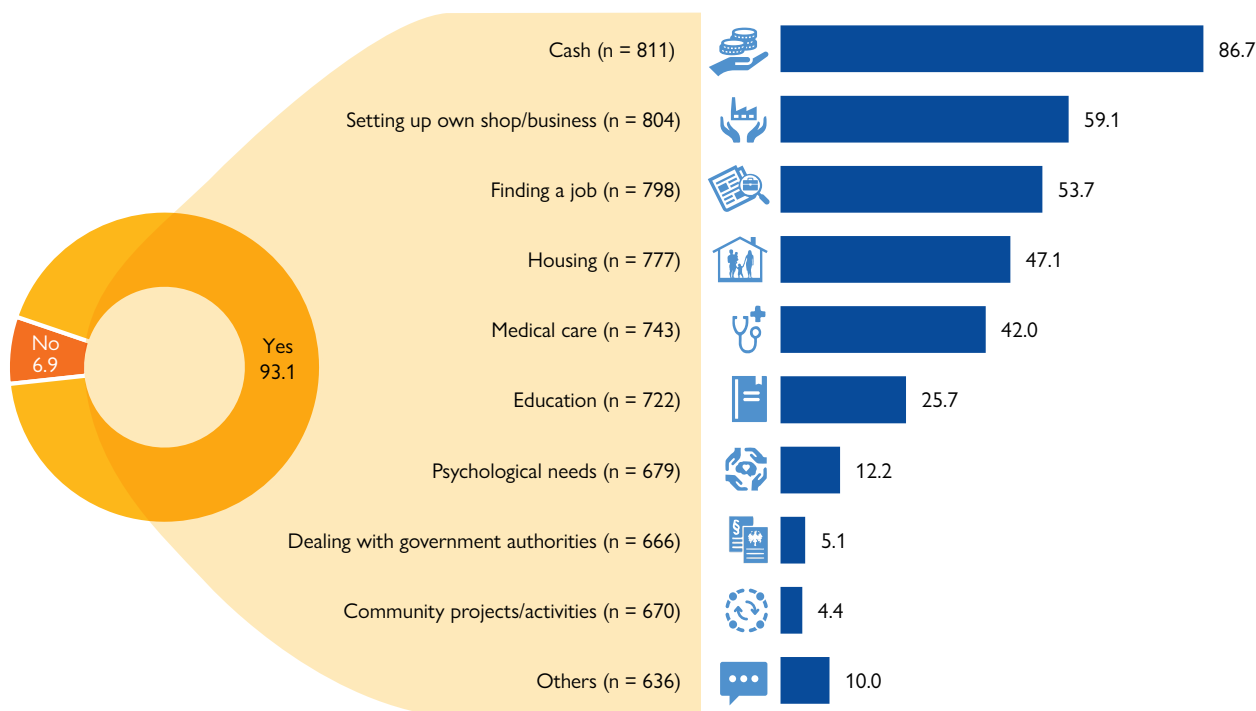
The vast majority (87%) said that additional flexible aid in the form of monetary assistance would continue to be important or very important to them. Only in the Russian Federation did fewer participants (64%) consider financial assistance to

be important. This form of assistance is not linked to specific reintegration processes of an economic, structural or psychosocial nature. Monetary assistance is deemed important by men (86%) and women (88%) in all places of return. The more difficulties respondents have in sustaining their livelihoods with their own income, the more they wish for further monetary assistance.

Other important needs relate to assistance with improving economic livelihoods. This includes assistance with the establishment of a business (59%) or with the search for employment (54%). These results should be interpreted in light of the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic, since many respondents suffered economic losses.

In countries with a large share of self-employed returnees, such as Nigeria (88%) and Afghanistan (74%), assistance for self-employment is noted comparatively frequently (see also Loschmann and Marchand, 2021). Assistance in the search for employment, on the other hand, is mentioned at a below-average frequency (5% and 46% respectively).

Figure 46. Areas in which further assistance is desired, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: Left in figure n = 883, weighted. Depicted is the share of respondents who consider an area of support to be (very) important. The support is (very) important if the respondents indicated 4 (important) to 5 (very important) on a 5-point scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). The number of valid responses varies due to non-response.

In countries such as Iraq, Georgia and Lebanon, two thirds of respondents report having needs in both areas, while in Armenia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, fewer than half of respondents do so.

Regarding the structural dimension of reintegration, many respondents assess assistance in the area of housing and medical care as important, while a smaller share points to other assistance needs. Almost half (47%) rate further assistance for housing as important, a view that applies all the more the worse respondents assess their own housing situation. Another 42 per cent would welcome further assistance in the field of medical care. Furthermore, around a quarter (26%) see education as an important area for additional assistance. Slightly more than a tenth (12%) mention psychological needs.

Overall, men perceive economic assistance (in establishing a business and searching for employment) to be important more often than women. Regarding structural assistance, however, the opposite holds true: the share of those who consider assistance in these areas to be important is larger among women than among men in all areas. Assistance for

medical care, for instance, is considered important for 54 per cent of women and merely 35 per cent of men. The differences between men and women regarding their views of economic and structural assistance needs persists across all age groups. The desire for assistance in securing an independent livelihood, however, decreases considerably for the age group 50 and above, while the desire for additional assistance in the area of medical care increases for that age group. Single women express the need for assistance in finding employment more frequently than single men, while the opposite is true for returnees who are married.

Assistance in psychosocial reintegration – represented here by assistance for community activities – appears less important to respondents. Around 4 per cent view assistance for community activities as important. The low relevance corresponds to the high level of satisfaction of respondents in social areas. However, a notable share of respondents in Ukraine (24%) and in Lebanon (12%) consider assistance for community activities important.

11

Onward migration considerations

At a glance

- Approximately three years after returning, almost all respondents who participated in the second survey were still living in the country to which they returned. Slightly more than a tenth no longer live at the same place they were living at the time of the first survey.
 - About half the respondents say they thought about migrating again within the country or abroad in the 12 months leading up to the survey. Those respondents who want to leave the country frequently mention Germany as a possible destination. The majority of survey participants who are considering onward migration favour regular pathways. Out of all the returnees interviewed, only 1 in 20 is making initial preparations for migration in the near future.
 - The most frequently mentioned reasons for the intention to migrate are economic. Especially in cases where income is not sufficient to meet daily needs, participants hope for better employment prospects elsewhere.
- Other reasons for wanting to leave the place of residence are structural conditions, such as poor health care or security concerns. A further important motive for migrating is better educational opportunities abroad.
- Those who do not plan to migrate within the next year, but are considering doing so at a later stage, are not yet able to afford migration or are constrained by COVID-19 restrictions. Proximity to family is another reason many returnees are currently staying at their place of return.
 - For many respondents who are not considering migrating, proximity to family and a good life at the place of return are reasons for staying. At the same time, many also say they cannot afford the costs of migration. Previous negative migration experiences also keep some of the returnees from migrating again.

In current academic discourse, migration is no longer understood as a linear process, but increasingly as a complex process that also includes temporary and circular migratory movements (Castles and Ozkul, 2014; Skeldon, 2012). Sustainable reintegration allows returnees to consider onward migration decisions as a choice rather than as a necessity. Conversely, the voluntariness of onward migration does not automatically imply sustainable reintegration.

Accordingly, no direct link can be implied between sustainable reintegration and onward migration after return (IOM, 2017a). Often, migration and return decisions are not made once, but repeatedly. After a migration, a stay abroad and a subsequent return, further migratory movements may take place within national borders or internationally, in the short term, long term or repeatedly. Decisions about onward migration may be made by single or multiple

individuals within the household and extended social networks. Thus, both individuals who are part of the outmigration network, as well as immobile individuals may be involved in, as well as affected by, the decision-making processes (Bermudez and Paraschivescu, 2021; Jeffery and Murison, 2011). People with migration experiences are more likely to migrate again than people who have never had such an experience. Accordingly, migration can also be understood as a learned strategy. It should not, however, be regarded in isolation of other aspects, such as migration experiences, opportunities and motives (Bernard and Perales, 2021:4ff.; see also Ajzen, 1991).

This chapter aims to address the reasons for staying in the place of return from the perspective of respondents. Furthermore, the extent to which respondents intend to migrate again and the underlying reasons for such intentions are analysed. This includes the stage of consideration, the geographical destination and the possible time frame of a renewed migration.⁵⁷ Furthermore,

returnees were asked whether they would also consider irregular migration (see Figure 47).

11.1. Onward migration: Considerations, intentions and preparations

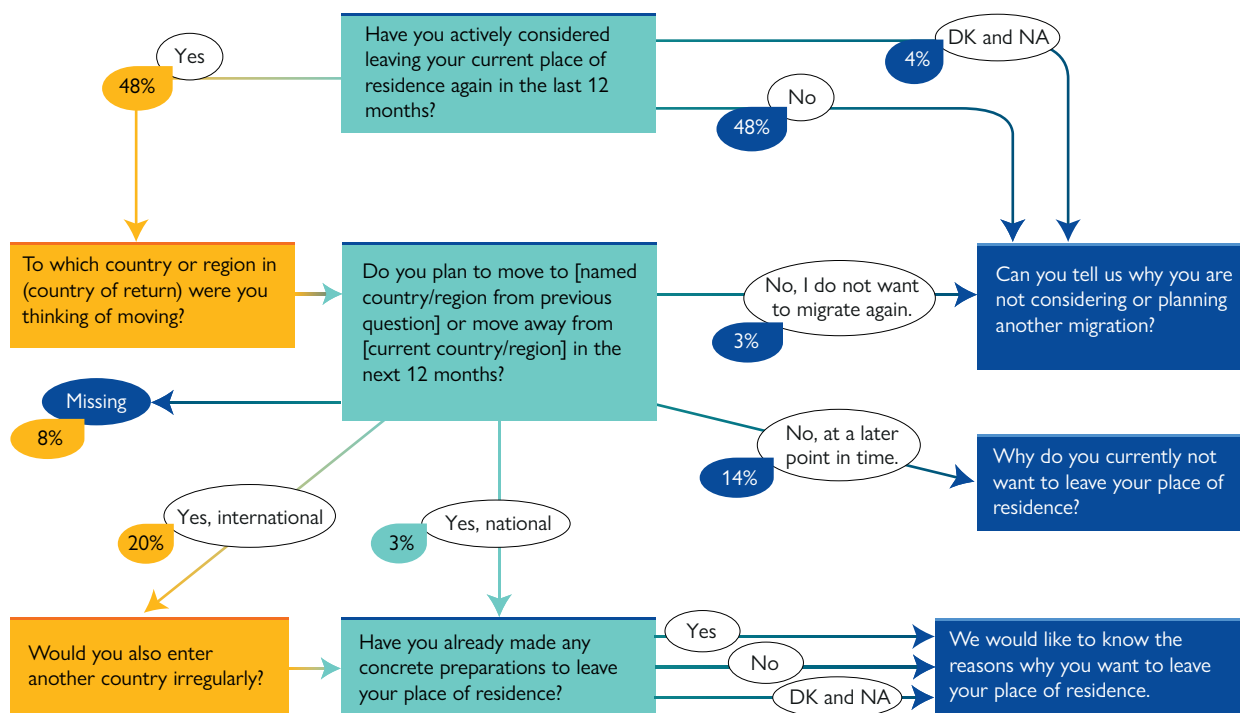
Roughly every second returnee (48%) thought about onward migration in the 12 months preceding the survey. Of those mentioning a specific country to which they would like to migrate (n = 343),⁵⁸ 87 per cent named Germany, with the other answers distributed across 19 other countries. As such, one third of all survey participants (33%) considered an onward migration to Germany in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The other half of respondents (48%) said they had not considered leaving their place of residence

57 Those who did not provide any further information in this regard (8% of all respondents) were not asked any further questions about their onward migration intentions.

58 Only respondents who had already thought about onward migration were asked about possible destination countries and regions (see Figure 47).

Figure 47. Question flow on the topic of onward migration



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: N = 906, weighted. DK = I don't know; NA = no answer.

again in the 12 months before the survey.⁵⁹ At the time of the first survey, roughly the same share of respondents said they had not thought about migrating again.⁶⁰

A central theme of analyses on the causes and motivations for international migration is the relationship between migration intentions and the actual realization of migration (Carling, 2002; Naujoks, 2020; Huber et al., 2022). Current research indicates that there can be a large discrepancy between the intention to move across borders and the actual decision to migrate. Intentions can, however, be a reliable indicator for actual migration (Tjaden et al., 2019; Docquier et al., 2014), but they are strongly dependent on individual (such as sex, age and previous migration experiences) and contextual (such as social ties, economic and political context) factors (Carling, 2002). These factors need to be weighed against one another before an actual decision can be taken – regardless of previous intentions and considerations (ibid.). Of all individuals who intend to migrate, those with the financial wherewithal, information and support through social contacts, and can thus undertake a migration, are more likely to actually decide in favour of migration (Carling, 2014; Monti, 2021). Hence, beyond migration intentions, the ability to actually do so is also relevant (Carling, 2002:12ff.). Moreover, general societal narratives about the desirability of migration in addition to the social environment play a role in both migration intentions and migration decisions. Given the complexity of the decision-making process, no statements can be made about actual movements based on inquiries about migration wishes (Naujoks, 2022:28).

The complexity of the decision-making process for or against migration is also reflected in this study. As such, not all those who have thought about onward migration intend to do so immediately. A small share of respondents (3%) has considered migrating, but says they have not pursued such considerations any further. An additional 14 per cent of all respondents report the wish to migrate only at a later time.

Roughly a quarter of all respondents intend to move onward within the next 12 months. The majority plans to migrate abroad (20%), while a smaller proportion of 3 per cent does not name a destination or intends to move within the country. Among respondents who plan to leave the country of return, more than half (56%) say they favour regular migration only and almost all (92%) name Germany as possible destination country. Male returnees report an intention to move onward within the next year (28%) twice as often as female returnees (14%).

Respondents who indicated a wish to migrate in the foreseeable future were further asked whether they had already made concrete preparations. One in four respondents (23%) in this group say they had. Consequently, out of all respondents, a share of around 5 per cent have thought about migrating again, intend to do so within the next 12 months, and have already made initial preparations.

59 A further 4 per cent of respondents did not provide any information on the question regarding their considerations on onward migration (“don’t know”/“no answer”). Since this group also answered further questions on the topic of onward migration, the overall sample has still been used as the basis for classifying respondents into different groups.

60 The first survey used a different form to inquire about onward migration considerations (see Schmitt et al., 2019). As such, statements from the first and second surveys cannot be directly compared.

11.2. Reasons for onward migration

Those who have considered onward migration within the last 12 months and aim to do so within the next year were further asked about their reasons (see Figure 48). Most (84%) named at least three reasons. Economic reasons, such as a lack of financial means to cover living expenses (84%) and the prospect for better job opportunities (76%), were mentioned particularly often.

Structural factors are also mentioned by almost all respondents as a reason for onward migration. Of those, two thirds point to poor local health care (65%) or the prospect of better educational opportunities elsewhere (63%) as reasons for onward migration. Some respondents elaborate further, saying that specific treatment options are currently unavailable at their current place of residence. Furthermore, around one in two respondents cite a lack of safety at their current place of residence (55%), poor housing conditions (54%) or a lack of trust in government agencies (49%) as reasons for a potential migration.⁶¹

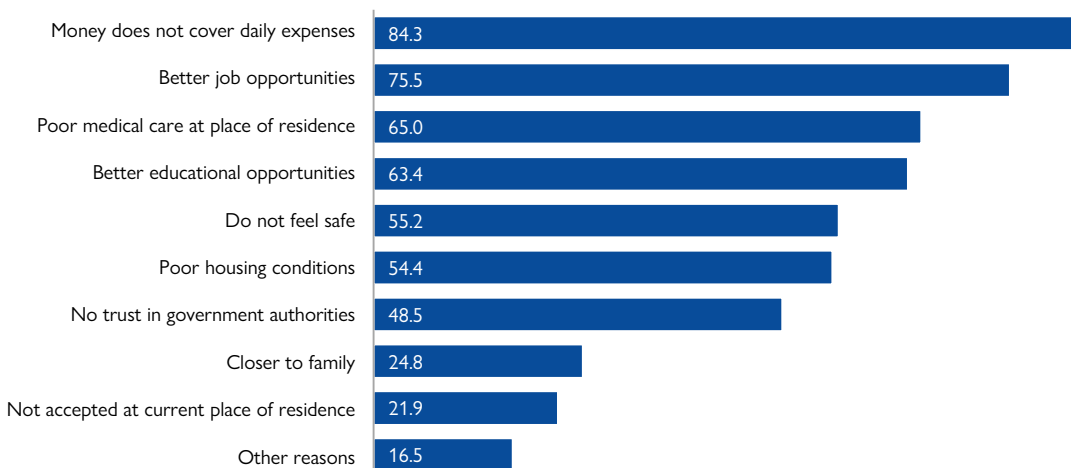
Social factors are mentioned somewhat less frequently overall. About a quarter of respondents mention proximity to family as a reason for onward movement (25%). One in five respondents does not feel accepted at their current place of residence (22%).

11.3. Reasons for postponing migration

Respondents who have thought about migrating again but do not plan to do so within the next year (14%) mention several factors as playing a role (see Figure 49). Obstructions to onward migration such as a lack of financial resources and the need for more time to prepare are the most frequent reasons. Around half of respondents in this group also mention COVID-19-related constraints as a barrier to migration. Beyond these barriers to a near-term onward migration, social inclusion at their place of residence prompts many respondents to stay for the time being.

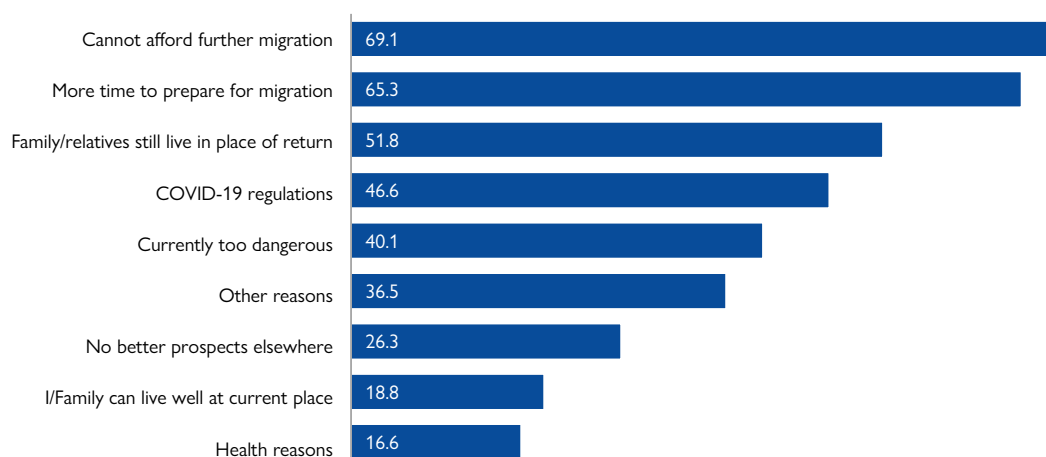
⁶¹ Respondents who chose the option "Others" were able to provide additional information. Some said this fear was related to the general situation in the country of return or that they felt threatened due to their religion.

Figure 48. Reasons for onward migration, in per cent



Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 240, weighted; multiple responses possible.

Figure 49. Reasons for postponing onward migration, in per cent

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n=99, weighted; multiple responses possible.

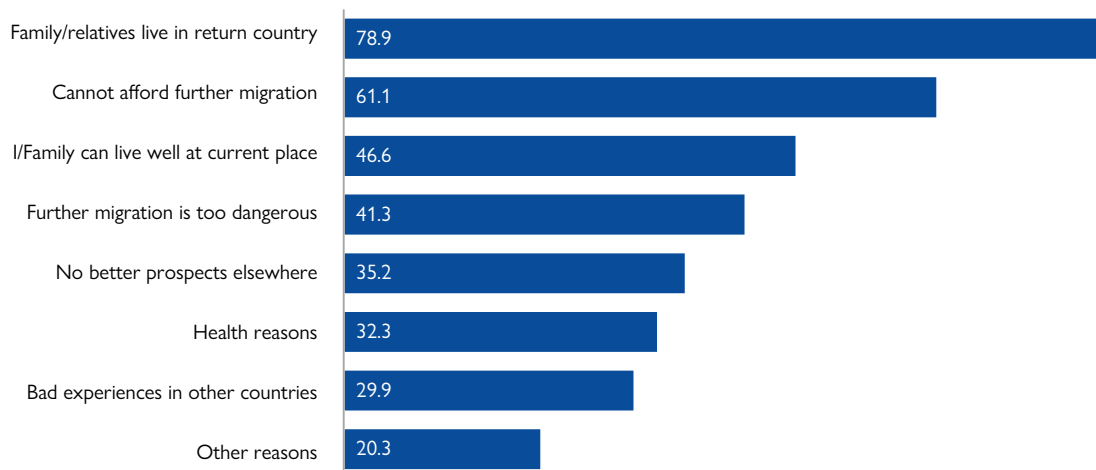
11.4. Motives for staying at the place of return

Respondents who do not intend to migrate again give several reasons for staying at their place of return, with more than half giving three or more reasons (see Figure 50). The decisive factor for staying is relations to family and life satisfaction at the place of return. Having family or relatives living in the same place is important to four in five respondents. Some respondents mention caring for young, elderly or sick family members as a reason for staying in the place of return. Furthermore, almost half cite as a reason the fact that they or their family can lead a good life as a reason for staying.

Other frequently mentioned reasons for staying indicate that migration no longer seems feasible due to a lack of resources or capacities. Almost two thirds of respondents say they cannot afford onward migration. One third of respondents with no intentions of migrating are unable to do so because of health reasons. In addition, it appears that individual migration experiences and existing information about available migration options influence onward migration decisions. Accordingly, 41 per cent consider migration to be too dangerous.

About a third (35%) does not expect improved prospects through onward migration or (30%) had negative experiences during previous stays abroad. Other reasons mentioned (20%) include the desire to (continue to) invest in their own business and attachment to the place of return. In some cases, the survey participants point to improvements in the local security situation, a desire to continue migrating only via regular routes, worries about migrating alone as a woman or the COVID-19 pandemic as reasons. This indicates that, in addition to the frequently mentioned reasons previously discussed, a variety of aspects inform individual decisions against onward migration.

Overall, it seems clear that considerations, intentions and concrete plans of respondents regarding onward migration differ. These range from not having considered migration at all to establishing concrete plans for migration in the near future. Often, several reasons play a role when considering whether to migrate again or to stay (for the time being) – whereby these intersect for many respondents. Both considerations of onward migration and motivations for staying in the place of return are influenced by structural, economic and social circumstances.

Figure 50. Reasons for staying at the place of return, in per cent

Source: StarthilfePlus Study II.

Note: n = 465, weighted; multiple responses possible.

12

Key findings

Migrants in Germany have received assistance for voluntary return and reintegration for over 40 years. Returnees can take reintegration preparation courses before departure within the framework of the so-called Return Preparation Measures (*Rückkehrvorbereitende Maßnahmen* in German). In other programmes, like REAG/GARP, the focus is on administrative assistance for voluntary return and financial assistance for reintegration. In the countries of return, reintegration programmes such as the federal programme StarthilfePlus or European Union-funded reintegration programmes, provide financial and in-kind assistance, for example assistance in the area of housing, job search and psychosocial support.

The StarthilfePlus programme is an important instrument for voluntary return and reintegration assistance. It was introduced in 2017 and has been continuously developed since then. The programme is funded by BAMF and implemented by IOM. The aim is to promote sustainable reintegration with a focus on assistance in the first year after return. Depending on nationality and the country of return, the StarthilfePlus programme has provided in-kind assistance in addition to financial assistance since 2018.

The StarthilfePlus programme is accompanied with research by IOM and BAMF Research Centre. The StarthilfePlus Study II presents key results of the accompanying research and focuses on long-term reintegration processes of returnees. The analysis is based on survey data from 906 study

participants in a total of 9 countries of return. All surveyed returnees participated in the StarthilfePlus programme and received financial assistance. They departed Germany between 2017 and 2018 and were interviewed twice. The first survey took place from 2018 to 2019, around eight months after return on average. The second survey was conducted approximately three years after return, in late 2020 or early 2021. To examine the reintegration of female returnees in greater depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 female returnees in Armenia, Iraq and Lebanon in addition to the standardized survey.

The StarthilfePlus Study II is one of the first comprehensive surveys of migrants who have returned to various countries from Germany and, for the first time, allows for the observation of changes in reintegration over time. In addition to the analysis of reintegration, this study looks at the use of financial assistance within the framework of the StarthilfePlus programme and its significance from the perspective of those who have returned.

The findings are not representative of all voluntary returnees, as they relate exclusively to persons who have made full use of the StarthilfePlus assistance and could be reached for the second survey approximately three years after return. Despite these limitations, the StarthilfePlus Study II provides relevant evidence-based insights into reintegration processes and formulates impulses for the further development of return and reintegration assistance.

Returnees are a heterogeneous group.

Around half of all study participants have returned to Iraq. Other respondents live in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Returnees living in both rural and urban regions were reached for the study, with about 55 per cent of the study participants living in larger cities with 50,000 inhabitants or more.

The respondents in the weighted sample are relatively young. Of the study participants, 47 per cent are below the age of 35. Men make up the majority of respondents, while women comprise 35 per cent. At the time of departure from Germany, a slight majority of study participants were married. Over time, the marital status of some returnees has changed. Almost 40 per cent of those single and 10 per cent of those divorced or widowed have married and started a family. At the same time, the share of those divorced has also increased over time, from 4 per cent to 9 per cent. Around 58 per cent of surveyed returnees live in extended households that include relatives in addition to the nuclear family.

Structural conditions make reintegration more difficult.

The StarthilfePlus Study II explores how returnees assess their access to important services and infrastructure, as well as the security situation at their place of return. Over time, many respondents perceive a deterioration of important structural conditions for reintegration. For example, study participants' satisfaction with the security situation has decreased in many sample countries since the first survey in 2018. Three years after their return, respondents in Lebanon and Afghanistan are particularly dissatisfied with the security situation.

A majority of the study participants have access to medical care at their place of return. Yet the share of those with access to medical care has decreased over time. While around 91 per cent of respondents said they could see a doctor if necessary in 2018, only 82 per cent of returnees said the same in 2020. Around 5 per cent of all study participants lost access to medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Returnees in rural areas are able to see a doctor when needed less often than respondents in urban areas.

Respondents have little trust in State structures, and returnees do not have access to public infrastructure everywhere. More than half of study participants say they can only somewhat rely on the police and judiciary in their place of return, or not at all. About one third of surveyed returnees rate access to public services as poor or very poor, while another third rate it as good or very good. The differences are due to the public infrastructure of the countries to which the study participants returned. But the size of the place of residence is also important when it comes to access to public services. Returnees in rural areas and in small towns note poor access to public services more often.

Overall, it appears that structural reintegration is a particular challenge for the returnees interviewed when they live in societies with low political and economic stability. In some countries, moreover, security cannot be guaranteed in the long term. This is particularly evident in the cases of Afghanistan and Ukraine. The structural conditions for returnees are likely to have deteriorated significantly in Afghanistan due to political upheavals after the Taliban took power in 2021, and due to the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine in February 2022, although this cannot be depicted within the scope of this study.

If structural conditions for reintegration deteriorate longer term, returnees have limited opportunities to realize their life plans at their place of return. To counteract such influences, measures to strengthen infrastructure, health care and peacebuilding programmes, such as those implemented by the Refugee Sector Project of the GIZ, are of central importance.⁶²

The housing situation is satisfactory three years after the return.

Around three years after return, three quarters of respondents live in a private flat or house. Roughly 18 per cent live with relatives or friends, and only few respondents live in shared accommodation or other types of housing. Overall, the quality of housing seems to be satisfactory to respondents. Three in four rate the housing situation as adequate, good or very good.

⁶² See online: www.giz.de/de/weltweit/83450.html.

Because sustainable housing is an important goal of reintegration assistance, and because participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II frequently state that they have spent the financial assistance they received on rent and housing, the findings regarding the stability of respondent housing three years after return could indicate a positive impact of the assistance measures. This remains an assumption, however, as a data-based impact analysis is not possible due to methodological limitations.

Earned income is often insufficient for covering daily needs.

The share of those with occupation has increased significantly over time. Approximately eight months after return, 41 per cent of study participants between the ages of 18 and 65 were employed or self-employed. Three years after return, 64 per cent of working-age respondents generate income from occupation. The types of income generated independently also include income from pensions or rent, with about 9 per cent of study participants generating independent income exclusively from these sources.

Although many returnees interviewed generate their own income, three out of four respondents find it difficult to cover their daily needs and those of their financial dependants. Many say they are looking for other work opportunities due to poor working conditions or low earnings. In 2020, for example, almost 90 per cent of respondents in Afghanistan report being self-employed or employed. At the same time, around 82 per cent of the returnees surveyed in Afghanistan say they are unable or barely able to cover the cost of living with the income they earn.

Participants in the study further note that the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly affected their economic situation. Accordingly, 71 per cent of respondents have lost income since the outbreak of the pandemic. Four out of five returnees report that it has become more difficult to cover daily living expenses.

Economic activity does not always lead to sufficient income. Income-generating measures, such as the promotion of employment in return regions and the promotion of self-employment in combination with access to microcredits, should be expanded further.

Returnees use the financial assistance mainly for daily needs as well as for housing and health expenses.

Overall, 85 per cent of the surveyed returnees are satisfied or very satisfied with the StarthilfePlus programme. At the time of the second survey – around three years after return – the vast majority of returnees had spent the financial assistance provided by StarthilfePlus in full. Since generating sufficient income is a continuing challenge for returnees, financial assistance was important for around 57 per cent for covering everyday needs. The assistance provided also supported housing and medical care.

Beyond covering daily needs, returnees invested the financial assistance in the establishment of independent livelihoods and in education. For 19 per cent of the respondents, the assistance received at the place of return was important for economic independence. For another 8 per cent, the assistance was helpful for financing education.

Of all respondents, 22 per cent received assistance from other reintegration programmes in addition to the financial assistance from the StarthilfePlus programme. This primarily applies to assistance in specific reintegration areas, above all housing and business establishment. To support long-term reintegration prospects, it may be desirable to coordinate regional programmes. In this regard, it would be important to pursue a process-oriented, holistic approach that ranges from assistance in the decision to return and preparation for departure up to and including reintegration.⁶³

Financial assistance is highly valued by the respondents due to its flexibility.

Three years after return, around 93 per cent of returnees express the wish for further assistance. Monetary assistance has the highest priority among the respondents since it can be used flexibly for a variety of purposes. In addition, study participants express a need for assistance in finding income-generating employment or in establishing their own business. Assistance for housing or medical care is also important. For smaller groups of respondents,

⁶³ See also the recommendations of the OECD study on sustainable reintegration (OECD, 2020).

there is also a need for assistance in the areas of education and psychosocial care.

Reintegration assistance that combines flexible monetary assistance with needs-oriented, in-kind assistance at the place of return seems to best meet the needs of returnees. Against this backdrop, the current orientation of the StarthilfePlus programme, which includes components of monetary and in-kind assistance, appears useful.

Returnees are satisfied with their relationships with family, friends and neighbourhood.

Respondents' satisfaction with their social contacts has increased over time. Three years after return, around 92 per cent of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their relationships with family and friends. Of the respondents, 80 per cent are satisfied or very satisfied with their relations in the neighbourhood.

Despite the good social integration in the immediate social environment, around 38 per cent of study participants feel little or no sense of belonging to the community in their place of return. Around 30 per cent of respondents say they have experienced discrimination after their return sometimes, often or very often. The share of study participants who regularly experience discrimination is particularly high in Nigeria (87%), Lebanon (42%) and Iraq (40%).

A more intensive social engagement on the topic of migration and return at the places of return could help reduce social reintegration barriers, thereby enabling the better social integration of returnees. Integration information and awareness-raising projects, which reduce stigmas and promote mutual understanding, could be useful. Relevant actors for the implementation of such approaches could be civil society self-organizations, including those of returnees.⁶⁴

About half of returnees are thinking about a renewed migration.

Around 48 per cent of the respondents have thought about a renewed migration, but only 5 per cent have made initial preparations for migrating in the near future. The majority of study participants who intend to migrate again are in favour of regular pathways.

Economic factors are among the most frequently cited reasons for an intended onward migration with generated income not being sufficient to cover costs of living and study participants hoping for better job opportunities elsewhere. Other reasons for leaving their place of residence include structural conditions, such as poor health care or the lack of a sense of security. Educational opportunities abroad are also an important motive for those thinking about migration.

For many respondents who are not considering migration, proximity to family and relatives in addition to a good quality of life weigh in favour of staying at the place of return. Simultaneously, many note that they are unable to afford renewed migration. Previous negative migration experiences also influence the migration intentions of some returnees.

In the face of persisting structural and economic reintegration barriers, returnees express the intention to improve their living situation through spatial mobility despite individual reintegration assistance. Through measures of coordinated migration management, opportunities should be created to enable migration in a humane, safe and orderly manner. This not only concerns migration options to Germany or the European Union, but also impacts cooperation with neighbouring regions to establish fair migration policies.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ See also the recommendations of the IOM study on community-based reintegration approaches (IOM, 2017b).

⁶⁵ See the 360-degree approach of the BMZ's Perspektive Heimat programme, as well as counselling services within the framework of the GIZ's Migration and Diaspora programme.

Returnees aged 50 or above are less likely to feel a sense of community belonging.

Overall, 18 per cent of the returnees who participated in the StarthilfePlus Study II are in their later adult years, defined as aged 50 or over. Respondents in this age group have access to public services less often than study participants in other age groups, and they are also less satisfied with their economic situation. Access to health care differs for respondents in their later adult years depending on the country and place in which they live. However, they face higher barriers in accessing psychological support.

There are no major differences between age groups when it comes to satisfaction with relations in the neighbourhood. Respondents in their later adult years also experience discrimination less often than younger returnees. But the study shows that the sense of community belonging among returnees decreases with age, as does overall life satisfaction. While 36 per cent of those under the age of 35 are generally satisfied with their current life, this applies to 21 per cent of those aged 50 or above.

The findings of the StarthilfePlus Study II indicate that particular attention should be paid to the living situation of people in their later adult years during preparations for return and in reintegration assistance. To this end, specific challenges and assistance needs of returnees in their later adult years should be identified in practice and research.

Women have high reintegration potentials and significant hurdles at the same time.

Around 35 per cent of all participants in the StarthilfePlus Study II are women. The surveyed women and men perceive the structural conditions at the place of return differently, with women assessing the security situation more positively than men. Women returnees also express more frequently that they can rely on the police and justice system. These differences in assessment could be ascribed a greater number of interviews being conducted with women who have returned to countries with a relatively good public infrastructure, such as the Russian Federation or Armenia. Further validation of this correlation through in-depth analyses is necessary.

In terms of structural reintegration, the women interviewed fare slightly better overall than the men. Access to health services, however, is an exception. Over time, such access has deteriorated more significantly for women than for men. While around 93 per cent of female returnees said they had access to medical care in 2018, that share had dropped to 79 per cent by 2020 – around three years after their return. By comparison, 84 per cent of the men surveyed said they could see a doctor if needed. In the qualitative interviews, female returnees emphasized that they are primarily concerned with the health of their children, spouses or close relatives. Given the high costs of medical care, the women interviewed tended to set their own medical issues aside and only seek medical care later or not at all.

Just 38 per cent of women said they generate income from agriculture, employment or self-employment, as compared to 75 per cent of the men surveyed. Qualitative interviews suggest that women do not generally choose the role, but that their economic inactivity seems to be forced upon them by the disadvantageous circumstances in the labour market. Almost all female returnees who participated in the qualitative interviews wish to work and contribute financially to their families' income yet find their access to the labour market limited due to childcare duties or the obligation to care for sick family members.

Men are more satisfied with contacts in the neighbourhood than women. The share of men who said they were satisfied or very satisfied increased by 6 percentage points between the two surveys. Such an increase cannot be observed among women. It is presumed that women's migration experiences partly contribute to their more critical perception of their social environment. Women in Iraq and Lebanon in particular emphasize that they only became aware of gender-specific restrictions and prejudices in public life after their return.

The desire among female returnees to earn an independent income and their view on gender-specific disadvantages stem from a high level of motivation to actively contribute to improving their living situation at the place of return. This reintegration potential of female returnees should be addressed specifically and activated by assistance programmes. Depending on the return context, the specific participation barriers for returning women

should be identified and reduced through individual assistance. Women's participation is an important concern of international cooperation for peace and security.⁶⁶ Moreover, women in refugee situations are receiving increasing attention in development cooperation.⁶⁷ Women returnees could also be given greater consideration in the transnational and regional approaches of development cooperation.

Sustainable reintegration cannot be reduced to economic participation.

The StarthilfePlus Study II employs a total of 16 indicators in developing the reintegration index pertaining to reintegration status around three years after return. The index shows that roughly 37 per cent of study participants achieve a high overall reintegration level. But the situation for the 16 per cent of returnees with a low reintegration level is challenging. Beyond economic challenges, the key hurdles facing returnees are the lack of long-term access to services and infrastructure. Furthermore, a perception of low security has a negative impact on the reintegration index. Thus, reintegration cannot be reduced to economic participation alone. In addition to employment and economic independence, returnee participation in the place of return along with security considerations should be promoted.

Reintegration does not only depend on the national return context.

The reintegration status established in the StarthilfePlus Study II differs depending on the country in which interviews took place. Returnees who achieve a relatively high reintegration level overall more often live in Georgia, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, for example. But even in these countries, some people face numerous challenges three years after return.

Overall, the heterogeneous distribution of reintegration statuses in the countries surveyed shows that returnees in a supposedly equal (national) context have unequal opportunities and access based on such factors as, for example, sex or age. Reintegration assistance should not, therefore, be directed solely at the origins of potential returnees but should also address cross-origin target groups and pilot assistance specifically for them. Specific offers for returnee women, returnees in their later adult years or returnees in rural areas could reduce inequalities.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ See the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (in German).

⁶⁷ See information on the BMZ's Action Network on Forced Displacement – Women as Agents of Change.

⁶⁸ See also the recommendations of a study on group-specific return preparation and reintegration support (Olivier-Mensah et al., 2020).

Annex

Questionnaire for StarthilfePlus Study II

Legend:

DK: Do not know

PNA: Prefer not to answer

First, we would like to ask you some questions on the financial support you received for your return from the StarthilfePlus programme.

1. Have you spent the second instalment of StarthilfePlus, received on [Date], completely, partially or not at all yet?
 - Not at all yet
 - Yes, partially (Continue with 3.)
 - Yes, completely (Continue with 4.)
 - DK (Continue with 5.)
 - PNA (Continue with 5.)

2. In which of the following areas are you planning to spend the second instalment of StarthilfePlus? Please answer yes or no in each case. Are you planning to use the money ...
 - ... For daily needs/consumption, e.g. food, toiletries or clothing?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... For setting up your own shop/business?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... To pay off debts you had before your journey to Germany?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... For education or vocational training?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... For medical care?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... For housing? (This includes renovation, additions, rent, buying property.)
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... For obtaining documents or having these recognized?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA
 - ... To lend or give it as a gift to family or friends?
 - No
 - Yes
 - DK
 - PNA

... For projects or activities in the community (e.g. religious, cultural or sporting activities)?

No Yes DK PNA

... For psychological needs?

No Yes DK PNA

... For other purposes (miscellaneous)?

No Yes DK PNA

(Continue with 5.)

3. [Filter, if 1 = yes, partially] You have so far spent only part of the financial support. In which of the following areas would you like to spend the remaining sum? Please answer yes or no in each case. Are you planning to use the money ...

... For daily needs/consumption, e.g. food, toiletries or clothing?

No Yes DK PNA

... For setting up your own shop/business?

No Yes DK PNA

... To pay off debts you had before your journey to Germany?

No Yes DK PNA

... For education or vocational training?

No Yes DK PNA

... For medical care?

No Yes DK PNA

... For housing? (This includes renovation, additions, rent, buying property.)

No Yes DK PNA

... For obtaining documents or having these recognized?

No Yes DK PNA

... To lend or give as a gift to family or friends?

No Yes DK PNA

... For projects or activities in the community (e.g. religious, cultural or sporting activities)?

No Yes DK PNA

... For psychological needs?

No Yes DK PNA

... For other purposes (miscellaneous)?

No Yes DK PNA

4. [Filter, if 1 = yes, completely] Could you please tell us if you spent the money from the second instalment of StarthilfePlus on one of following areas and if yes, how important the support was for the areas you mentioned? In case you used the money on one of the categories, please answer on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

How important was the support for daily needs/consumption, e.g. food, toiletries or clothing?

1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support in setting up your own shop/business?

1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support in paying off debts you had before your journey to Germany?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for education or vocational training?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for medical care?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for housing? (This includes renovations, additions, rent, buying property.)
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for obtaining documents or having these recognized?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support in supporting family or friends?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for projects or activities in the community (e.g. religious, cultural or sporting activities)?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for psychological needs?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

How important was the support for other purposes (miscellaneous)?
 1 (Not important) 2 3 4 5 (Very important)
 Not used at all DK PNA

5. Did the financial support from the StarthilfePlus programme help you in settling in [Country of return]? You can state whether it helped you extremely, very, moderately, slightly or not at all.

Extremely Very Moderately Slightly Not at all DK PNA

6. Do you find yourself in need of further support from return and reintegration programmes?

No Yes DK PNA

(If yes, continue with 7. Otherwise, continue with 8.)

7. [Filter, if 6 = yes]. Please state for the following areas whether further support would be important for you. You can rate each of the following options as either very important, important, fairly important, slightly important or not important. How important would further support be ...

... In the form of cash?

Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... In finding a job?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For setting up your own shop/business?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For education?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For medical care?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For improving your housing situation?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For dealing with government authorities?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For projects or activities in the community (e.g. religious, cultural or sporting activities)?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For psychological needs?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

... For other purposes (miscellaneous)?

- Very important Important Fairly important
 Slightly important Not important DK PNA

8. How satisfied are you with the StarthilfePlus programme as a whole? You can answer whether you are very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the assistance.

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied
 Very dissatisfied DK PNA

9. Since your return, have you received additional reintegration assistance in addition to the financial assistance?

- No Yes DK PNA

(If yes, continue with 10. Otherwise, continue with 12.)

10. [Filter, if 9 = yes] Who provided this support?

- [Free text] DK PNA

11. In which areas have you been receiving support? (Instructions: Categories are not read out; only applicable ones selected.)
 ... For daily needs/consumption, e.g. food, toiletries or clothing?
 ... For setting up your own shop/business?
 ... To pay off debts you had before your journey to Germany?
 ... For education or vocational training?
 ... For medical care?
 ... For housing?
 ... For obtaining documents or having these recognized?
 ... For lending or gifting it to family and friends?
 ... For projects or activities in the community (e.g. religious, cultural or sporting activities)?
 ... For psychological needs?
 ... For other purposes (miscellaneous)?
 No Yes DK PNA
12. How satisfied are you overall with your decision to return to [Country of return]? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?
 Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
 DK PNA

Housing situation and household

We now would like to know more about your housing situation and household.

13. In which country and province/region are you living right now?
 Country _____ [Drop down]
 Administrative district/Province _____ [Free text]
 Return country (Continue with 16.)
 Other country
14. [Filter, if 13 = other country] In what way did you enter [Country]?
 With residence permit by way of regular entry for work, education or family
 Applied for asylum when entering
 Undocumented
 In a different way, that is, _____[Free text]
 DK
 PNA
15. Are you planning to travel onwards to another country?
 No Yes, to [Country] DK PNA (Continue with 17.)
16. [Filter, if 13 = return country] Did you move to a different village or city since the last survey?
 No Yes DK PNA
 (If yes, continue with 17. Otherwise, continue with 19.)
17. [Filter, if 13 = other country or 16 = yes] How many inhabitants does the place you currently live in have: up to 5,000 inhabitants, up to 50,000 inhabitants, up to 500,000 inhabitants or more than 500,000 inhabitants?
 Up to 5,000 inhabitants
 5,001 to 50,000 inhabitants
 50,001 to 500,000 inhabitants

- More than 500,000 inhabitants
- DK
- PNA

18. I will now read out several statements to you. Please answer whether the following aspects mentioned played any role in your decision to change your place of residence:

I felt unsafe in the old place.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

I wanted to return to my previous place of residence.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

I had a house/flat in the place of residence.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

I wanted to be closer to my family/friends.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

I thought it would be easier to find a job in the new place of residence.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

The new place of residence offers better schools, universities or further educational opportunities.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

Medical care is better in the place of residence.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

I had other reasons.

- Disagree
- Agree
- DK
- PNA

19. What is your current housing situation? Are you currently living ...

- In a private flat/private house
- In collective housing facility such as a reception centre
- With relatives/friends
- In a different kind of accommodation
- DK
- PNA

20. Would you rate the standard of housing you live in currently as very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor
- DK
- PNA

21. What is your current civil status?

- Single
- Married
- Partnership (not married)
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Others

22. How many people currently live together in the household with you?

- _____ [Number] DK PNA (Continue with 25 if 22 = 0.)

23. Please state the number of persons other than yourself who regularly contribute to the household income (e.g. by way of employment, pensions, State subsidy).
 _____[Number] DK PNA
24. Did this situation change due to the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how many persons contributed to the household income before?
 No
 Yes, before _____[number] household members contributed
 DK
 PNA
25. Do you have children and, if so, how many?
 No Yes, _____[number] DK PNA
 (If yes, continue with 26. Otherwise, continue with 28.)
26. [Filter, if 25 = yes] How old are your children in years?
 Age of child 1: _____ [Age of each child 1-9] DK PNA
27. Do you have children of school age and, if so, how many? How many of these would attend school regularly (in case schools are not closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic)?
 No
 Yes, ____ [Dropdown] of ____ [Dropdown]_ (Yes: Number of children in school compared to number of children in school age)
 DK PNA

Reintegration

We are now about halfway through the questionnaire. The following questions are mainly about your living conditions in [Country of return].

28. Over the last 12 months, do you know roughly how much your average after-tax household income was per month, including all sources of income (social assistance, wages, sale of agricultural products, etc.)?
 _____[Amount] _____[Local currency] DK PNA
29. Did your income change since the COVID-19 pandemic (beginning of the year)? If yes, in which way?
 Income doubled or more than doubled
 Income increased but not doubled
 No change in income
 More than half of the previous income
 Less than half of the previous income
 DK
 PNA
30. I shall now read out various sources of income. Please state whether you currently receive income from these sources of income by answering yes or no in each case. Do you receive income from ...
 ... Independent agriculture or livestock
 No Yes DK PNA

- ... Employment
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Self-employment
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Rent
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Pension
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Support from within the household
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Family support from outside the household and within the country
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Family support from abroad
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Governmental or other social subsidy (other than family)
 No Yes DK PNA
- ... Other sources of income
 No Yes DK PNA
- Which other sources of income are available to you?
 _____[Free text]

31. Did the COVID-19 pandemic have an influence on one of the before-mentioned categories?

(Instructions: Categories are not read out.)

Independent agriculture or livestock

Employment

Self-employment

Rent

Pension

Support from within the household

Family support from outside the household and within the country

Family support from abroad

Governmental or other social subsidy (other than family)

Other sources of incomes

- Not income source anymore
- Less income since COVID-19
- No change
- More income from that since COVID-19
- New income source
- DK
- PNA

32. [Filter; if 31 = employment] You said you currently have income from employment. Are you permanently employed or repeatedly only for short periods of time?

- Repeatedly for shorter periods of time
- Permanently employed
- DK
- PNA

33. Are you currently actively looking for employment? Please answer yes or no.

- No Yes DK PNA (If no, continue with 35.)

34. Why are you looking for a new job?
- Unemployed
 - Dissatisfied with type of work at current job
 - Dissatisfied with working conditions (locations, hours)
 - Dissatisfied with salary at current job
 - Others, please explain _____ [free text]
 - DK
 - PNA
35. Have you attended a school or university since the last survey?
- No Yes DK PNA (If yes, continue with 36. Otherwise, continue with 38.)
36. Are you currently attending a school or university?
- No Yes DK PNA (If no, continue with 37. Otherwise, continue with 38.)
37. Why are you currently not attending school/university?
- Acquired degree/qualification
 - Attrition
 - School/university closed due to COVID-19
 - DK
 - PNA
38. Are you able to borrow money if you need it?
- No Yes DK PNA (If yes, continue with 39. Otherwise, continue with 40.)
39. How often do you borrow money: very often, often, sometimes, rarely or never?
- Very often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- DK PNA
40. How well does your money cover your daily expenses: very well, well, acceptable, hardly or not at all?
- Very well Well Acceptable Hardly Not at all
- DK PNA
41. Has COVID-19 changed how well your money covers your daily expenses?
- No change
 - Yes, we can cover our daily expenses better.
 - Yes, it is more difficult to cover our daily expenses.
 - DK
 - PNA
42. Where you live, can you see a doctor when you are ill?
- No, generally not (Continue with 44.)
- No, due to COVID-19
- Yes
- DK (Continue with 44.)
- PNA (Continue with 44.)

43. What is the quality of health care available to you: very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?

- Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor
 DK PNA

Now we would like to know how satisfied you are with certain aspects in your life. In each case, you can state whether you are very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

How satisfied are you currently with ...

44. Relations in your neighbourhood?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
 DK PNA

45. Your relationship to family and friends?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
 DK PNA

46. The security situation in the region?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

47. Your economic situation?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

48. To which extent do you feel that you are part of the community where you currently live? Please answer this question on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 expressing a very strong feeling of belonging and 5 meaning that you do not feel you are part of the community at all.

- 1 (A very strong feeling of belonging)
 2 3 4
 5 (I do not feel part of the community at all.)
 DK PNA

49. How often were you invited to or participate in social activities (celebrations, weddings, other events) within your community before COVID-19-related restrictions: very often, often, sometimes, rarely or never?

- Very often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
 DK PNA

50. How would you rate your access to public services at your place of residence: very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?

- Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor
 DK PNA

51. Have you experienced discrimination since your return: very frequently, frequently, occasionally, rarely or never?

- Very frequently Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
 DK PNA

(If very frequently, frequently or occasionally, continue with 52. Otherwise, continue with 53.)

52. [Filter, if 51 = very frequently, frequently, occasionally] We now would like to know what the discrimination you experienced was based on. Please state whether the following statements apply to you.

I have experienced discrimination based on ...

... Gender

Disagree Agree DK PNA

... Ethnicity

Disagree Agree DK PNA

... My return from Germany

Disagree Agree DK PNA

... Physical disability

Disagree Agree DK PNA

... Other reasons

Disagree Agree DK PNA

53. How much can you personally rely on the police and justice system should you need them: extremely, very, moderately, slightly, not at all?

Extremely Very Moderately Slightly Not at all
 DK PNA

54. Would you wish to receive specialized psychological support?

No Yes DK PNA

(If yes, continue with 55. Otherwise, continue with 56.)

55. Can you access psychological support when you need it?

No Yes DK PNA

56. Do you have at least one official identification document that is valid in your country?

No Yes DK PNA

57. How satisfied are you currently with your life overall? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
 DK PNA

58. How did the COVID-19 situation influence your overall life satisfaction?

Strong positive influence Moderate positive influence No influence
 Moderate negative influence Strong negative influence DK PNA

59. How would you rate your situation in life compared to the population's situation in life in [Country of return]? Much better, better, same, worse, much worse?

Much better Better Same Worse Much worse
 DK PNA

Onward migration

We are nearly there. We would now like to ask you whether you are thinking about leaving [Country or region of return] again.

60. Have you, in the past 12 months, seriously considered leaving your current place of residence again?

- No Yes DK PNA

(If yes, continue with 61. Otherwise, continue with 63.)

61. To which country or region in [country of return] did you consider moving?

_____ [Country] DK PNA

_____ [Region in country of return] DK PNA

62. Are you planning to move to [country/region named in previous question] or away from [current country/region] within the next 12 months?

- No, I do not want to move on any further
- No, at a later stage (Continue with 64.)
- Yes, [Comment interviewer: Country] (Continue with 65.)
- Yes, [Comment: Region] (Continue with 66.)
- No, to a different place: _____ [Country] (Continue with 65.)
- No, to a different place: _____ [Region] (Continue with 66.)
- DK (Continue with 68.)
- PNA (Continue with 68.)

63. [Filter, if 60 = no] Can you tell us why you are not considering or planning to move anywhere else? Please state whether the following statements apply to you.

I cannot afford further migration.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

Further migration is too dangerous.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

My family/relatives live in [country of return].

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I/My family can live well at the current place of residence.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I have had bad experiences while living in other countries.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I am no longer able to move to another country for health reasons.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I do not have better prospects elsewhere than here.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I have other reasons for staying in this country.

- Disagree Agree _____ [Which reasons] DK PNA

(Continue with 68.)

64. [Filter, if 62 = no, at a later stage] Why do you currently choose to not yet leave your place of residence? Please state whether the following statements apply to you.

I currently cannot afford further migration.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

Further migration is currently too dangerous.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

My family/relatives still live in [Country of return].

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I/My family can live well at the current place of residence.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I need more time to prepare for migrating again.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I am currently not able to move for health reasons.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I currently do not have better prospects elsewhere.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

COVID-19 regulations are impeding my onward migration.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I have other reasons for staying for now.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

(Continue with 68.)

65. [Filter, if 62 = Yes, [Comment interviewer: Country] or No, to a different place: _____ [Country]]

Would you enter another country also in an irregular way? (This means: The migrant does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry, stay or residence in that country.)

- No, only by regular routes.
 Yes, under all circumstances.
 DK
 PNA

66. [Filter, if 62 = Yes, [Comment: Region] or No, to a different place: _____ [Region]] Have you already made specific preparations for leaving your place of residence?

- No Yes DK PNA

67. We now are interested in the reasons why you wish to leave your place of residence again. Please state whether the following statements apply to you.

I do not feel safe at my current place of residence.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

The people living in my current place of residence do not accept me.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I want to live closer to my family.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I/My children have better educational opportunities elsewhere.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I/My family have better job opportunities elsewhere.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I find medical care at my current place of residence to be poor.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

My money does not cover my daily expenses at my current place of residence.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

The housing conditions are very poor at my current place of residence.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

I have no confidence in government authorities.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

Other reasons.

- Disagree Agree DK PNA

Which other reasons?

_____ [Free text]

Final questions

Thank you very much for taking part in the survey to this point. We have now concluded the substantive questions. To finish, we have a few more questions for you.

68. We intend to conduct additional interviews to explore the living conditions and perspectives of returnees in greater detail. Would you agree if we contact you again for another survey or a personal face-to-face interview/videocall interview at a later date? Your willingness would be very helpful for our research project and would contribute to the further improvement of StarthilfePlus.

- No. (Continue with 70.)
 Yes, agreed to personal interview and survey.
 Yes, only personal interview.
 Yes, only survey.

69. Please tell us the mobile phone number you would like to receive your credit on. To protect your anonymity, your number will be immediately separated from the questionnaire answers after conclusion of this conversation.

[Mobile number called] or other number: _____ [Mobile phone number]

70. Where are you right now?

- At home?
 At work?
 Out in your place of residence for other reasons?
 Out in a different place for other reasons?
 Out in a country other than your country of return?
 Which: _____ [Open answer]

71. Were there other persons in the room during the interview?

- No Yes

Thank you very much for taking part in the survey.

72. Do you have any comments or like to add something?

_____ [Free text]

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