



VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES



Funded by the European Union



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



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VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Prepared by Altai Consulting for IOM Morocco – August 2016



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| IGA | Income-generating Activity |
| AVR | Assisted Voluntary Return |
| AVRR | Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration |
| DFID | Department for International Development (Government of the United Kingdom) |
| UNHCR | (Office of the) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| MRRM | Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out by Altai Consulting for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) office in Morocco. It seeks to analyse assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) through a community-based approach, the projects that exist in this area and the possibility to replicate them in the main countries of return from Morocco (i.e. Guinea, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria).

This research is part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Countries of Origin, Transit and Destination funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by IOM in Morocco, Yemen and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The study, carried out between May and August 2016, is based on both secondary research work and on field research in Guinea, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. Altai conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 211 returning migrants in their countries of origin, direct or indirect recipients of AVRR projects, representatives of the government and the civil society, members of the local community, members of IOM mission offices, IOM partners and other key actors delivering reintegration assistance. Altai also met (face-to-face or via Skype) with 33 experts and key informants working in 23 different countries.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the AVRR programmes is to provide assistance to migrants who are unwilling or unable to remain in their host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. For more than 35 years, most of these programmes have been implemented by IOM.¹

Established in 1979 in Germany, IOM's first assisted voluntary return (AVR) programme has given way over the years to programmes comprising a reintegration support component (AVRR). While the AVRR was established in Europe, programmes were subsequently developed in host countries in other regions. Since 2000, the AVRR has also been offered to migrants in some transit countries, such as Morocco, Niger, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt or Yemen.

IOM currently manages a multitude of different AVRR programmes, supported by various donors (often host countries' governments). For each programme, donors define, in coordination with IOM, specific activities, budget, timetable and administrative procedures.

To date, the AVRR programmes implemented by IOM have mainly taken the form of individual assistance to migrants (direct, limited and occasional assistance provided to a migrant in the form of in-kind or cash grants). The interest in return and reintegration assistance through community-based projects is more recent. Nevertheless, IOM has already carried out community-based projects in contexts other than the AVRR, particularly in cases of large non-voluntary forms of return, such as forced returns and internal or cross-border displacements.²

In the absence of a previously worded definition of community-based approach initiatives, Altai suggests the following criterion: the community-based AVRR projects bring together initiatives that directly support the reintegration process of the returnee(s)³ while directly involving the local community and responding to its needs. From the very beginning, the goal of an AVRR community-based project must be twofold: to facilitate the reintegration of returnees and to have a direct positive impact on the local community.

¹ Other organizations also implement assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes, such as the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Caritas International.

² While this study mainly concerns community-based AVRR projects, Altai has been interested in community-based projects implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in contexts other than the AVRR in order to discuss best practices. These non-AVRR community-based projects, including a reintegration assistance component, are mostly implemented by the IOM Department of Operations and Emergencies.

³ We used the terms "returning migrant" and "returnee" interchangeably in this report to refer to individuals with a returning migration background.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

RETURNEES' NEEDS IN TERMS OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The main need mentioned during the interviews conducted for this study is to earn money quickly (to address the critical and immediate needs) and then to have an adequate and regular income. Upon return, migrants are generally in a situation of economic vulnerability, without sources of income and no savings. Most of them seek to create their own income-generating activities (IGAs). To that end, a start-up capital is required, which most of them do not have. Whether they wish to find a job or create their own activities, the returnees from Morocco, who have often not completed their education nor received vocational training, also need to strengthen their capacities.

Migrants also have a constant need for information and advice. Before returning, they need to know the local economic, social, political and security conditions as well as their rights in the country of return.⁴ They also need clear and detailed information on the IOM AVRR programme and the assistance they will receive.⁵ At the design stage of the project, they should be advised on the promising sectors, market developments and various possible investments in their regions. Finally, migrants need information on the different types of assistance made available to them in addition to the AVRR, whether it be psychosocial, financial, administrative support or training, for example.

The third major factor essential to the success of return and reintegration is that migrants need to rebuild a social network and, if necessary, to benefit from psychosocial support. The community's acceptance and family involvement are essential components of successful reintegration. Returning migrants sometimes find themselves in a psychological situation that requires support,⁶ without which it will be difficult for them to concentrate on the creation and management of a project. Some migrants may lack social capital upon their return, while others could be stigmatized. Moreover, many returnees experience a sense of failure, even stronger when the community gets into debt to contribute financially to the migration with the hope that the migrant will regularly send money after settling at the destination.

CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION MODEL

Regarding AVRR, IOM has to deal with challenges relating to the funding of reintegration components; the preparation, implementation and monitoring of individual projects; the sustainability of return; and the handling of specific cases.

IOM faces difficulties in mobilizing adequate funding for reintegration assistance;⁷ managing the demands of different donors in terms of procedures, priorities, eligibility of beneficiaries or timetables; restricting the operating costs of individual assistance;⁸ and encouraging the harmonization of AVRR programmes.⁹ As a result, the amount of reintegration assistance that can be offered to returnees is often limited, and may be insufficient to launch a sustainable activity.

⁴ While some migrants are in regular contact with their communities of origin, others, as in cases of long absence, lack knowledge about the developments in their countries.

⁵ In particular, the types of possible uses of the assistance.

⁶ For instance, broken dreams, feelings of failure or trauma related to travel, or living conditions in the host country.

⁷ Because of the priorities of donors, it is easier to obtain funding for the "return" components of AVRR programmes than for reintegration components.

⁸ Implementation and monitoring of individual reintegration assistance are costly in terms of time and resources consumed. Monitoring of individual projects is one of the most financially burdensome aspects of AVRR for IOM offices, with the beneficiaries being geographically dispersed and sometimes difficult to reach.

⁹ AVRR is not established as part of a single general fund but of a multitude of projects financed by different donors. The amount of grants awarded to returnees for their reintegration, the eligibility criteria to be met by beneficiaries and the implementation procedures vary according to donors and projects.

Prior to the return to as well as after arrival in the country of origin, it is sometimes difficult to prepare returnee reintegration projects as may be necessary. It is not always appropriate to develop projects before returning, since returnees are sometimes disconnected from the contexts of their regions of origin. Moreover, the difficulties encountered by migrants in the host country actually do not ensure they are always in a psychosocial situation that is favourable for the preparation of their reintegration. Upon migrants' arrival in the country of origin, IOM sometimes lacks human and material resources to support migrants thoroughly in the identification of their projects. Some returnees may also encounter administrative and logistical difficulties in accessing reintegration assistance.¹⁰

Once the migrant has returned and the procedures to obtain assistance have been completed, then implementation and monitoring challenges for individual AVRR projects will emerge. It is delicate and time-consuming for IOM teams to maintain contact with migrants who often return to remote areas that are far from IOM offices and who are not always reachable. In addition, in most cases, assistance to returnees is provided only in the short term, which in turn results in difficulties to maintain contact for long-term monitoring and assessment. Another difficulty is the need for IOM members in return countries to have the technical expertise to support projects in specific sectors. Partnerships with local actors sometimes represent a solution to the above-mentioned challenges, but might not be generalized in all regions of return.¹¹

Moreover, the AVRR individual approach does not always address the problems that originally drove migrants to leave their communities of origin,¹² and sustainability of return could therefore sometimes be limited.¹³ Support for returnees' individual projects may also sometimes generate a situation of resentment among the local community towards returnees.¹⁴ Finally, in view of the challenges mentioned, it may be difficult to meet the needs of the most vulnerable migrants and to demonstrate flexibility in the handling of specific cases.

¹⁰ The main logistical and administrative difficulties include: the distance between the beneficiary's place of residence and the IOM offices in the countries of return (e.g. in cases where IOM has only one office in the country and the beneficiary comes from such a remote area away from the country's capital) and the fact of having to collect several offers from suppliers of goods and service providers to be submitted to IOM (which might be complicated in some countries where written estimates are uncommon, or in cases where there is only one local service provider, or when estimates from certain suppliers are deemed not to be compliant). These constraints, which are frequently combined with other urgent matters to be managed, discourage some returnees and force them to entirely give up seeking individual reintegration assistance.

¹¹ IOM has not been able to build partnerships with local actors in all areas of return, either because of a lack of resources or because there are no adequate partners available in the regions concerned. In the case of returnees from Morocco, case management committees bringing together the main local actors of reintegration in the countries of origin are being set up as part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants, which is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by IOM.

¹² These fundamental problems, such as the lack of economic opportunities or basic infrastructure, are often frequently present at the moment of the return of migrants, who will face them again, especially as they return in difficult circumstances and in a less favourable situation than at the time of their departure.

¹³ It should be noted that this research is not an evaluation of the impact of reintegration assistance and that a comprehensive study of the issue would be necessary. Although the majority of key informants and migrants interviewed as part of this research have raised the limitations in terms of sustainability of return, it is currently impossible to demonstrate this finding in view of the difficulties related to the monitoring of projects and the traceability of returnees.

¹⁴ It may be due to the envy that members of the local community might experience when the returnees receive assistance that could also be needed by the rest of the community or, in the case of a large number of returns, to the negative impact of returns on the local community (an overuse of available resources and infrastructure, for example).

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Community-based approaches could provide solutions to various migrants' needs, as well as to some challenges of the current AVRR approach.¹⁵ However, given their limitations and the necessary conditions for their implementation, community-based projects cannot fully substitute individual assistance, especially as regards the support for migrants in situations of extreme vulnerability.

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

If successful, community-based projects should contribute to the reintegration of returning migrants by encouraging the creation of a social network, reducing the potential resentment among the local community¹⁶ and upgrading the status of the returning migrants within the community.

They could also be useful to improve the sustainability of the projects of returnees, by encouraging long-term involvement of project members, as well as the sustainability of return, by creating satisfactory life opportunities within the local community. In this sense, they could prevent irregular reemigration.

Finally, the community-based approach should provide advantages in terms of obtaining and optimizing funds with respect to the current individual model, as a result of the grouping of beneficiaries in collective projects (economies of scale and higher start-up capital for beneficiaries), the involvement of the community and the objective of local development (the possibility to raise funds from donors related to development).

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

However, the community-based approach can only be effective in certain situations. The following criteria provide a favourable environment for the implementation of community-based AVRR projects: sufficient number of migrants returning to the same community; adequate profile of migrants;¹⁷ local community interest and motivation of migrants; availability of basic infrastructure in the region; stability, security and economic opportunities in the return area; and civil society activism.

Some operational conditions are also required to successfully conduct community-based AVRR projects: update and systematic use of the IOM global database and training of the personnel on the subject; ability to analyse data on migrants' profiles and bring migrants together; local context analysis; availability and proximity of human resources to ensure the support and monitoring of projects; development of partnerships with local stakeholders.

¹⁵ This section of the report remains conditional, as the exact impact of community-based AVRR projects cannot be demonstrated at this stage given that: few community-based AVRR projects have been implemented so far; most of these projects are either very recent or ongoing; and these projects have not been systematically assessed. Section 2.3 of the report, which discusses the challenges and limitations of the research, provides further details on this point, while section 3.4 identifies the community-based AVRR projects conducted.

¹⁶ Resentment from the local community can be reduced since community-based projects directly benefit members of the community (see previous section on resentment that may appear towards migrants).

¹⁷ It will be important that the returnees show interest in teamwork and speak a common language (in some return areas, several languages are spoken). It will also be preferable that they have similar profiles, particularly in terms of age, community of origin, time spent abroad, family status, qualification level, work experience, areas of interest and life plans.

POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Community-based approaches do not offer a solution for all the challenges of AVRR. For example, they will not be able to address all the challenges posed by the funding, the prior preparation of the projects, monitoring and evaluation, nor the problem related to the lack of human resources within AVRR units.

Community-based projects also have their own constraints, such as the adaptation of available assistance to the specific needs of migrants (especially the most vulnerable), the selection of projects and beneficiaries, the potential lack of income generation at the very beginning of the reintegration process and the management of human relations within the group.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

TYPES OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to all types of situations for AVRR. The most relevant community-based approach model depends on the local context, on community needs and on the profiles of migrant(s). Altai therefore proposes in this study different scenarios, their advantages and disadvantages, illustrated by real examples.

Community-based projects can be classified into three categories:

1. Community-based projects that focus on migrants and involve members of the community in one way or another, and meet the needs of the community.

These can be initiatives that start with an individual microproject of a returnee or a group project of different returnees. In both cases, these initiatives have a strong impact on returnees and a lesser impact on the local community. They have the advantage of directly supporting the reintegration of migrants, as they are focused on their needs, but have the disadvantage of not always meeting the needs of other residents, or of not doing so in a straightforward manner.

2. Community-based projects which, on the contrary, are focused on the needs of the local community and which, in one way or another, involve one or more migrants.

This model usually takes the form of a local development project for the community into which migrants are integrated. This type of project requires the training of the AVRR unit members in the management of development projects, a sound knowledge of the specific sector of intervention, as well as important resources to ensure financial support and monitoring over the long term.

As a result, these initiatives may be difficult to implement for the AVRR units with limited budgets. It is also complicated to prepare such projects with returning migrants in advance, and the beneficiary selection issue arises markedly. The main risk of this type of project is its limited impact on returnees.

On the other hand, these initiatives have the advantage of responding directly to the needs of local residents and offering more opportunities to involve communities at the project design stage. In this sense, they have a greater potential to minimize the resentment of local residents towards returnees and to contribute to the prevention of irregular migration.

3. Community-based projects that are initially based on existing projects that seek to include returnees to facilitate their reintegration.

Many different situations could be envisaged: these may be (a) either projects implemented by the AVRR units, by other IOM departments or by other donors, (b) or national development plans. Projects may be currently underway, or might have received funding (from a non-governmental organization (NGO) or another development institution) in the past, or they may be local initiatives that have never received external support.

This type of project could provide several advantages: a prior guarantee that the projects work well and generate regular and sufficient income for the beneficiaries; a solution to funding issues (budgetary savings for IOM); a solution to the problems related to the lack of specific expertise of the AVRR teams; and a learning opportunity for migrants who have no skills.

However, the integration of returnees into an existing project requires a number of preconditions for implementation, on the basis of which this mechanism is likely to remain rare.

COMBINED APPROACHES

On the basis of the research work, Altai recommends combining the individual and community-based AVRR approaches: by cumulating both offers or by adopting complementarity.¹⁸ It is also possible to associate different types of community-based projects to best meet the variety of needs (depending on the local contexts and the individual situations of the returnees).

In those situations where the AVRR units do not have sufficient budgets or in-house expertise required to implement community-based projects, an alternative could be to allow other development actors in the country to implement ambitious projects, and to focus on building partnerships with these actors, so that their projects integrate returnees, while providing individual assistance (and/or emergency support) to migrants who need it most.

BEST PRACTICES

Although relatively few community-based AVRR projects have been implemented so far, a number of best practices are already emerging, and lessons can also be learned from community-based projects carried out by IOM in contexts other than that of the AVRR.

The research enabled the identification of several best practices relating to the design of community-based AVRR projects, such as the following:

- Organize consultations during the development of community-based projects, involving as much as possible all the segments of the local community (e.g. through steering committees). Holding such consultations makes it possible to take into account the perspectives and the needs of the local actors, to enhance the sustainability of the projects, to raise communities' awareness and to support the development of local governance.
- Conduct an in-depth study of local needs and the operating environment to ensure the viability of the community-based project type being considered in the selected area, and ensure that it is also consistent with the available budget and resources and is compatible with the country's regulatory framework.
- Prioritize the types of activities and sectors that are favourable to community-based projects. Since resources are pooled for community-based projects, these projects are useful for activities that require a significant initial investment (as in the case of fisheries) and large working capital (e.g. seasonal agriculture).

¹⁸ In the case of complementarity scenario, returning migrants who can be brought together in community-based projects are grouped (and do not receive individual assistance), while specific cases (vulnerable migrants with special needs or migrants returning to remote areas) receive individual assistance.

- Favour specific technical training relevant to the selected sector for each project rather than general training common to all returnees, and integrate a personalized coaching time when finalizing the business plan.
- Study the economic and financial profitability of the projects in relation to the investment cost and within the local context to ensure that they will generate sufficient revenue for all members, and involve, if possible, industry experts in these preliminary studies.
- Prepare and place at the disposal of AVRR beneficiaries business plan models for the most common types of activities in the country which they can build upon.

Regarding the selection of beneficiaries, the following best practices stand out:

- Ensure (and communicate about) the transparency of the selection criteria and the process.
- Take into account the motivation, the entrepreneurial spirit and the skills that the beneficiary can bring to the project (as well as, in the case of the beneficiaries who are members of the community, their proximity and affinities with the returnees).
- Select community beneficiaries on the basis of clearly defined vulnerability criteria rather than leaving the choice entirely to the returnees and collaborate with local authorities to identify vulnerable individuals within the community.
- Including women¹⁹ makes it possible in particular to sustain the projects and to raise awareness among the community about the risks of irregular migration.
- Without making their participation a criterion, integrate if possible returnees who have not benefited from AVRR programmes (many of whom are in the main countries of origin of migrants returning from Morocco)

Several best practices relating to the implementation and management phases of the projects also emerge:

- Emphasize and communicate about the flexibility of the assistance depending on the situation of the beneficiaries (e.g. the possibility of obtaining technical and financial support to carry out vocational training, pursue basic education, receive medical assistance and construct a dwelling).
- Develop partnerships with public authorities, the private sector and civil society, making sure to clarify each other's responsibilities through a partnership agreement.
- In the case of beneficiaries living below the poverty line, give priority to grants to microfinancing and revolving loan funds.
- Support the development of migrant networks by involving them in the implementation of reintegration projects (while being careful however not to delegitimize these networks in the eyes of the local community by associating them too closely with IOM).
- Include in the implementation of the projects the diaspora segment that is well established and has resources, by targeting and then sensitizing the networks and associations of diaspora already established abroad.

Best practices for project monitoring are as follows:

- Establish a logical framework and baseline indicators for monitoring, especially if monitoring is carried out by local NGOs.
- Include in the budget the resources required for thorough and sustainable monitoring.
- Where possible, use the expertise of former beneficiaries who have succeeded in the same region

¹⁹ It is recommended that women be included as beneficiaries of the community in contexts where women represent only a small percentage of returnees. In the countries of return from Morocco, women seem, based on the interviews conducted for this study, to be motivated to participate in community-based projects.

and in a similar sector to coach new project members.²⁰ This will further support former successful project beneficiaries, and provide new ones with personalized, relevant and sustainable tutoring.

Below are best practices related to the IOM advisory and information role for migrants:

- Sensitize and inform migrants in advance about the importance of remaining reachable.
- Devote resources to reorientation (facilitating returnees' access to various forms of assistance available to them) and counselling of migrants is relatively inexpensive, and has a strong positive impact on returnees. This requires that AVRR advisers (such as NGOs, international organizations, and local and provincial authorities) stay informed and participate in key stakeholders meetings in the country.
- Raise awareness and inform returnees' families and communities about regular migration through campaigns (such as media campaigns or on-site campaigns in communities). The integration of testimonies and the participation of celebrities would increase the impact.

Other general best practices for IOM emerge from the research:

- Clearly define which projects are considered to be community-based AVRR projects and establish criteria for success.
- Formally establish guidelines for the implementation of community-based projects, processes and a benchmarking methodology.
- Train AVRR teams in context analysis, management and monitoring of community-based projects, strategic development of activities, marketing and identification of market opportunities.
- Share experiences among IOM mission offices, each office having been able to acquire specific expertise, as well as among the different departments.
- Develop synergies between the projects of various IOM departments (only possible on projects extended over several years), and direct the AVRR returnees towards projects implemented by other departments.

CONCLUSION

The community-based AVRR initiatives are useful to complement the individual approach and address the limitations of this model. On the other hand, because of the constraints of their implementation and their own limitations, community-based projects cannot totally be a substitute for individual assistance.

At the end of this study, it seems possible and desirable to replicate community-based AVRR projects in the contexts of the main countries of return from Morocco. Such a context seems favourable to the combination of individual assistance for all returnees and community-based projects (which may involve only one or two migrants) especially in areas of high departure. Community-based projects should be carried out in addition to individual assistance, not as a replacement.

Further reintegration support could also be explored for migrants returning from Morocco, such as:

- Encouraging returnees to establish collective projects when they wish to create one, for example by informing migrants from Morocco that this is a possible option, letting them know about the potential benefits of pooling of resources and facilitating the administrative procedures;
- Encouraging migrants to involve members of the local community in their individual AVRR projects, for example by providing additional grants in the event of the creation of sustainable employment for a community member.

²⁰ It will only be possible to replicate this best practice if IOM has remained in touch with former beneficiaries and if a sufficient number of projects have been implemented in the same region and sector.

In general, it would be essential to ensure that: (a) an assessment of the local context, the profile of returnees and the other beneficiaries, the project's needs/risks according to the technical sector and its economic sustainability has been carried out or is included in the budget and schedule of activities; (b) the budgets of the community-based projects are sufficient to cover the costs of long-term monitoring (one year minimum, ideally two years), including in terms of human resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM

- Increase communication with migrants in countries of destination, transit and return.
- Enhance the collection of information and maximize the usefulness of databases of migrants.
- Develop coordination and collaboration mechanisms within IOM, between mission offices and between departments: strengthen communication between the IOM offices in destination and origin countries before and during the implementation of the projects, and develop synergies with other IOM departments, particularly those implementing community-based projects.
- Strengthen knowledge-sharing and experience-feedback within IOM.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM RELATING TO ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES (IRRESPECTIVE OF THE TYPE)

- Encourage the involvement of offices in the countries of origin in the design of programmes, in particular the procedures to be followed in the implementation of reintegration assistance and recommendations on the types of projects adapted to the local context.
- Encourage creativity and diversity in reintegration projects.
- Focus on project monitoring and early-stage support for the beneficiaries' projects (e.g. development of the activity, definition of a marketing strategy and marketing of products).
- Strengthen the presence of the IOM AVRR units' members in high-return areas by establishing regional offices where they do not already exist or by seconding representatives from the AVRR units in areas of return for key moments of the activities.
- Develop strong partnerships with local civil society organizations, as well as with the public and private sectors.
- Pay attention to flexibility in terms of the aid provided and the involvement of the families of returnees, particularly in the case of individual microprojects.
- Conduct systematic external evaluations of reintegration projects (especially beyond a certain budget) and consider an evaluation framework and global indicators.
- Advocate the creation of a global AVRR fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

- Conduct theoretical work for the determination of the community-based AVRR approaches.
- Develop methodological procedures and guidelines for these projects.
- Involve the local community in project design, prior analysis of the needs and selection of beneficiaries.²¹

²¹ Pay special attention to the inclusion of all segments of the community, including women and the most vulnerable members, as well as to the transparency of processes.

- Avoid trying to implement community-based projects when the available budget is not sufficient to ensure the basic requirements for success, such as an adequate number of human resources in the areas where the projects should be implemented. In the case of a very limited AVRR budget, Altai suggests focusing on individual assistance (by seeking to address the identified challenges of the model) while taking a coordinating and reorienting role (by promoting especially the integration of returnees into the projects of other stakeholders).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

- Work towards the harmonization of the AVRR programmes in terms of the amount of assistance provided to migrants, eligibility criteria and implementation procedures.
- Create a distress fund to meet the most urgent needs of returnees who are in extremely precarious situations upon arrival in their countries of origin.
- Take into account in the AVRR programme budgets the costs in terms of human resources and the time required for the improvement, update, and analysis of databases of returnees.
- Support the development of IOM regional branch offices and their continuity from one project to the next.
- Provide the necessary budget for sustained monitoring of reintegration projects to ensure their effectiveness.
- Include in the budget of the AVRR programmes sufficient resources for more personalized support for each migrant in the host country and after the arrival in the country of origin.
- Fund preliminary studies in order to determine the viability of reintegration projects (of any type), to ensure that they are rooted in the local economy and to identify their expected impact on the local community.



Introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT “ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF STRANDED AND VULNERABLE MIGRANTS”

This research is part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Countries of Origin, Transit and Destination, funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Morocco, Yemen and the United Republic of Tanzania. In view of the challenges related to the situation of vulnerable and distressed migrants in the territories of these three countries, the project aims to meet the immediate needs and enhance the capacity of governments, civil society and other actors in ensuring long-term management of mixed migratory flows.

The project will last for 24 months, from February 2015 to January 2017, and has as main objectives for Morocco:

- To strengthen the capacities of government partners and civil society in Morocco and in the main countries of origin of migrants (i.e. Guinea, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria) in order to manage migration with respect for human rights and address the needs of vulnerable and distressed migrants;
- To support the safe voluntary return of vulnerable and distressed migrants in Morocco to their countries of origin in close cooperation with the concerned governments;
- To improve collaboration and dialogue between all the countries involved in the return process and ensure a better assistance for migrants in their countries of origin.

The main activities in Morocco and the countries of origin are:

- Assisted voluntary return and reintegration of 800 distressed migrants, with the direct involvement of the authorities in Morocco and the countries of origin;
- The provision of improved assistance tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable cases;
- Training and capacity-building of government authorities and civil society actors in Morocco and the main countries of origin;
- Study visits to selected Member States and EU institutions;
- Specific training and capacity-building for journalists;
- A media campaign;
- Promoting partnerships and building local actors' capacities to improve reintegration assistance provided to returnees²² in their countries of origin;
- A regional workshop on return and reintegration policy.

Following a rapid assessment of the training needs for government institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Morocco and the main countries of origin, it was recommended to address the issue of return and reintegration management with special emphasis on assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) and community-based approach initiatives.

In this context, IOM Morocco decided to conduct a comprehensive study on the subject and organize a training workshop on the dynamics associated with the return process, during which the preliminary results of the study were presented and discussed.

²² In this report, the terms “return migrant” and “returnee” are used interchangeably to refer to individuals with a return migration background.

1.2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES

The AVRR programmes implemented by IOM have so far essentially taken the form of individualized assistance to migrants, with the exception of reintegration projects involving the local community conducted in cases of large internal or cross-border displacements (see section 3.4, “Mapping of Community-based Approach Initiatives”). However, some precursor initiatives to support reintegration with a community-based or collective approach have recently emerged.

This research work is carried out within a context where the EU and several IOM mission offices seek to optimize assisted return and reintegration programmes, where limited funding does not always provide adequate support for migrants or for the implementation of individual sustainable projects in the countries of return. Based on this assessment, it appears that a broad spectrum of possibilities becomes available to address the limitations of the current assistance, including in particular grouping migrants by community of origin, affinity, sector of activity or skill, return community and location (sometimes different from the community of origin). Section 3.3 (“Definitions”) – Figure 6 in particular – summarizes the various approaches to assisted return and reintegration.

This study seeks to analyse: (a) AVRR through a community-based approach; (b) the projects that exist in this area; and (c) the possibility to replicate them in the main countries of return from Morocco. Grouped returns are therefore exclusively examined from the point of view of the community-based approach, that is, when they directly involve the community (see section 3.3, “Definitions”). While this study mainly concerns community-based AVRR projects, Altai has been interested in community-based projects implemented by IOM in contexts other than AVRR in an effort to examine best practices (details in section 3.4, “Mapping of Community-based Approach Initiatives”).

The study has the following objectives:

- Analyse innovative projects for assisted return and reintegration through a community-based approach;
 - Identify assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects to support migrants through a community-based approach across the world;
 - Conduct a field study on the implementation and impact of several of these projects.
- Identify the best practices derived from the projects studied and identify the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of such projects;
- Consider a range of community-based projects available to IOM mission offices;
 - Understand and take into account the constraints of the AVRR programmes;
 - Understand the constraints and limitations of community-based projects;
 - Put into perspective the possible approaches and introduce the possibilities of complementarities between the types of approaches;
 - Understand the context of migration and the current dynamics of reintegration in the main countries of return from Morocco (i.e. Guinea, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria) and identify the opportunities for community-based approaches in these countries.

1.3. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 2 presents the methodology used in the research.

Section 3 provides a background on the AVRR and migration in Morocco. It also provides definitions of key terms (section 3.3) and summarizes the different types of AVRR programmes implemented by IOM throughout the world over the past 30 years (section 3.4).

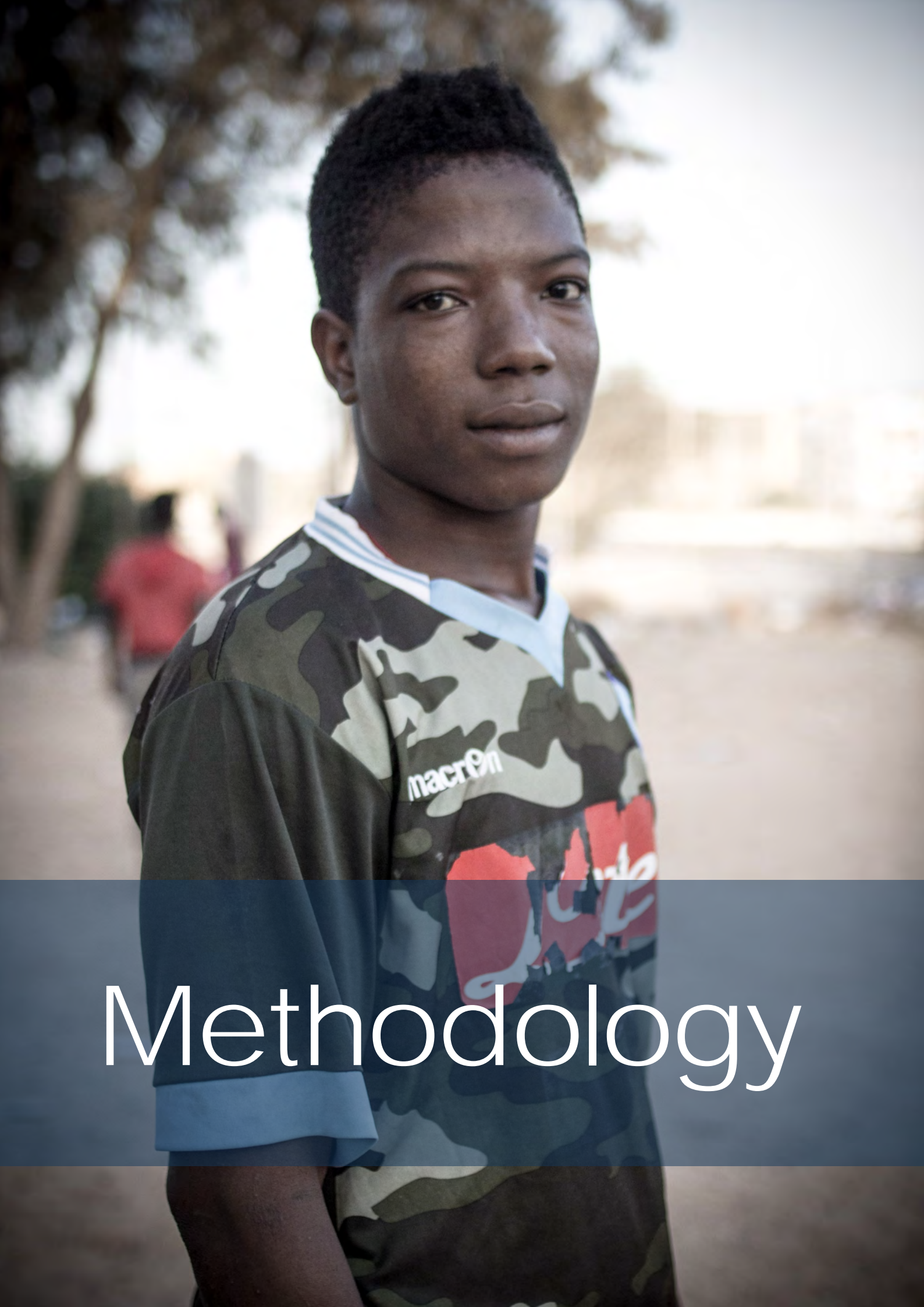
The report then analyses, in section 4, the main needs in terms of assistance for voluntary return and reintegration as well as the limitations and challenges encountered with the current AVRR approach.

Section 5 focuses on AVRR community-based approaches, highlighting first the solutions they can bring to the challenges currently faced (section 5.1), the prerequisites for the successful implementation of community-based AVRR projects (section 5.2) and the possible limitations of these projects (section 5.3).

Section 6 focuses on the implementation of community-based projects. Following the categorization of assisted return and reintegration community-based projects (section 6.1), the best practices identified during the research are detailed in section 6.2.

Finally, the report concludes by proposing an assessment of the possibility of setting up community-based AVRR initiatives in the countries of return from Morocco as well as recommendations for IOM (section 7).

A comparative analysis of the contexts between the selected countries is carried out transversely throughout the document. Each section of the report draws on examples from different regions and presents case studies from different countries and types of projects.



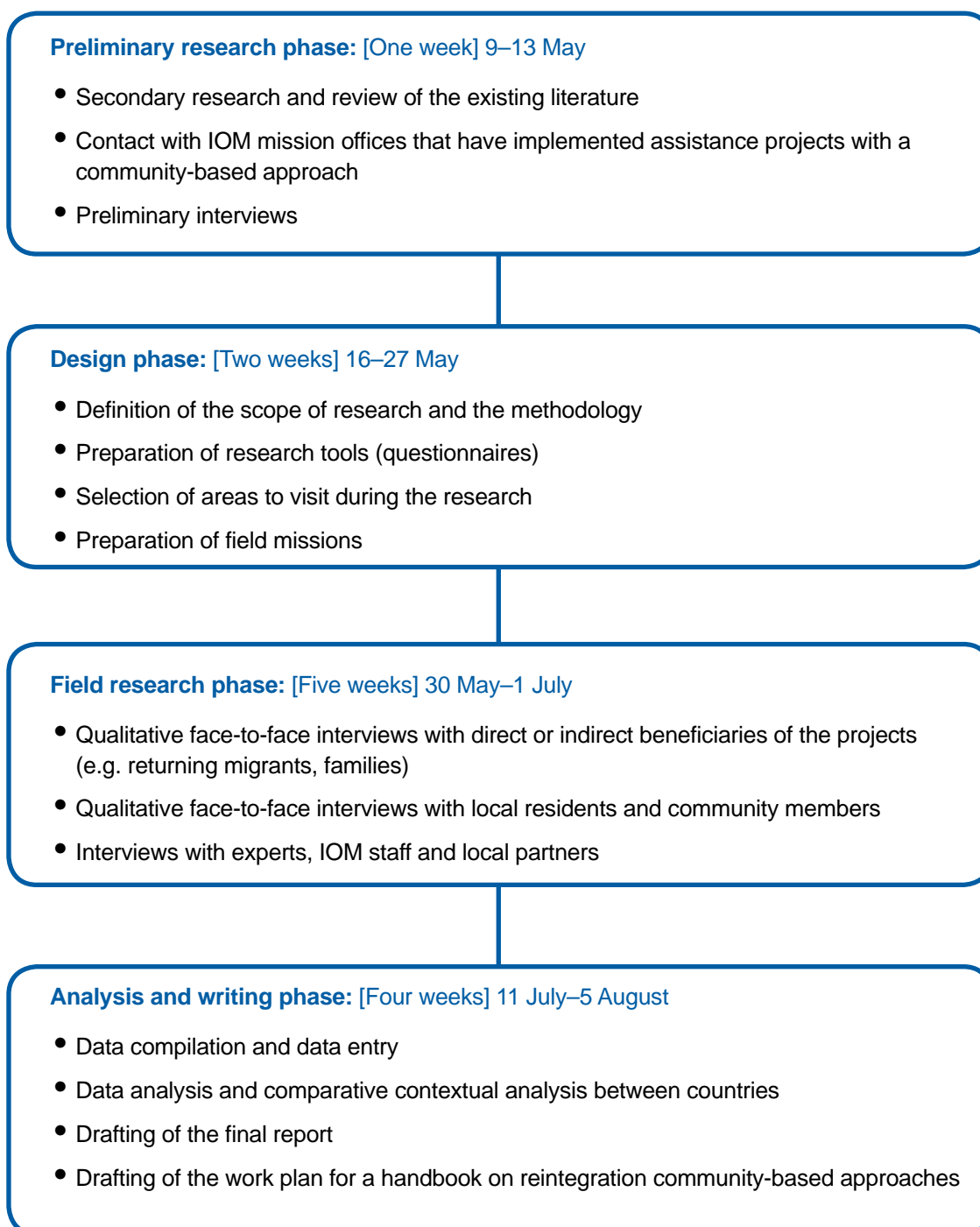
Methodology

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH STAGES

The study is based on both secondary research work and field visits in Guinea, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. It consists of four phases described below.

Figure 1: Research Stages



2.2. DATA COLLECTION

For the purposes of this study, Altai conducted in-depth interviews with 211 people in Guinea, Sri Lanka and Tunisia as well as 33 interviews (either face-to-face interviews or via Skype) with key informants working in 23 countries. All interviews were qualitative and semi-structured by definition.

Altai developed questionnaires and guidebooks for the interviews with stakeholders during the design phase. These tools were then adapted to the profile of the interlocutor, to the nature of the relevant project and to the target region.

The research team paid particular attention to gender specificities as well as to signs of gender-based violence.

2.2.1. DOCUMENTARY STUDY

Data collection began with the collection and analysis of the existing data and a review of the available relevant documents such as:

- Studies on development and reintegration assistance, AVRR programmes and Morocco's policy on return of migrants;
- Reports, project documents and project evaluations by various IOM mission offices that have conducted community-based initiatives;
- The literature analysing the context in the main countries of return of migrants in Morocco and all assisted return and reintegration initiatives that were carried out there.

The list of key secondary documents reviewed during the research is available as an appendix to this report.

2.2.2. INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

During the preliminary research and design phases, Altai conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with the staff of IOM mission offices, representatives of IOM regional offices and Headquarters, experts and relevant stakeholders. These interviews have led to the identification of the relevant projects conducted by IOM in different countries, to the collection of lessons learned and to the understanding of the specific contexts of these countries, and to obtaining the opinion of key actors on community-based initiatives.

Altai conducted 33 interviews with key informants, either face-to-face interviews or via Skype. The research team also interacted with several government and civil society representatives from the main countries of return of migrants during the training organized by IOM Morocco on 16–17 May 2016 (see photo below).



Presentation by Altai Consulting during the training organized by IOM in Rabat.

2.2.3. RETURN AND REINTEGRATION CONDITIONS IN THE MAIN COUNTRY OF RETURN BACK FROM MOROCCO: GUINEA

With the objective of studying the specific challenges of the reintegration of returning migrants from Morocco, the profiles and needs of migrants, and the possibility of implementing community-based initiatives in the country, Altai carried out a field visit to Conakry, Guinea.

Guinea has been selected for field research among the main countries of return of migrants in Morocco for the following reasons:

- Large number of returns from Morocco (Guinea was the main country of return from Morocco in 2016, according to IOM Morocco AVR statistics for 2016);
- Returns concentrated in one region (a context that is conducive to the implementation of projects with a community-based approach);
- Size of the team and the capacity of IOM's local mission (a context that is conducive to the implementation of projects with a community-based approach);
- Interest of IOM's local mission, donors, authorities, civil society and migrants in community-based initiatives;
- Existing partnerships with local authorities and CSOs;
- Access to beneficiaries and to the local community (IOM's local mission knows where migrants who have benefited from return and reintegration assistance live, and the region is accessible to researchers in terms of logistics and security).



An IOM staff conducts an interview with a member of the Awareness Committee for Youth and Women Migration in Conakry, Guinea.

In Guinea, the research team conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with a total of 61 respondents²³ with various profiles: returning migrants from Morocco, IOM representatives, IOM (government and civil society) partners and members of the local community. Table 1 summarizes the interviews conducted. All in-depth interviews were individual, with the exception of the two discussion groups listed in the table.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in three main migrant return areas – namely, Conakry, Kindia and Mamou – with the exception of four interviews conducted by telephone. The field visit had to be carried out during the month of Ramadan, which affected the availability of respondents and complicated Altai's travels. Figure 2 shows the locations of the interviews carried out for the purposes of this research.

²³ Referring to the persons who have responded to the survey; a term specific to social sciences research.

Table 1: Categorization of Interviews Conducted in Conakry, Guinea

| Number | Profile of Respondents | Details |
|--------|---|---|
| 9 | IOM staff | Staff in charge of IOM mission programmes in Guinea; all members of the AVRR unit; members of other IOM units implementing community-based projects in the country; staff responsible for programme development. |
| 9 | Representatives of public authorities | Prefect of Mamou; Prefectural Director of Youth (PDY); Director of Microprojects; Regional Service of Support of Local Governments and Coordination of Cooperatives and NGOs; Awareness Committee for the Migration of Youth and Women; Emergency Response Section of the National Humanitarian Action Service (SENAH); Youth Employment Division; Directorate for Decentralization. |
| 16 | Members and beneficiaries of community-based projects | Members and beneficiaries of two community-based projects implemented by the IOM AVRR unit in 2015. These interviews were conducted in the form of two discussion groups – one group per project. |
| 11 | Migrants returning from Morocco who are AVRR beneficiaries | Altai paid particular attention to the diversity of the profiles of migrants interviewed in terms of gender, age and socio-professional background. Some returnees had just returned to Guinea and were still awaiting their reintegration assistance, while others started their projects and some had returned several years ago. |
| 2 | Relatives of migrants returning from Morocco who are AVRR beneficiaries | Migrants' fathers. |
| 5 | Returning migrants from Morocco who are not AVRR beneficiaries | Returnees who had not benefited from IOM AVRR for various reasons, including because they did not know IOM and had independently returned from Morocco or because they were not eligible for reintegration assistance (one of the migrants, for example, having heard of IOM in Niger, travelled from Morocco to Niger on his own and benefited from the return assistance from IOM Niger, through a project that does not provide for reintegration assistance). |
| 3 | Relatives of migrants returning from Morocco who are not AVRR beneficiaries | Migrants' fathers and uncles. |
| 2 | CSOs, which are also IOM partners | Sabou Guinea; National Committee for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons and Assimilated Practices. |
| 2 | CSOs, which are non-IOM partners | Regional Council of Civil Society Organizations of Mamou; NGO head offices (key actors of civil society in high-return areas, which are not currently working in partnership with IOM). |
| 1 | Private-sector organization; IOM partner | Trainers Association for the Development of Entrepreneurship (AFODE). IOM partner for training. |
| 1 | Non-migrant beneficiary of an individual microproject | Beneficiary (who has never migrated) of assistance to an individual microproject offered by the IOM AVRR unit (funded by the Government of Switzerland). |

Figure 2: Map of interviews conducted in Guinea



2.2.4. CASE STUDY: THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH IN SRI LANKA

In order to study reintegration projects with a community-based approach implemented by an AVRR unit, Altai conducted a field visit in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka was selected for this field search on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- The existence of AVRR projects with a community-based approach in the process of implementation;
- The preliminary indications of success of the community-based approach to reintegration (based on preliminary interviews conducted with IOM teams at the beginning of the study);
- The need to collect additional information and data to analyse the projects implemented;
- Access to beneficiaries and the local community (the IOM local mission knows where migrants who have benefited from return and reintegration assistance live, and the region is accessible to researchers in terms of logistics and security);
- Project scope and number of beneficiaries.

The research team held in-depth qualitative discussions with 141 people in Sri Lanka, which included IOM members, other key actors delivering reintegration assistance, direct or indirect beneficiaries of assisted return and reintegration projects, and members of the local community.

The interviews clarified the conditions for the implementation of the AVRR unit's community-based projects, the nature and objectives of the assistance, the profiles and needs of the migrants, success factors of the projects as well as the practices that might be replicated elsewhere, especially in the key countries of return from Morocco. Table 2 summarizes the interviews conducted.



An IOM staff moderates a discussion group with beneficiaries of an IOM community-based AVRR project in Sandilipay, Sri Lanka.

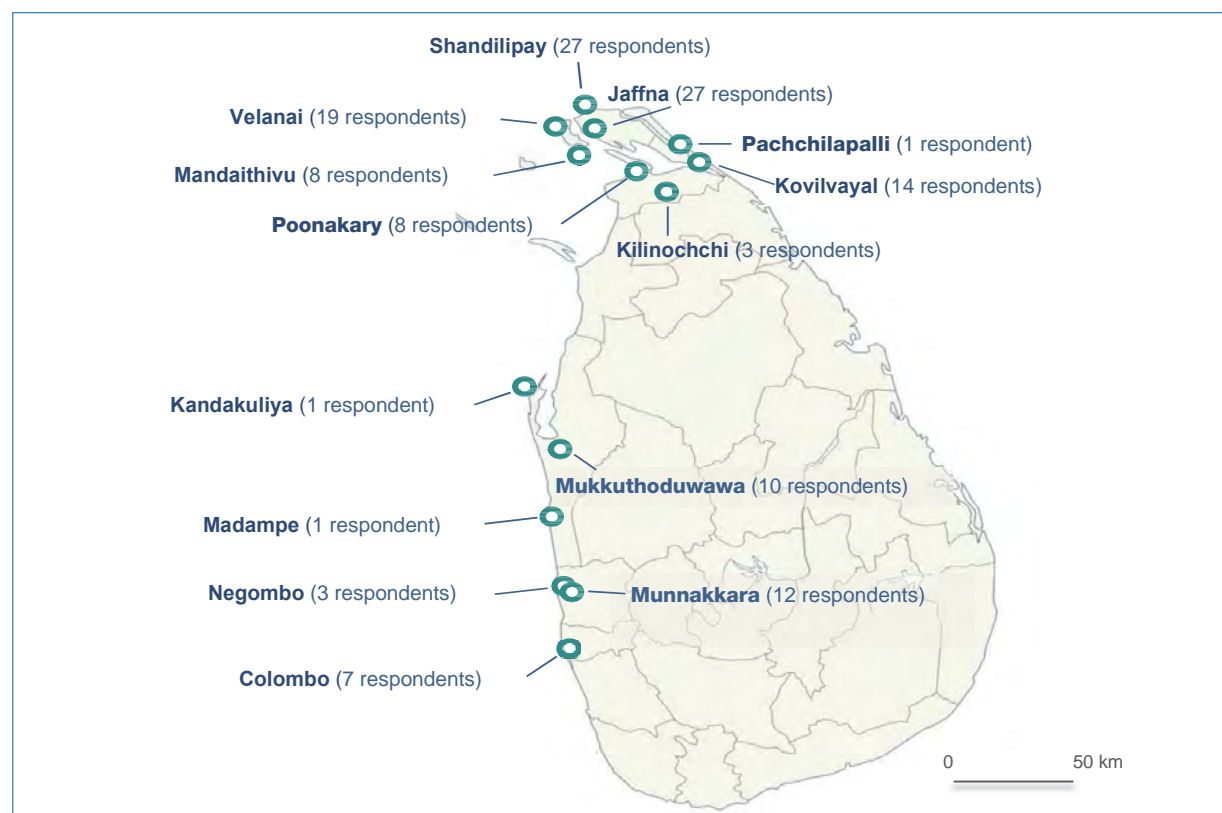
Table 2: Categorization of interviews conducted in Sri Lanka

| Number | Profile of Respondents | Details |
|--------|--|---|
| 13 | IOM staff | Members of the AVRR units in Colombo, Jaffna and Kilinochchi; Project Coordinator for community-level livelihood development in Jaffna. |
| 80 | Members and beneficiaries of community-based projects | Members and beneficiaries of 10 community-based projects implemented by the IOM AVRR unit. Interviews with these respondents were conducted in the form of two discussion groups – one group per project. |
| 16 | Recipients of community-based projects supporting access to vocational training and employment | Recipients of two community-based projects supporting access to vocational training and employment for young people in high-level Youth Empowerment component of the Community Stabilization through Reintegration (CSRA) project, implemented by the AVRR unit. These interviews were conducted in the form of two discussion groups – one with a group being trained in the hotel sector, the other with a group being trained in medical assistance in a private hospital. |
| 2 | Returning migrants receiving individual AVRR support | Recipients of individual voluntary return and reintegration assistance. |
| 3 | Returning migrants (non-voluntary return) who are also recipients of reintegration assistance | Recipients of individual reintegration assistance offered by the AVRR unit for migrants who have not returned through IOM (non-voluntary returns). |
| 1 | Returning migrant (non-voluntary return) who is a non-recipient of assistance | An involuntary returning migrant from Australia who did not receive individual reintegration assistance from IOM. |
| 8 | Representatives of public authorities | Employees of offices of divisional secretaries; employees of Gram Sevager; an employee of Samurdhi; a delegated technical expert from the government for the executive committee of a community-based project. |

| Number | Profile of Respondents | Details |
|--------|---|---|
| 1 | Representative of traditional authorities | A priest strongly involved in the management of the daily life of the local community, including in support of a community-based project supported by IOM. |
| 12 | CSOs, which are also IOM partners | Members of four local NGOs working in partnership with IOM for the management of reintegration assistance: WISE; Mahatma Gandhi Community Centre; North Ceylon Sarvodaya; and Shanthiham Association for Health and Counselling. |
| 1 | Public organization, which is also an IOM partner | Representative of the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), which manages government vocational training centres, working in partnership with the IOM AVRR unit. |
| 4 | Private organizations which are also private-sector partners of IOM | Employees of three different companies (a clinic, a hotel and a private training centre), working in partnership with IOM on the project to help young people access vocational training and employment in high-level departure areas (Youth Empowerment component of the CSRA project implemented by the IOM AVRR unit). |

The interviews were exclusively conducted on a face-to-face basis, on site in 15 cities of five different districts: Colombo; Negombo (Munnakkara, Negombo); Puttalam (Madampe, Mukkuthoduwwa, Kandakuliya); Kilinochchi (Kilinochchi, Pachchilapalli, Kovilvayal, Poonakary); and Jaffna (Sandilipay, Jaffna, Mandaithivu, Velanai). The map below shows the locations of interviews conducted in Sri Lanka during the research.

Figure 3: Map of interviews conducted in Sri Lanka



2.2.5. CASE STUDY: THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH IN TUNISIA

With a view to considering initiatives that follow a different approach and operate under different conditions, Altai also conducted fieldwork in Tunisia, where assisted return and reintegration projects directly involving the local community were implemented by IOM until the end of 2015. The field visit helped in identifying and analysing two specific programmes:

- AVRR for returning migrants from Switzerland whose individual projects can be transformed into collective projects including members of the local community (the amount of assistance is higher if the project directly involves at least one member of the community, thereby encouraging migrants to join the residents).²⁴ This project was implemented between 2012 and 2015.
- Programme of stabilization and creation of employment opportunities in communities experiencing difficulties in absorbing migrants returning from Libya (Stabilizing At-risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Management to Enable Smooth Transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (START)). This EU-funded project was implemented from 2012 to 2015.

During field research in Tunisia, Altai interviewed nine respondents based in Tunis and Sfax:

- Four members of the IOM mission office (Head of Mission, AVRR Project Manager, AVRR Project Assistant, START Project Manager);
- Three members of the Confederation of Tunisian Citizen Enterprises (CONNECT), one of IOM's main partners for the implementation of AVRR projects;
- Two members of the Office of Livestock and Pasture (OLP), an organization belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and one of IOM's main partners for the implementation of AVRR projects.

2.3. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

2.3.1. CHALLENGES

There is a phenomenon of “fatigue” in soliciting interviews among migrants supported by IOM in some countries. As part of this study, Altai encountered this phenomenon in Tunisia. The research team did not conduct interviews with the AVRR recipients on the recommendation of the local IOM office, which did not consider them appropriate as the beneficiaries had been frequently approached in the past. IOM members in Tunis, on the other hand, shared with Altai a short video documentary, including interviews with beneficiaries and actors of the AVRR project funded by the Government of Switzerland.

The inability to access a list of all community-based projects carried out by the IOM offices represented another challenge for Altai during this study. Indeed, the IOM project database does not currently allow the classification of reintegration projects by type (community or individual projects). Therefore, the team had to carry out during the preliminary phase a time-consuming work of mapping and identifying projects that were relevant to the research.

Finally, the pre-existing literature is reduced on the issue of community-based AVRR projects, due to the relatively recent development of these mechanisms.²⁵

2.3.2. LIMITATIONS

Due to the challenges encountered during the identification of the various community-based projects that IOM carried out worldwide (see section 2.3.1, “Challenges”), it is possible that this research may not be comprehensive in terms of community-based AVRR projects established by IOM.

²⁴ Each project could benefit from an additional assistance of EUR 2,750 for each non-migrant employed within the project.

²⁵ There is, however, more literature about the non-AVRR community-based projects (community stabilization projects, projects in emergency situations, etc.).

This study does not offer definitive answers as to the effectiveness, the impact and the sustainability of community-based projects. Indeed, relatively a small number of community-based projects have been implemented so far (see section 3.1) and Altai has not always been able to verify the results of these initiatives for three main reasons:

- Some activities are too recent to ensure that conclusions on their impact are drawn.
- The community-based projects implemented by the AVRR units in fact involved very few or no returnees (so that if it is possible to assess whether these projects have achieved their objectives, it is however impossible to explore their impact on returnees).²⁶
- With very few exceptions, Altai did not have access to evaluations of completed projects (confidential or unavailable internal documents).

It would be particularly useful to carry out a “return on investment” assessment of each AVRR programme conducted through a community-based approach (depending on its impact and its budget) in order to measure its absolute effectiveness (e.g. by comparing the situation of returning migrants who are beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of projects).

Conducting this type of evaluation for each type of community-based project (see section 6.1, which presents the different types of existing community-based projects) would help inform a comprehensive policy and make recommendations regarding the implementation of AVRR projects valid for all IOM mission offices.²⁷ In order to carry out this type of evaluation, researchers should have access to the detailed budgets, project documents and internal evaluations of the projects reviewed, as well as the possibility of interviewing the beneficiaries (which was not always the case for this research).

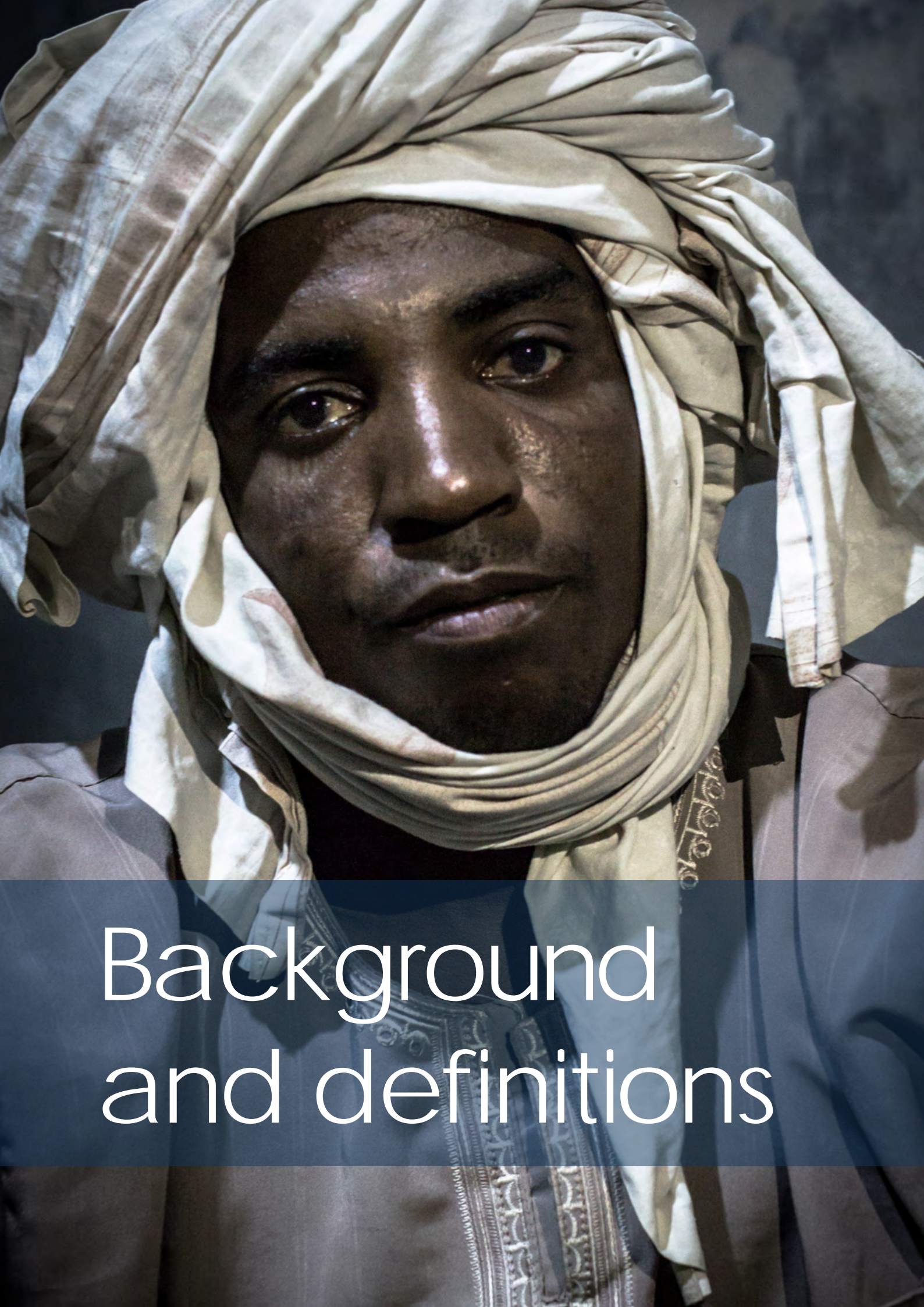
As well, due to budget and timetable constraints, only one field visit was made possible in the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco and Guinea. This report therefore presents more detailed information on the challenges of reintegration in the countries of origin. In order to better prepare the guidelines on community-based AVRR projects implementation in the region, it would be useful to obtain in-depth data on the three other main countries of origin, namely, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Field visits could allow the precise analysis of reintegration problems in each country.

Finally, within the broad scope of research represented by community-based approaches, it would be interesting to focus extensively on the projects being implemented by other IOM departments, which are particularly useful in terms of experience-sharing. A qualitative research work based on interviews with IOM key informants at the Headquarters, in regional offices and in countries where large projects are carried out would help continue to identify good practices that can be used by the AVRR units.

Similarly, research work on assisted return and reintegration projects for migrants implemented by other non-IOM actors (international organizations, NGOs and government agencies) in targeted countries would be an essential basis for drawing lessons from the activities of actors who sometimes have a long experience in the sector (support for returnees, local development and community-based projects) and perhaps think of alternative approaches. In this perspective, a first in-depth documentary research work should be carried out to identify the relevant projects. It would be realistic to limit this type of study to one region (with strong migration dynamics or having a particular interest for IOM in terms of programming) rather than seek to identify projects carried out around the world. Consideration could so be given to limiting the research to projects with a budget similar to the activities envisaged by IOM.

²⁶ This was the case in Sri Lanka and Guinea, where the direct involvement of returnees in community-based AVRR projects was not a necessary condition or a selection criterion (see section 6.1, which presents the types of possible community-based projects).

²⁷ The local context though undoubtedly determines the impact of the projects and the most appropriate type of approach.



Background and definitions

3. BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

3.1. BACKGROUND ON ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The purpose of the AVRR programmes is to provide assistance to migrants who are unwilling or unable to remain in their host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin. For nearly 30 years, most of these programmes have been implemented by IOM.²⁸

Established in 1979 in Germany, IOM's first assisted voluntary return (AVR) programme has given way over the years to programmes comprising a reintegration support component (AVRR programmes). The AVRR programmes are, in most cases, funded by the governments of the host countries (e.g. European countries). IOM currently manages a multitude of different AVRR programmes supported by various donors. For each programme, donors define, in coordination with IOM, specific activities, budget and timetable administrative procedures.

An AVRR programme generally implies the following main services:²⁹

Figure 4: Description of an IOM assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme

| In host countries | In countries of transit | In countries of origin |
|--|---|---|
| Awareness-raising for AVRR programmes | Assistance during transit | Assistance in customs and immigration services upon arrival |
| Collection of information on the country of origin | If necessary, medical or operational escort provided throughout the entire trip | Reception arrangements after the arrival, including information and referral to local partners, as and when necessary |
| Recording of the diaspora profile | | Continuing the trip to the final destination |
| Contacting and transferring information to migrant communities, including referral to public services | | Reintegration assistance, including business start-up, vocational training, studies, medical assistance and job placement |
| Individual counselling for return and reintegration, and dissemination of information on the country of origin | | Capacity-building activities (focusing on local development, access to services, local networks, etc.) |
| Specialized assistance and guidance for vulnerable people | | |
| Temporary accommodation | | |
| Facilitation of issuance of travel documents | | |
| Organization of the trip (and escorts) | | |

²⁸ Other organizations also implement AVRR programmes, such as the Danish Refugee Council and Caritas International.

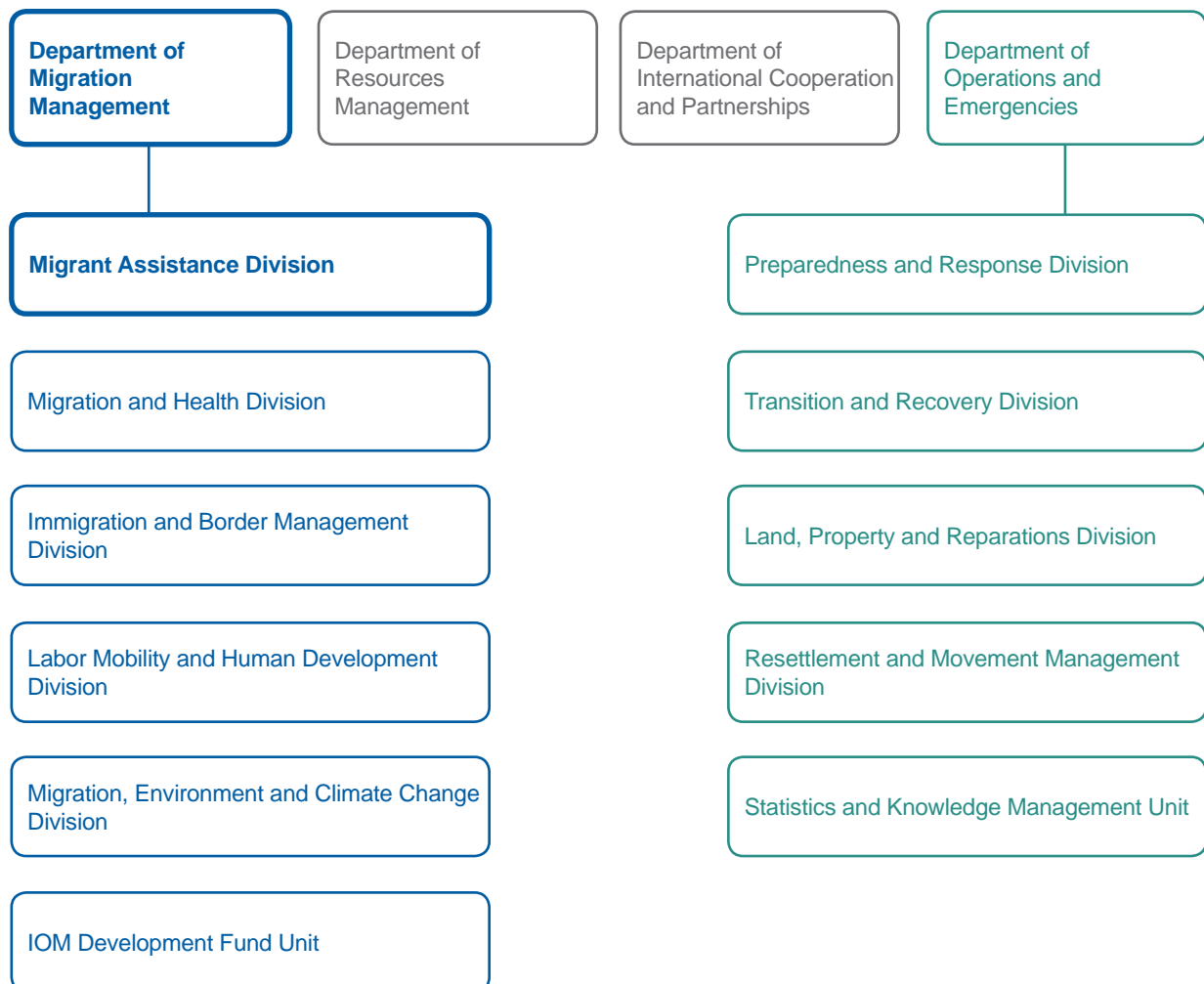
²⁹ Source: www.iom.int/fr/aide-au-retour-volontaire-et-la-reintegration-avrr

While the AVRR was established in Europe, programmes were subsequently developed in host countries in other regions. Since 2000, the AVRR has also been offered to migrants in some transit countries,³⁰ such as Morocco, Niger, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen.

AVRR is currently recognized as a key element of an effective management system and a human response to irregular migratory flows. More than 1.3 million migrants have received assistance since 1979, of whom nearly 70,000 benefited in 2015.³¹ These programmes include migrants with no right to legal residence in the host country, as well as migrants with regular status but who choose to return. The primary beneficiaries of AVRR programmes are those whose asylum claims have been rejected or withdrawn, migrants in distress, victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors and those with special health-related needs.

The AVRR programme is overseen by the Migrant Assistance Division of the Department of Migration Management at IOM Headquarters.

Figure 5: IOM Headquarters structure



³⁰ Assistance was provided with the financial support of European governments and the European Commission.

³¹ In 2015, 69,540 migrants from 156 countries of origin benefited from the AVRR programmes, a significant increase in comparison with previous years.

The Department of Migration Management (and a fortiori the Migrant Assistance Division) is highly decentralized in its structure: IOM's nine regional offices review and approve the projects, support their development, and coordinate and support activities in their regions. Under their supervision, country offices plan, develop, and implement projects and programmes.

IOM's experience indicates that reintegration is an essential aspect of return migration and contributes greatly to the success and sustainability of return.³² Reintegration assistance in AVRR programmes depends on the resources made available by the donors. As described in the *IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region* (2013), reintegration assistance can take the form of:

- Assistance to small businesses and income-generating activities (IGA);
- Vocational training;
- Education support (to cover school fees, books and school supplies);
- Housing and health assistance when necessary;
- Assistance in job placement, internships or apprenticeships;
- Community-based support (initiatives aimed at addressing community concerns and needs, such as the funding of local infrastructure).

3.2. BACKGROUND ON MIGRATIONS IN MOROCCO

Morocco, which has long been a country of return and transit for migrants en route to Europe, has also become a host country for migrants of sub-Saharan origin. To address the lack of support mechanisms for migrants in distress in countries of transit, IOM mission offices in Morocco and countries with a similar situation began implementing AVRR programmes in the mid-2000s. Since 2005, IOM Morocco has assisted more than 4,800 irregular migrants, often vulnerable and in distress, to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

As the first North African partner to sign a mobility partnership with the EU in June 2013, Morocco adopted, in September of the same year, a new migration policy that provided more protection for migrants residing in the country. As part of this new migration policy, Morocco carried out, until 2014, a campaign for the regularization of irregular migrants³³ and is currently working on the development of three new draft laws on asylum, trafficking in human beings and migration.

Since 2007, the IOM mission office in Morocco has been working in partnership with the Government of Morocco to carry out AVRR programmes for irregular migrants who wish to return to their countries of origin but do not have the means to do so. In 2015 alone, 1,399 returns from Morocco were carried out, mainly back to Guinea, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire.³⁴ The programme is experiencing a strong demand, while the lack of financing limits the supply.

This situation led to the extension of the waiting time for irregular migrants in Morocco before the assisted voluntary return to the country of origin.

³² See, for example: *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (Geneva, IOM, 2015), available from www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/Reintegration-Position-Paper-final.pdf

³³ Morocco's Ministry of Interior estimates that between 25,000 and 40,000 migrants were in an irregular situation in Morocco at the end of 2013; most of them were from West African countries and were living in precarious conditions.

³⁴ In 2015, 420 returns to Guinea were carried out, 311 to Cameroon, 182 to Côte d'Ivoire, 121 to Senegal, 93 to Mali, 90 to Nigeria and 182 to a range of other countries. This high number of voluntary returns made Morocco the eighth largest return mission in the world in 2015 through the AVRR programme.

3.3. DEFINITIONS

IOM defines “return” as the migration bringing a person to his/her place of departure – country of origin or place of habitual residence – generally after spending at least one year abroad. The return movement can be carried out either within the territory of a given State (e.g. the case of internally displaced persons) or between the host country and the country of origin (e.g. the cases of economic migrants and refugees). The concept of return can be divided into subcategories, depending on the terms and conditions of the return: voluntary return or forced return, assisted return or spontaneous return.³⁵ Voluntary return is the spontaneous or assisted return of a person to his/her country of origin based on a freely expressed will.³⁶



Preparation of an assisted voluntary return under the AVRR: an IOM staff provides explanations to a migrant before departure, at the IOM office in Rabat, Morocco.

Reintegration is the process through which a migrant reintegrates into the society of his/her country of origin within the context of return migration, enabling him/her to reengage in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his/her country.³⁷

The return and reintegration assistance developed by IOM, in particular under the AVRR programme, has traditionally taken the form of individual initiatives – in other words, personalized assisted return and reintegration projects under which assistance is provided in a direct, limited and timely manner to a migrant in the form of in-kind or cash grants.

However, a growing number of collective initiatives have been undertaken to alleviate the limitations of the usual individualized AVRR projects. For the purposes of this study, Altai has defined collective initiatives such as assisted return and reintegration projects involving migrants grouped together to carry out a collective project, as in the case of an agricultural cooperative.

³⁵ Definition taken from the IOM *Glossary of Migration* (2007), edited by Richard Perruchoud, available from http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_9_fr.pdf

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

In the absence of a previously defined set of initiatives with a community-based approach, Altai proposes the following criterion: community-based initiatives include reintegration assistance projects that directly involve the community while addressing its concerns and needs. From the very beginning, the goal of an assisted voluntary return and reintegration community-based project must be twofold: to facilitate the reintegration of assisted and voluntary returnees and to have a direct positive impact on the local community.

Voluntary return and reintegration initiatives with a community-based approach therefore involve both returning migrants and members of the local community. These initiatives may be:

- Activities (either collective or not) of returning migrants, which also involve members of the local returning community (non-migrants) or are directly serving the community. For example, projects offering additional incentives for individual migrants to employ members of the local community in their start-up companies.
- Local development or infrastructure projects in areas where the number of returning migrants is significant; reintegration assistance for returning migrants is then part of a larger project to assist the community. For example, development assistance projects that meet the long-term structural and institutional needs of the local community (construction/renovation of infrastructure, common services, etc.) in areas where the number of departures or returns is high and projects that directly involve returning migrants and support their reintegration.

The distinction between the different forms of assisted return and reintegration is not strict and can best be visualized in the form of two opposite ends of a continuum as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Schematic typology of assisted return and reintegration approaches



3.4. MAPPING OF COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH INITIATIVES

As noted by IOM in its report *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (2015), there can be no one-size-fits-all solution to reintegration issues.³⁸ Within the categories defined above, the forms of assisted return and reintegration through a collective or community-based approach are as numerous as the local contexts and vulnerabilities experienced by migrants are diverse.

Traditionally, approaches to voluntary return and reintegration are considering assistance on an individual basis (micro level), in particular through cash or in-kind support to individual migrants. Relatively few AVRR projects have expanded their scope to the macro level by directly involving the local community. In recent years, however, interest in community-based initiatives has grown in the face of the limitations of the AVRR “traditional” individual model. Currently, large-scale community-based AVRR outreach projects have been implemented by IOM in Sri Lanka and UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo (hereinafter referred to as Kosovo/UNSC 1244). Several small-scale initiatives have also recently emerged in Africa – for example, in the countries of return of migrants from Niger and in Tunisia.

Generally speaking, however, the range of initiatives supporting the reintegration of non-AVRR migrants and directly involving the local community is wide. Altai therefore chose to focus on community-based projects that included a reintegration assistance component implemented by IOM in a context other than AVRR (e.g. for non-voluntary returns or internally displaced persons), with a view to identifying good practices that can be applied to the AVRR units’ work.

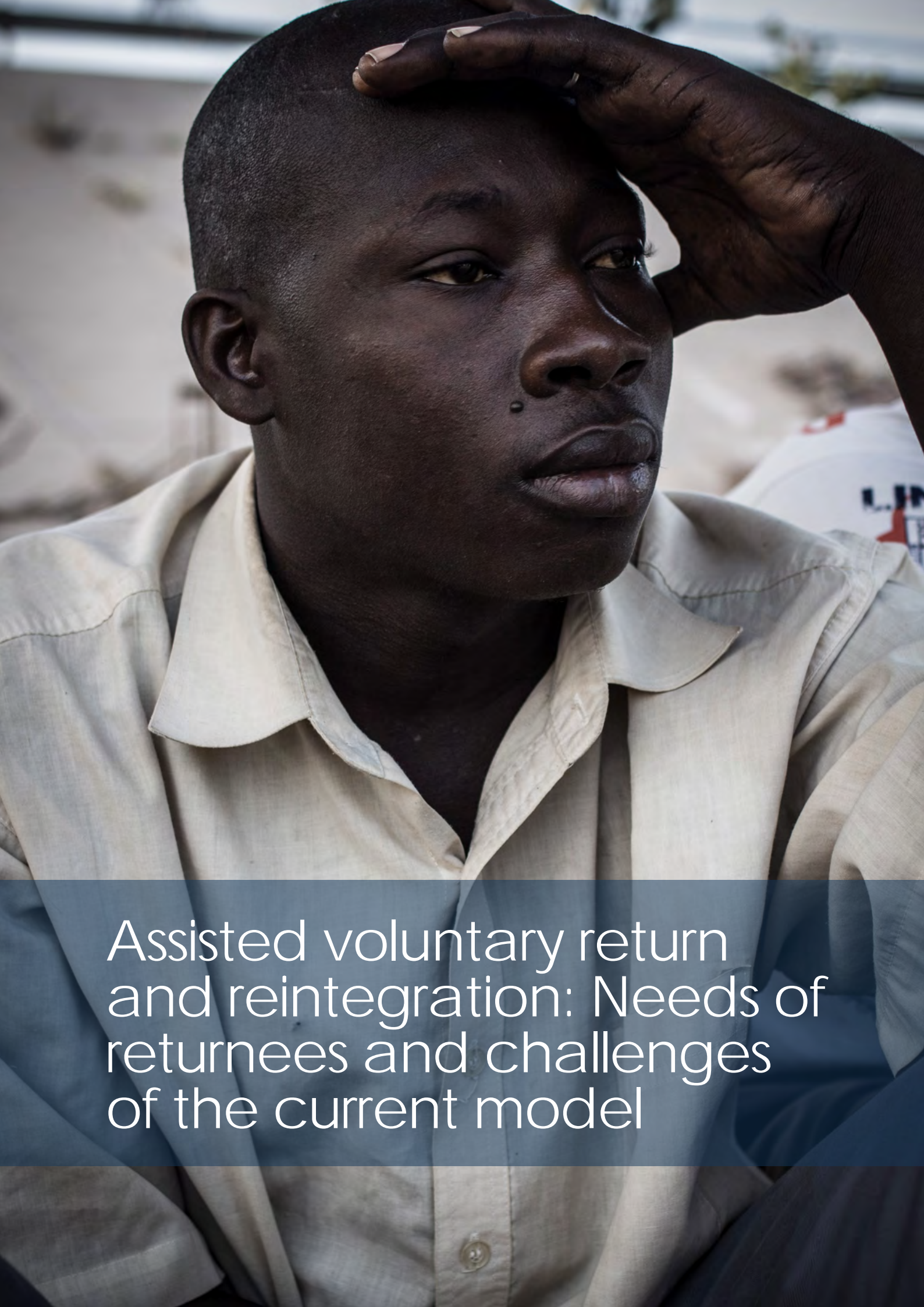
These non-AVRR community-based projects, comprising a reintegration assistance component, are mostly implemented by the IOM Department of Operations and Emergencies and not by the Department of Migration Management (Figure 5). Kosovo/UNSC 1244, Iraq, several Latin American countries and Tajikistan have paved the way for innovative projects that still continue today. Several community stabilization projects (implemented by the Department of Operations and Emergencies) in particular include activities to assist the reintegration of returning migrants.

A detailed but non-exhaustive list of current and past community outreach initiatives identified by Altai during the research is attached to this report. Initiatives have been categorized by type of approach and type of return assistance (e.g. AVRR or non-voluntary returns), place and date of implementation. Figure 7 summarizes the initiatives identified in each category.

³⁸ IOM, *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (Geneva, 2015), p. 10. Available from www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/Reintegration-Position-Paper-final.pdf

Figure 7: Identified assisted return and reintegration projects involving, to varying degrees, the local communities





Assisted voluntary return
and reintegration: Needs of
returnees and challenges
of the current model

4. ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: NEEDS OF RETURNEES AND CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT MODEL

Summary

Three main needs of migrants in terms of AVRR can be identified, all of which contribute to the success and sustainability of their reintegration:

- Migrants have a constant need for information and advice, both before departure as well as upon return and reintegration, to fully understand the AVRR process, prepare and then implement their projects. It should be noted, however, that before departure some migrants lived in distress conditions in such a way that they only thought about the urgent need to return and that it was difficult for them to consider or prepare their reintegration.
- Migrants need to earn money quickly to meet their immediate needs and then to have a satisfactory and regular income to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Migrants need to rebuild a social network within their communities of return and, if necessary, to be able to benefit from psychosocial assistance.

Regarding AVRR, IOM is currently facing some challenges:

- The difficulties encountered in finding funding for reintegration assistance and managing donor requirements limit the amount of subsidies that can be offered to returnees.
 - Prior to return as well as upon arrival in the country of origin, it is sometimes difficult to prepare returnee reintegration projects as may be necessary and under appropriate conditions.
 - Maintaining contact with returnees and monitoring their projects is time-consuming and sometimes complicated to implement when returns are carried out in a remote area situated some distance away from an IOM office, when partnerships with local actors are limited or when projects require sector expertise.
 - The AVRR individual approach does not always address the problems that originally drove migrants to leave their communities of origin, and the sustainability of return can sometimes be limited.
 - Members of the local community who do not receive assistance may sometimes feel envious towards returnees, as well as a feeling of resentment, in the event of a large number of returns, which have an impact on local resources.
-

4.1. MIGRANTS' NEEDS IN TERMS OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The section provides an analysis of migrants' needs in terms of AVRR – in other words, the needs that the AVRR projects must address because they represent necessary factors for sustainable reintegration. Reintegration is a multidimensional process, and returnees need support in several areas, such as: counselling and access to information (section 4.1.1); economic reintegration (section 4.1.2); and reintegration into the community of origin (section 4.1.3). The specific needs and challenges facing the return and reintegration of the most vulnerable cases are discussed in section 4.2.5.

4.1.1. INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Migrants have a constant need for information and advice, both before departure as well as during the return and reintegration process, to fully understand the AVRR process, prepare and then implement their projects.

Information on the current context and rights in the country of return

To consider their return, migrants primarily need information on the current context in their countries of return and their rights once they return. While some migrants are in regular contact with their communities of origin, others, as in cases of long absence, lack knowledge about the developments in their countries. They need to be aware of the economic, social, political, and security conditions in their countries and regions of return.³⁹ It is also necessary for migrants to know their rights and the migration laws that are applicable to them upon their return.⁴⁰

Information on the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme and the operation of IOM

Prior to their return, migrants also need clear and detailed information on the IOM AVRR programme, the process of return and the assistance they will receive (and what, on the contrary, IOM will not be able to do). Having an idea of the time that the reintegration assistance process may take, for example, will enable them, where appropriate, to organize a round-trip travel to their regions of origin, rather than wait sometimes several weeks in the capital of the country of origin.

Similarly, it is important for migrants to understand the basics of how IOM operates, where assistance comes from and why it is necessarily limited. Failing to always understand the difficulty for IOM to obtain funding, migrants may tend to give lesser value to reintegration assistance and continue to hope to be able to benefit from assistance more than once.⁴¹ The motivation of returnees to get the most out of the assistance provided and enhance it is stronger when it is assumed that the opportunity will occur only once. These explanations also justify the fact that the amounts of assistance and the monitoring procedures vary (which may be perceived by migrants as an injustice) because of the difficulties of harmonization between AVRR programmes.

³⁹ When all security conditions are not met, IOM reserves the right to suspend its operations. In the case of health crises such as the Ebola virus disease outbreak, IOM Morocco also informs the potential returnees before asking them to confirm their desire to return to their countries of origin.

⁴⁰ In some countries, for example, migrants who have left irregularly may be subject to judicial prosecution for violating the law on migration.

⁴¹ In spite of discussions with IOM staff members in the country of departure (during which it was particularly specified that assistance would be provided only once and that IOM did not have its own funds) and the signature of a document, a large number of migrants interviewed in Guinea, for example, hoped to receive assistance a second time.



Migrant candidates for the AVRR listen to a representative of their country of origin in Rabat, Morocco.

Advice for the design and implementation of the return project

In addition, the returnees also need support in terms of design and throughout the implementation of their projects for the return. When developing their projects, they need advice on the promising sectors, market developments and the various possible IGAs in their regions. In Guinea, for example, most of the beneficiaries of individual AVRR programmes are oriented towards the creation of small businesses such as grocery stores, sale of phone refills or motorcycle taxis, partly due to lack of ideas of other possible projects and insufficient knowledge of other potentially promising sectors.⁴² During the implementation of the projects, migrants also need advice and training in managing and developing their projects, making the best use of the assistance offered (see section 4.2.3). For example, it is difficult for migrants who are illiterate to run a business without support or training.

Information on other existing assistance measures and opportunities

Finally, migrants need information on the different types of assistance made available to them in addition to the AVRR programme, whether it is psychosocial, financial, administrative support or training, for example. Some returnees⁴³ may not be aware of the assistance they could benefit from through other IOM programmes or other actors (government support or projects of other international organizations, international NGOs or local NGOs).⁴⁴

⁴² Some recipients interviewed said in fact that they had even been unaware that they were allowed to ask for another type of project. The limited amount of assistance also leaves little room for creativity and limits potential projects, as discussed in section 4.2.1. It is important to note, however, that returnees are often in a precarious situation and in distress and are not in favourable psychological conditions for the preparation of a project, even if they have been informed and advised by IOM.

⁴³ That was the case of some migrants interviewed in different regions of Guinea as part of this study.

⁴⁴ In some countries, IOM is implementing new approaches with a view to improving the information given to returnees, such as case management committees involving government and non-government reintegration actors.

4.1.2. ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

The primary need of returnees is to earn money quickly (to address their critical and immediate needs) and then to have an adequate and regular income. This is the main need referred to by all migrants and stakeholders interviewed during this study.

Urgent need for economic reintegration upon return

Upon return, migrants are generally in a situation of economic vulnerability, without sources of income and with no savings. Migrants interviewed in Guinea, for example, had spent a large amount of money to reach Morocco and try to get to Europe.⁴⁵ They sometimes went into debt to their families or communities to pay for their travel expenses and meet their needs by the time they arrive in Morocco.

Many returnees do not have a job waiting for them upon their arrival or the possibility of resuming an activity in their countries of origin. For many migrants, unemployment or lack of satisfaction with their income is the main factor underlying their departure. Although some returnees could find work in the sector in which they worked prior to their departure (e.g. iron and steel industry, butchery, sales), many others sold their production tools in order to leave (e.g. their lands, livestock, boats or motorcycles). Others had no activity before their departure: the Guinean returnees, for example, are often teenagers and full-time students before emigrating.

Another factor explains the priority given by migrants to the economic reintegration: the social reintegration of returnees (which, as detailed in section 4.1.3, is essential to ensure sustainable return) depends in part on their financial resources. Returnees are more likely to earn the respect of their communities if they are able to bring an income. The guarantee of receiving IOM assistance helps mitigate the perception of failure of migration.

Need to create an income-generating activity

What do returnees need to quickly generate sustainable and sufficient income to cover their needs and those of their dependents? It is impossible to generalize situations that vary from one country to another, from one region to another and from one individual to another. However, in the economic context of the main countries of return from Morocco, it is difficult for migrants to find a job. The unemployment rate is high, especially among young people (the main potential migrants). The only available jobs are often informal and poorly paid.

For example, the majorities of Guinean returnees have no qualifications or professional experience prior to migration and therefore have little hope of finding a job. Those who are able to be employed by their relatives (e.g. in a farm or family business) have generally chosen to emigrate because they do not consider their income sufficient or satisfactory. As for graduate migrants who are more likely to be employed, they often leave the country after spending a long period looking for a job.⁴⁶

Under these circumstances, most returnees seek to create their own IGAs. To that end, they need start-up capital, which most of them do not have (the challenges related to funding of reintegration assistance are detailed in section 4.2.1).

Need to strengthen the capacities of migrants

Whether they wish to find a job or create their own IGAs, the returnees from Morocco, who have often not completed their education nor received vocational training, also need to strengthen their capacities.

⁴⁵ They spend up to EUR 1,000 on the way to Morocco, after which the journey from Morocco to Europe will cost approximately EUR 4,000, not to mention their living expenses in Morocco, where most of them did not find a job.

⁴⁶ According to a member of the public service interviewed in Guinea: "There are no jobs available for young graduates because officials who are eligible for retirement are willing to do anything to avoid leaving their jobs and there is never a job opening. Many people in the administration falsify their birth certificates to claim they are younger than they actually are and thereby do not have to retire. They need their income to support their families. It's cultural, people have a large family to support, and the pension is too small to support everybody's needs."

The beneficiaries of AVRR who wish to implement their microprojects need training that is specific to their business sectors, advice for project management and activity development and, often, a general educational support. The research has highlighted the fact that the failure of many individual projects is directly caused by a lack of awareness of the need to reinvest, to maintain working capital and to develop the business to generate a sustainable income.

Training component of the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes

The AVRR programmes implemented by IOM sometimes include training courses in entrepreneurship and project management. These courses are often short-term (one day covering the introduction to the basics of accounting for example) and take place within groups of returnees with different profiles. Migrants could benefit from training courses applied to the sector of their choice. In Tunisia, for example, the Confederation of Tunisian Citizen Enterprises (CONNECT), IOM's main partner for training, has chosen, based on experiences, to customize training: by offering shorter but more personalized training courses, by creating small groups of migrants on the basis of their needs and interests, and finally by paying particular attention to interpersonal skills of trainers.

4.1.3. SOCIAL REINTEGRATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

The third major factor essential to ensure the success of return and reintegration is that migrants need to rebuild a social network and, if necessary, be able to benefit from psychosocial support. The social and psychosocial dimensions are sometimes overlooked during the design of assisted reintegration programmes, which focus instead on economic reintegration.

Psychological support

Returning migrants find sometimes themselves in a psychological situation that requires support: broken dreams, return shock, feeling of failure,⁴⁷ or trauma related to travel or living conditions in the host country. Without psychological support, it will be difficult for them then to concentrate on the creation and management of an IGA project.

"I came back seven months ago. I could not go to Europe because the smugglers stole our EUR 8,000, my brother and I. It was my family who found the money. Here right now I cannot believe it, it's impossible. I do not know yet what I want to do."

– A migrant returning to Mamou, Guinea

Social networking within the community of return

Moreover, the availability of a social support network and the attitude of the local population towards returnees are critical factors for the sustainability of return. Migrants need to be accepted into the community and be able to rely on contacts to inform them and help them in difficult situations. However, some migrants may lack social capital upon their return, and in some contexts, migrants become victims of social stigma. As highlighted by IOM in the report *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (2015), some governments or cultural contexts that promote emigration as a strategy for economic growth may discourage returns. In Afghanistan, for example, the shame resulting from the rejection by the local population of those who "failed" in their migration projects has greatly influenced the reemigration desires of returnees.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ This feeling of failure, expressed by many interviewed returnees, is even stronger when the community gets into debt to contribute financially to the migration with the hope that the migrant will regularly send money after settling at the destination.

⁴⁸ L. Schuster and N. Majidi, "What happens post-deportation? The experience of deported Afghans", *Migration Studies*, 1(2):221–240. Available from <http://migration.oxfordjournals.org/content/1/2/221>

Family involvement

Just like community acceptance, family involvement is an essential component of a successful reintegration.⁴⁹ The family can provide, in addition to financial support, moral and psychological support to returnees, and help them re-establish a social circle. The shame and stigma caused by the return may also have an impact on the entire family of the migrant. Some IOM members interviewed during this study consider that, for this reason, not only migrants but also their families need in-depth psychological support.

4.2. CURRENT CHALLENGES OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED ASSISTANCE MODEL

This section analyses the challenges faced by IOM offices to address the needs of migrants identified in section 4.1 and implement AVRR. The main identified challenges have been consolidated here in chronological order: challenges relating to the funding of reintegration (section 4.2.1), preparation of migrant projects (section 4.2.2), implementation and monitoring of the projects (section 4.2.3), sustainability of return (section 4.2.4) and management of specific cases (section 4.2.5).

4.2.1. FUNDING OF REINTEGRATION COMPONENTS

IOM faces difficulties in mobilizing adequate funding for reintegration assistance, managing the demands of donors, restricting the operating costs of individual assistance and encouraging the harmonization of the AVRR programmes. As a result, the amount of reintegration assistance that can be offered to returnees may be insufficient to launch a sustainable activity.

Obtaining funding for reintegration assistance

Members of IOM offices interviewed for this study highlighted the difficulty of finding funding for reintegration. Because of the priorities of donors, it is easier to obtain funding for the “return” components of the AVRR programmes than for the “reintegration” components. In Morocco, for example, the demand from migrants for AVRR remains significantly higher than what the IOM office can offer, despite a steady increase in the number of migrants supported since 2012.⁵⁰

High costs associated with support and monitoring of individual reintegration assistance

The implementation and monitoring of individual reintegration assistance are costly in terms of time and resources consumed.⁵¹ Monitoring of individual projects is one of the most financially burdensome aspects of the AVRR programme for IOM offices, with the beneficiaries being geographically dispersed and sometimes difficult to reach, as highlighted in section 4.2.2.

Coherence of the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes, required processes and amounts of assistance

Another challenge faced by IOM in the implementation of assisted return and reintegration is **the lack of harmonization between the different AVRR programmes and the management of the requirements of each donor. AVRR is not established as part of a single general fund but of a multitude of projects**

⁴⁹ As highlighted by the EU in its report “Action Document for ‘Pilot action on voluntary return and sustainable community-based reintegration’” (2015): “In many contexts, the degree of success of individual reintegration highly depends on the active engagement of families and communities in local development initiatives that complement and support the reintegration of returnees.” To access the document, see: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/file/49071/download_en?token=jL-3zYzW

⁵⁰ The development of AVRR programmes in so-called transit countries such as Morocco and the increasing demand for assistance in the current migration context make the effective management and implementation of assistance difficult. When the number of beneficiaries is far higher than originally expected, the number of grants may increase proportionally but not the number of staff accompanying and advising migrants, thus complicating project management.

⁵¹ The report “MISMES: Tunisia” (European Training Foundation, 2015), for example, shows that the current AVRR programmes are particularly labour-intensive from an institutional point of view. The percentage of the total budget allocated for these programmes directly reaching the beneficiaries does not usually exceed 20–30 per cent (although returnees benefit also from the training to which they are entitled and from return transportation, the costs of which are not included in the percentage of the total budget that directly benefits returnees).

financed by different donors. Each project has its own criteria for the eligibility of beneficiaries, its priorities, its milestones to achieve, its timetable, its own implementation framework and its own reporting procedures.⁵²

Depending on programmes and donors (often host country governments), the amounts of grants awarded to returnees for their projects vary. Migrants of the same nationality therefore receive different grants depending on the country from which they return. There are considerable differences between the allocations of the various programmes, ranging from EUR 4,000 for reintegration assistance to returnees from Switzerland to EUR 0 for returnees from Niger and EUR 1,000 for those returning from Egypt. The IOM *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region* (2013) already warns donors of the “resulting tensions between returning migrants of the same nationality receiving different amounts for reintegration assistance and in different forms, some much more generous than others”.

Cyclical funding of the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme in Morocco to mitigate the challenges associated with the functioning of AVRR through the projects of different donors

The IOM mission office in Rabat is one of the few IOM offices to have decided in 2014 to adopt a “cyclical” approach for the AVRR programme, with the aim of mitigating the difficulties arising from the funding of AVRR by disparate programmes, in particular the lack of coherence in the assistance received by migrants and the impossibility of planning for the long term.

Organizing the AVRR programme in cycles lasting just over 24 months enables the IOM mission office to plan the available funds and arrange support from different donors for the different aspects of the programme. The cycles end in July in order to avoid the risk of a cessation of funding in winter (a period of strong increase in the number of requests due to the cold weather). The first cycle (May 2014–July 2016) has just been completed, while the new cycle started in May 2016 (the overlapping of cycles is voluntary).

This cyclical organization seems to be advantageous for the time being, although as highlighted by interviewed IOM members, it does not resolve the difficulties of raising funds for reintegration.

In general, to address the problems associated with the funding of a single mission through programmes of different donors, IOM offices in North Africa have sought to ensure: (a) that migrants returning to the same country receive the same assistance to reintegration funded by the same project; and (b) that when a project which is coming to an end overlaps with another one that has just begun, the concluding project resources must be used as a priority for reintegration assistance and must first be exhausted.

The fact that the amount of reintegration assistance depends on the budget of the host country and on the donor funding the project rather than on the differences between the contexts of the countries of return, whether in terms of socioeconomic conditions (cost of living, inflation, exchange rate) or in terms of the security situation, it is an obvious challenge for IOM offices and migrants. Interviewed experts from IOM pointed out that despite IOM’s recommendations, donors have so far shown little interest in funding standardized reintegration assistance allocations.

Insufficient amount of reintegration assistance

As a direct result of the difficulties mentioned in the following example (“Guinea”, in the text box), the amount of reintegration assistance provided to migrants is limited and sometimes insufficient to enable returnees to launch a sustainable activity. This is the case for returning migrants from Morocco who receive EUR 500 in

⁵² Concerning the differences between budget allocations for monitoring among various projects, for example, see section 4.2.3.

kind through IOM-approved suppliers.⁵³ In the main countries of return of these migrants, in West Africa, this sum is relatively small and limits the possible activities. Other countries of departure, such as Nigeria and Cameroon, are unable to provide individual grants for reintegration assistance.

Example: Guinea

In Conakry, Guinea, EUR 500 does not allow for substantial purchases of equipment. For example, the amount represents only 50 per cent of the cost of a motorcycle that is appropriate to carry on a motorcycle taxi business (the most common individual project among returnees). Nor is the sum sufficient to purchase a large freezer for the sale of food (for migrants wishing to open a food shop or a fish shop, for example). Migrants must therefore supplement IOM's assistance with personal funds to launch their businesses, getting into debt to their relatives. In the absence of additional personal capital, returnees mostly choose to buy prepaid phone cards using the EUR 500 grant, which they subsequently resell to dispose of cash. Under these circumstances, individual projects are scarcely diversified, with migrants choosing their projects from the short list of whatever the EUR 500 of assistance (and their potential personal funds) will allow them to invest in.

4.2.2. PREPARATION OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Prior to return to as well as upon arrival in the country of origin, it is sometimes difficult to prepare returnee reintegration projects as may be necessary.

Project design before departure

If, according to several key actors interviewed, it is essential that an initial reflection on the reintegration projects of the returnees is carried out in advance in the host country, it is not always possible or appropriate to develop projects before the return. In the host country, potential returnees usually live in precarious conditions that are hardly favourable to the peaceful development of their reintegration projects. IOM-supported migrants in Morocco, for example, are mostly in situations of extreme vulnerability and their primary priority is to ensure their basic needs until their departure. In addition, migrants are sometimes disconnected from the local economic contexts in their regions, which AVRR advisers in host countries are not familiar with either.

Finally, IOM mission offices in host countries do not always have sufficient human and material resources to be able to provide in-depth support to migrants in the elaboration of their projects, due to a rapid increase in the number of potential returnees or to donors' decision not to cover adequate staff expenses. In Morocco, for example, the AVRR team includes approximately 10 members, 3 or 4 of whom are involved in hosting and communicating with the AVRR candidates. Each of these members must sometimes conduct more than 25 interviews per day with migrants while managing the expectations of migrants and the difficulties to which they are exposed because of the delays of the process.⁵⁴

⁵³ It should be noted that Morocco is one of the few countries of transit in the world whose government helps to fund reintegration assistance. The other donors for the AVRR programme from Morocco are Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the EU. (Source: https://morocco.iom.int/sites/default/files/Fiches%20de%20projets/AVRR_Maroc.pdf)

⁵⁴ In order to optimize the assistance provided to migrants ahead of departure, the IOM mission office in Morocco has planned to adapt a guidebook prepared by IOM Ireland, titled "Preparing for Return".



Migrants arriving at the IOM office in Rabat, Morocco.

Challenges associated with the organization of returns faced by offices in destination countries

The IOM offices in host countries sometimes face administrative difficulties in organizing the return of migrants, which can cause delays. Obtaining travel documents, for example, depends on the political commitment of the governments of the countries of origin. The reintegration project will thus be hampered if the government of the country of origin has a negative attitude towards returnees or has limited capacity to assist the migrants or to meet the demand.

Launch of projects upon return

According to the interviews conducted, returnees may also face logistical and administrative difficulties in the countries of origin to access individual reintegration assistance. Sometimes they have to travel to the IOM office from remote areas before gathering the necessary supporting documents and quotations and then wait for several months. The evaluation of the IOM Libya Humanitarian Repatriation of Stranded Migrants (HRSM) programme,⁵⁵ for example, shows that most of the beneficiaries who returned to Senegal and Nigeria were living a great distance away from the IOM office and had to wait between two and six months before having a first contact with IOM after the return. These logistical constraints force some returnees to give up seeking reintegration assistance.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The assessment was conducted by Altai in 2016. According to the evaluation, 9 of the 13 beneficiaries who were interviewed in Senegal and Nigeria had to pay more than USD 20 for transportation to get to the nearest IOM office. It was even more compelling that some of them had to travel back and forth several times to the IOM office to complete the procedure for obtaining assistance. Only 3 of the 13 interviewed recipients were able to contact IOM within a period of one month upon their return, which took between 2 and 6 months for the others. The project procedure required returning persons to get in touch in-person with the IOM offices in their countries of origin, but some of them did not understand this instruction and waited for IOM to contact them (having given their phone numbers), while others had to do an Internet-based search to find the IOM office numbers.

⁵⁶ The IOM *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region* (2013) identifies the following reasons to explain that some returnees fail to contact IOM to receive their reintegration assistance: "(a) migrants live very far away from the IOM office and lack the will or financial means to attend training sessions or counselling; (b) in-kind assistance discourages some migrants who see the process as cumbersome or even impossible, given that the acquisition of mandatory receipts, licences and the like is not always possible, especially in rural settings; (c) the migrant has been able to find a job and therefore feels he or she no longer needs reintegration assistance; or (d) the migrant is planning to reemigrate or has already done so". To access the document, see: <https://publications.iom.int/books/assisted-voluntary-return-and-reintegration-handbook-north-african-region>

4.2.3. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Once the migrant has returned and the procedures to obtain assistance have been completed, then challenges in implementing and monitoring individual AVRR projects will emerge.

Maintaining contact with returnees for the monitoring of projects

It is delicate and time-consuming for IOM teams to maintain contact with migrants who often return to remote areas that are far from IOM offices and who are not always reachable. Indeed, areas of return do not always have good telephone networks and returnees do not always make efforts to remain reachable (they do not contact IOM upon return as planned, do not report changes in their phone numbers, or do not answer or indicate erroneous numbers once the in-kind assistance is obtained). The geographical distance between IOM offices and returning communities also complicates the management and monitoring of the projects.

Decentralization of IOM offices in countries of return

In Guinea, IOM has only one office in Conakry, the country's capital, from which members have to cover a country with a total area of 246,000 sq km. The lack of field presence or lack of local representation in areas of high numbers of returns is a daily challenge for the AVRR teams in assisting and monitoring migrants. The problem is exacerbated in countries whose territories are even broader, such as Nigeria.

At the other end of the spectrum, the strong decentralization of the AVRR unit in Sri Lanka is one of the key factors to its success and the proper running of the projects. Half of the AVRR unit's staff have been relocated to the provinces (10 team members in the capital Colombo, and 10 others dispatched to three regional offices in Batticaloa, Jaffna and Kilinochchi). The AVRR unit is the only IOM unit in Sri Lanka to have members in the regional offices for the time being. The small distances in the country also facilitate direct and regular contact with migrants.

In addition, assistance to returnees is, in most cases, provided only in the short term, making it difficult for IOM and its partners to maintain contact with migrants for long-term monitoring and assessment. However, returnees sometimes need long-term support until the implementation of a strong project.⁵⁷

Human resources and sector expertise

Another challenge is the need for IOM members in countries of return to have the technical expertise in different sectors to support projects relating to specific sectors. In order to support the implementation and monitoring of individual projects, the human resources of the AVRR units of the countries of origin would need to be strengthened not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of capacity (e.g. sector expertise and knowledge of other donors' initiatives).

Existing partnerships with authorities and civil society actors

Partnerships with local actors are, in some cases, a solution to the above-mentioned difficulties (geographical distance, lack of resources, lack of sector expertise),⁵⁸ but they do not exist and cannot be developed in all areas of return.

⁵⁷ The IOM report *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (2015), for example, emphasizes in this regard that "reintegration assistance should be provided beyond 12 months because it could take longer to create a livelihood capable of supporting the returnee and his or her family."

⁵⁸ Indeed, local actors – who are partners of civil society, the private sector and the public sector – would be able to support the implementation of projects in the provinces, provide technical expertise and ensure follow-ups.



In Sri Lanka, IOM has established close partnerships with local public authorities in the areas of return, as with the Divisional Secretary in Negombo.⁵⁹

In the training organized by IOM Morocco in Rabat, participants from the main countries of return from Morocco underlined the need to develop partnerships with CSOs. They also discussed the need to encourage the authorities' commitment to supporting programmes in the main countries of return from Morocco, which they considered to be weak.⁶⁰

In the absence of partnerships established with local actors, the risk of duplicating efforts may arise. Indeed, some local actors (public, private or civil society) sometimes implement projects similar to those of IOM or which could benefit the returnees (even if they are not the main target beneficiaries). According to one of the key informants interviewed: "It is sometimes possible, for example, that a market analysis has already been conducted by an NGO, or that there are excellent opportunities made available to migrants, such as tax reliefs or training. But members of IOM offices in countries of return do not always have the time or the capacities to obtain information and establish a link with officials."⁶¹

⁵⁹ The Divisional Secretary's team is involved in the search for information on migrants prior to their return, in sustainability assessments prior to project initiation and in cases monitoring. It maintains a database of existing projects and ensures coordination with local organizations working on the subject in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

⁶⁰ The EU summarizes in the report "Action Document for 'Pilot action on voluntary return and sustainable, community-based reintegration'" (2015): "Individual support for reintegration is often provided with limited involvement of government authorities in both countries of destination/transit and origin, and in parallel to existing government systems for socioeconomic support, such as vocational education and training, programmes for entrepreneurship, microfinance, etc. [...] This approach hampers the sustainability and therefore the success of the overall return and reintegration process."

⁶¹ It is worth noting that IOM is a project-based organization, and as this activity is not usually included in the projects, it is therefore not included in the budget.

Example: Cameroon

In Cameroon, many support programmes, to which returning migrants can have access, have been implemented by both the Government and the private sector.

Thus, the Assisted Return and Youth Insertion in the Diaspora (PARI-JEDI) Programme of the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education includes: (a) reception, orientation and counselling structures for young people who were in an irregular situation abroad; and (b) financial support, tutoring and networking for those wishing to start their own businesses. The Ministry also conducts activities to promote the employment and integration of young people, which can benefit returnees, such as the National Support Programme for Rural and Urban Youth (PAJER-U): training, funding and support for independent Cameroonian entrepreneurs between the ages of 15 and 35 years, who are not enrolled in schools.

The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training has, for its part, created the Integrated Support Programme for Actors in the Informal Sector (PIAASI) to support the most vulnerable sectors of the economy (e.g.: street vendors; mechanics; tenants; bar, restaurant and cafeteria owners; small farmers; and small business owners). The PIAASI offers deferred refund loans with an interest rate of 6 per cent, as well as support for organization and training. Other ministries also offer support for returnees, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, through the Support Programme for Youth Inclusion in Agriculture (PAIJA).

Similarly, other public institutions intervene, such as the National Employment Fund (NEF), through its Support Programme for the Return of Cameroonian Immigrants (PARIC) or the Support Programme for the Development of Rural Employment (PADER).

On the private sector side, the Inter-Management Group of Cameroon (GICAM) launched its Guichet Initiatives – Jeunes competition in 2016 to support and finance the entrepreneurial projects of the Cameroonian youth, the residents of Cameroon and the diaspora. Returnees aged less than 35 years may submit an application and receive technical and financial assistance.

4.2.4. RETURN AND REINTEGRATION SUSTAINABILITY

Another major challenge of implementing the AVRR programme is the sustainability of return and reintegration, which may prove to be limited.⁶²

Addressing the root causes of irregular migration

The AVRR individual approach does not always address the problems that originally drove migrants to leave their communities of origin, such as the lack of economic opportunities or basic infrastructure. These fundamental problems are often frequently present at the moment of the return of migrants, who will face them again, especially as they often return in difficult circumstances and in a less favourable situation than at the time of their departure. As long as the reasons for their first migration have not been eliminated, it is difficult to ensure sustainable livelihoods and generate the desire to resettle in the community of origin over the long term.

⁶² This was a comment shared by an overwhelming majority of key informants and migrants interviewed as part of this research. However, a comprehensive study of the issue would be necessary: it is currently impossible to demonstrate this finding in view of the difficulties related to the monitoring of projects and the traceability of returnees. For the sake of illustration, however, the Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTA) estimates that approximately 30 per cent of the beneficiaries of the AVRR programmes fail to reintegrate into the community.

Relationship between returnees and the local community

Support for individual AVRR projects can also sometimes create envy within the local community. Members of the local community may indeed experience a sense of injustice when returnees receive assistance that could also be needed by the rest of the community. Yet, it is difficult for returnees to reintegrate socially in an environment where the community is hostile to returnees. It is therefore essential that reintegration activities are not likely to create distances or tensions between returnees and the local community.

“The lack of productive infrastructure at the community level, job opportunities or job-based capacity-building are all challenges facing the improvement of economic conditions of returning migrants and local host communities.”

– IOM, *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (Geneva, 2015).

In addition, when there are too many returns, they may have a negative impact on the local community, representing a source of tension.⁶³ The overuse of available resources and infrastructure, for example, can impact local livelihoods and lead either to reemigration or conflict. Returns in large numbers can also disrupt local dynamics and exacerbate preexisting tensions. Burundi, for example, has seen approximately 70,000 returns between 2012 and 2013 (due to the closure of the United Republic of Tanzania's refugee camps and the forced deportation of Burundian illegal migrants).

4.2.5. SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC CASES

Finally, in light of the previously mentioned challenges, it may be difficult to meet the needs of the most vulnerable migrants and to demonstrate flexibility in the handling of specific cases within the framework of AVRR.

Flexibility in addressing specific individual needs

It might be difficult for the mission offices in countries of return, which already face the challenges mentioned above, to meet the specific demands of returnees and to manage a wide variety of life projects. Not all migrants wish or can implement an individual project to create an IGA. Some returnees have health problems and need financial support to cover their medical expenses.⁶⁴ Other returnees do not think they can become entrepreneurs and would feel more comfortable in a paid job. Finally, unaccompanied minors, predominating among Guinean returnees, for example, may need to continue their education or receive vocational training in order to be able to find a job or create their own jobs in the future.⁶⁵

Providing support for the most vulnerable migrants

Reintegration assistance to the most vulnerable migrants may pose additional challenges. Migrants who have been victims of trafficking, for example, have greater protection needs. Some of them have been placed in trafficking networks (knowingly or unknowingly) by their relatives or community members. It is therefore essential to ensure that they do not slip back into vulnerable situations by carefully evaluating the potential risk of returning to their communities. In the case, for example, of victims from the main countries

⁶³ IOM's study *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (2015) reports in particular: “The greater the number of returnees, the more they constitute a burden on returning communities that will have to support them while they will cease to receive remittance income – leading to vulnerabilities in terms of access to education, health care and housing.” The number of migrants returning to the region during the same period is therefore directly impacting the attitude of the local communities towards returnees.

⁶⁴ In Cameroon, for example, returnees do not have health coverage, neither do they benefit from health care. A sick migrant returning to his/her country of origin is likely to use the EUR 500 offered to him/her to cover medical expenses.

⁶⁵ For migrants returning from Morocco under the AVRR programme, it is possible to use reintegration assistance to pay for studies or vocational training, especially for minors. However, the small amount of reintegration assistance (EUR 500) is insufficient to address the basic needs and finance studies over the long term.

of origin of migrants in Morocco, there is a real risk of further trafficking, retaliation or vendetta against community members involved in trafficking.⁶⁶ The danger posed by the social environment of returnees is one of the reasons why some migrants choose not to return to their communities of origin.

Returnees who do not wish to return to their communities of origin

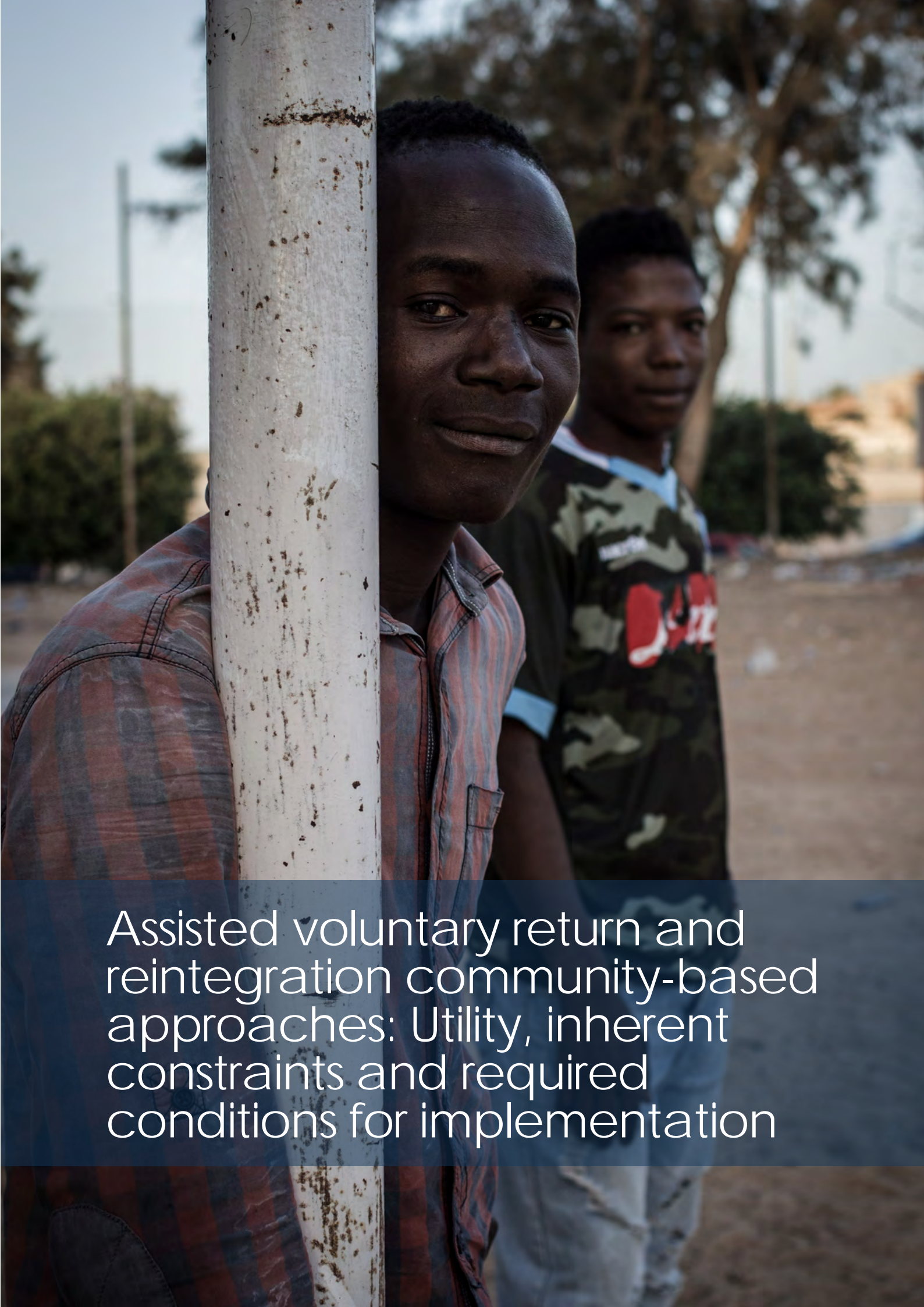
Migrants sometimes choose not to return to their communities of origin for a number of reasons. This is the case in Nigeria, where returnees tend not to return to their villages (often located in Edo and Anambra states) but rather go to the suburbs of Lagos. In Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, returns are often carried out first through the capital. Some migrants believe that it will be easier for them to find jobs in economic centres rather than in their communities of origin. Others are ashamed of their lack of resources and want to rebuild a situation before returning to their families and communities. Still, others want to avoid slipping back into a vulnerable situation or trafficking caused by their families or communities.

⁶⁶ The prosecution of criminals is problematic and the security of returnees is sometimes threatened, as expressed by the representatives of these countries during the training organized by IOM in Rabat in May 2016.

Challenges of implementing the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme in Guinea

The situation in Conakry, Guinea, illustrates several needs of returnees and the challenges of implementing AVRR detailed throughout section 4.

- Migrants returning to Guinea are mostly young men between the ages of 15 and 25 years, with little education and few or no qualifications nor professional experience.
- The economic situation in the country makes it very difficult for them to secure paid employment. However, upon their return, they do not have personal start-up capital to launch an IGA, having spent a lot of money to reach Morocco and try to go to Europe.
- Reintegration assistance offered to returnees from Morocco (EUR 500) is insufficient to start an IGA. Most migrants use this money to purchase a motorcycle to launch a motorcycle taxi activity (but the price of an appropriate motorcycle is generally much higher than EUR 500) or prepaid mobile phone cards to resell.
- Many migrants interviewed for this study had been through traumatic experiences during their migration period and would need psychosocial support, which was not provided at the time of the interview.
- Although IOM has a team of approximately 200 people in the country, the AVRR unit is composed of only four members, all based in Conakry. The majority of the IOM staff in Guinea are working on projects related to the efforts to combat the Ebola virus disease (several of which have a community-based approach). However, the opening of new regional sub-offices comprising AVRR advisers is under consideration.
- Coordination and synergies between projects implemented by different IOM departments and units are limited (and the departments are physically separated in several different buildings).
- The geographical remoteness of the main return areas, the fact that the AVRR unit does not have staff outside the capital and the lack of human resources limit IOM's ability to monitor projects.
- Public authorities, although very locally present and regularly informed by IOM members, have little direct involvement in the management and monitoring of projects. Case management committees bringing together the key local actors were being developed at the time of writing this report.
- Few partnerships have been established between IOM and the private sector or CSOs.
- The IOM's AVRR unit faces the challenge of personalizing assistance to address the needs of specific cases, such as those of minors who have to reintegrate into the education system.

A photograph of two young men standing outdoors. The man in the foreground is leaning against a weathered, white-painted metal pole. He is wearing a red and blue striped shirt and looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The man in the background is wearing a camouflage-patterned shirt and looking off to the side. The background shows a dirt area, trees, and a building under a clear sky.

Assisted voluntary return and
reintegration community-based
approaches: Utility, inherent
constraints and required
conditions for implementation

5. ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES: UTILITY, INHERENT CONSTRAINTS AND REQUIRED CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Can community-based initiatives be a response to the problems encountered with the current approach to assisted return and reintegration? This section seeks to understand the effectiveness of community-based projects to address the AVRR challenges (section 5.1), identify the prerequisites without which community-based projects may fail (section 5.2), and understand their constraints and limitations (section 5.3).

Summary

- Community-based initiatives can address some of the needs of migrants as well as some of the limitations of the current AVRR approach.
 - If successful, community-based projects should, in particular, help to: contribute to the social reintegration of returning migrants; prevent potential feelings of envy by members of the community; prevent reemigration through the creation of opportunities for sustainable lifestyle within the local community; and improve the sustainability of returnees' projects as well as the sustainability of return and reintegration.
 - However, community-based approaches do not offer a solution for all AVRR challenges mentioned in section 4.2. For example, they will not be able to resolve the difficulties relating to funding, project preparation, monitoring and evaluation, nor the problem related to the lack of human resources within the AVRR units.
 - Community-based projects also have their own constraints, such as the adaptation of available assistance to the specific needs of migrants, the selection of projects and beneficiaries, the potential shortfall of income generated at the very beginning and the management of human relations within the group.
 - Due to their limitations and the necessary conditions required for their implementation, community-based projects cannot fully substitute individual assistance, especially as regards the support for migrants in situations of extreme vulnerability.
-

5.1. SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

The community-based approach seems to be useful in addressing a number of migrants' needs as well as the challenges of the current model identified above.⁶⁷ They could promote the social reintegration of returnees (section 5.1.1). If successful, they should also ensure better sustainability of return and reintegration and prevent irregular migration (section 5.1.2). Finally, they may have some advantages in terms of obtaining and optimizing funding in comparison with the current AVRR individual model.

5.1.1. SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES AND MINIMIZATION OF THE RISK OF TENSIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Community-based projects, which involve both returnees and community members, can facilitate social reintegration in several ways: by encouraging the creation of a social network; by reducing the feeling of injustice that may be felt by members of the local community; and by improving the status of migrants within the community.

Facilitating the creation of a social network

Projects carried out within a group seem to facilitate the social reintegration of migrants who lack social capital upon their return, more than the projects carried out individually. Because of their collective dimension, community-based projects can provide migrants with an opportunity to create a network, work within a group and encourage exchange with other community members.

Direct involvement of the local community in addressing its concerns and needs

In addition, community-based projects reduce potential sources of resentment among local community members towards returnees. As discussed in section 4.2.4, the AVRR programme may sometimes create a sense of envy (when returning migrants receive assistance that would also be needed by the rest of the community) or foster tensions between the community and the returnees (when large numbers of returns lead to an overuse of available resources and infrastructure or intensify preexisting ethnic conflicts). The AVRR community-based approaches respond to these two scenarios. As defined in section 3.3, initiatives with a community-based approach include reintegration assistance projects that directly involve the community while addressing its concerns and needs.

Because members of the local community are directly involved in projects and receive assistance, feelings of injustice and favoritism towards returnees are less strong. The consideration of the needs and concerns of the communities of origin and the joint commitment to improving the quality of life of the community can prevent conflict, resentment and discrimination against returnees.

In addition, the AVRR community-based approach could help limit the potential negative impact on local communities of return in terms of numbers of migrants (see section 4.2.4). Community-based projects could alleviate the dual burden on communities of return, which sometimes have to support returnees while losing the benefit of remittance flows. They can contribute to the creation of socioeconomic opportunities in communities of origin (by creating jobs for community members) and address the basic needs of communities (rehabilitation and infrastructure development, for example).

⁶⁷ This section of the report remains conditional, as the exact impact of community-based AVRR projects cannot be demonstrated at this stage given that: few community-based AVRR projects have been implemented so far; most of these projects are either very recent or ongoing; these projects have not been systematically assessed. Section 2.3, which presents the challenges and limitations of the research, provides further details on this point, while section 3.4 identifies the existing community-based AVRR projects conducted.

Community-based projects could then help prevent migrants from being “viewed as a burden instead of as people with valuable skills and talents who can contribute to local development” (IOM’s report *Reintegration: Effective Approaches* (2015)). In cases where migrants have acquired skills during their stay abroad, these projects may also be an opportunity to bring this new expertise to benefit the local communities. In Tajikistan, for example, there has been a sharing of expertise between migrants returning from the Russian Federation and displaced persons at the Afghan border as part of the community stabilization programmes implemented by IOM.

Valuing migrants within the community

According to the interviews conducted during the research, it seems easier for migrants to be socially reintegrated when they have the support of their communities, which also receives assistance. Interviews conducted during the research indicate that a migrant enjoys greater respect if he/she carries out a project which the community can benefit from. The involvement of migrants in local development initiatives also seems to reduce psychological pressure and is sometimes perceived by migrants as a way to redeem the “failure” of the migration attempt. It would be interesting to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the community’s impact on the psychosocial reintegration of returnees.⁶⁸

5.1.2. RETURN SUSTAINABILITY AND PREVENTION OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Community-based projects could also be useful to improve the sustainability of the projects of returnees – by encouraging long-term involvement of project members – as well as the sustainability of return – by creating opportunities for sustainable life within the local community. In this sense, they could prevent the repetition of irregular migration (irregular return to the country of destination).

Enhanced sustainability of the project and the involvement of returnees

Community-based projects appear to be generally more sustainable than individual projects and can, in this sense, contribute to improving the sustainability of reintegration. Community-based projects can provide the IGAs that migrants need (see section 4.1.2) to meet the basic needs and, where appropriate, support their dependants. Several factors, detailed below, suggest that community-based projects may, in some circumstances, prove to be better tools for successful and long-term returnee economic reintegration than individual projects.

Through their collective aspect, community-based projects promote the long-term involvement of migrants. It has been observed during the research that it is more difficult to get discouraged and abandon the project when being a member of a group. The group dynamics are stimulating, just like the pressure of the other team members (whose income depend on the work of each one) urging them not to give up. Teamwork empowers the returnees who will also be less likely to “disappear” unexpectedly once the project is launched.

Group projects can also enable returnees, who do not have specific skills, training or prior work experience, and for whom it is more difficult to launch a profitable activity, to benefit from the knowledge of other members of the group and to generate an income with them.

Similarly, group projects can be a solution for returnees who do not feel able to create and manage a small business by themselves.

⁶⁸ With regard to the objectives of this study and the limited number of community-based AVRR projects implemented so far, we do not have sufficient data to support those views expressed during the conducted interviews. One way of assessing the relevance of these impressions would be to systematically conduct perception collection surveys among returnees and members of local communities, comparing the situation of returnees whose return directly benefited the community with that of returnees whose return did not directly benefit the community.



Members of the executive committee of a community dairy project supported by the IOM AVRR unit in Mamou, Guinea. One of the committee members, who received technical training in the dairy industry, was able to train her colleagues.

Contribution to the necessary conditions for the success of reintegration projects

Community-based approaches also seek, within their own scope, to generate the services and conditions necessary for returning migrants to succeed in their projects and reintegration. The existence of a stable political and socioeconomic environment, providing opportunities for income generation, is a key factor affecting reintegration. At the local level, it is essential to support the demand so that the created products or services offered by returning migrants can find opportunities.

The return would thus be more sustainable when it is linked to an assistance mechanism contributing to the creation of socioeconomic opportunities in the country of origin. The *IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region* (2013) recommends “redirecting additional assistance given to some migrants into home community development initiatives that, in turn, facilitate the reintegration of all migrants, especially those who are most vulnerable.”⁶⁹

Reduction in irregular reemigration

In seeking to tackle the reasons that force migrants to leave, the community-based approach aims at deterring recurrent irregular migration. Including the development or reconstruction needs of returning communities in the design of projects could prevent migrants from slipping back into situations of vulnerability. This approach is all the more relevant when the return takes place in a post-conflict or stabilization environment. For the EU, “improving opportunities in their communities, and thus the option of staying rather than migrating irregularly, prevents migrants as well as other community members (including potential migrants) from migrating and thus being exposed to the risks associated with irregular migration in the future.”⁶⁹ A thorough research work on this point would be necessary to collect data to be analysed.

⁶⁹ EU, “Action Document for ‘Pilot action on voluntary return and sustainable, community-based reintegration’” (2015).

Prevention of departures

By offering a response to the root causes of irregular migration and by contributing to the development of the country of origin, community projects could also prevent departures in the communities where they are implemented. These projects seek to improve opportunities for the members of local communities, which (especially in areas of high numbers of returns) include potential migrants. Creating opportunities for these people and incorporating them into projects before they actualize their desire for migration could be a way of preventing irregular migration.

“In terms of consistency of approach, migration in the countries of origin is the outcome of community strategies. The migrant does not set up the migration project alone, the whole family is involved. Collective strategies require collective responses.”

– IOM member in West Africa

Community-based projects, according to their objectives (see section 3.4, “Mapping of Community-based Approach Initiatives”), can provide sustainable economic and livelihood opportunities for community members and improve governance, stability, local infrastructure, or delivery of services.⁷⁰

5.1.3. OBTAINING AND OPTIMIZING FUNDS

Finally, the community-based approach should provide advantages in terms of obtaining and optimizing funding in comparison with the current AVRR individual model. The grouping of beneficiaries in collective projects (community-based or non-community-based) makes it possible to achieve economies of scale and, for beneficiaries, to have a higher start-up capital. The fact of implementing community-based projects rather than other types of collective projects (and therefore involving community members directly in a local development objective) contributes to the effectiveness of projects and might help raise funds from development-related donors.

Pooling of the start-up capital

The grouping of beneficiaries collectively allows them, with an identical individual allocation, to benefit from a sufficient start-up capital to launch more ambitious projects without securing personal funds or without the need to become indebted. For migrants returning from Morocco, whose amount of aid granted for reintegration assistance is limited and who are often not able to afford to supplement the aid with personal funds, this approach would be particularly helpful. It would enable them, for example, to vary the types of projects and launch activities in sectors that require a relatively large initial investment, which is not yet possible for them.

Reduction in the cost of project management and monitoring for IOM

The grouping of beneficiaries also facilitates and reduces the cost of project monitoring and management.⁷¹ It is easier for IOM staff members to keep abreast of the developments and to evaluate a collective project rather than a multitude of individual projects. It is also easier to maintain contact with a group than with a single individual. As beneficiaries are concentrated in a single location and not geographically dispersed, on-site visits are finally less costly, in terms of time and transportation.

Obtaining funding related to local development

In addition, it is easier to find large funding for development projects than for individual reintegration microprojects. Assistance to the reintegration of migrants through local development community-based projects could provide access to various funding sources and access to different donors (e.g. agencies, international organizations and international NGOs).

⁷⁰ Further research work would be useful to assess the impact of the IOM community-based projects carried out so far (see section 2.3.2, which presents the limitations of this study).

⁷¹ We refer here to the case in which reintegration assistance is provided through collective or community-based projects instead of individual projects (and not in addition to individual projects). See section 6.1.4, which presents the possible types of combined approaches.

Effectiveness of consideration of the local context

Reintegration assistance through community-based projects will finally be more likely to adopt a perspective focused on the country of origin and take into account the specificities of the local context (e.g. cost of living) than of AVRR individual “model” projects. Local community members will be more capable to know the needs, market, infrastructure and resources available in the region than the returnees or IOM staff, and can play a role in providing advice and information, which is essential to the success of the project. Similarly, they will likely benefit from promising sector-specific expertise in the region (see section 4.1.1, which deals with the need for feedback on the local context, and section 4.2.3, which tackles the challenges in implementing and monitoring the AVRR projects, in the absence of contextual knowledge and sector expertise).

5.2. CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

Despite their advantages detailed in section 5.1, relatively few community-based assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects have been implemented by IOM so far. This section and section 5.3 provide some explanatory elements on this point.

The research work has highlighted the fact that the community-based approach can only work in certain situations. This section examines the initial conditions required for a successful implementation of community-based initiatives: contextual conditions first (section 5.2.1), then operational conditions (section 5.2.2).

5.2.1. CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

The research has demonstrated the strong impact of the context on the success of the community-based projects studied. The following criteria constitute a conducive environment for the implementation of community-based AVRR projects: sufficient numbers of migrants returning to the same community; migrants with an appropriate profile; interests of the local community and motivation of migrants; availability of basic infrastructure in the region; stability, security and economic opportunities in the region; and activism of civil society.

Sufficient numbers of migrants returning to the same community

In order to develop community-based AVRR projects, the volume of voluntary returns needs to be sufficiently high and the returns should be geographically concentrated. On the one hand, it is quite inappropriate for IOM to seek to implement community-based AVRR projects in a place where the number of returns is small. These projects are more useful in terms of sustainability of returns, prevention of irregular migration and mitigation of the risk of tensions between the local community and returnees if they are carried out in communities that experience many returns.

On the other hand, it is preferable to directly involve several returnees in community-based AVRR projects,⁷² but it is difficult to engage returnees in a place where the flow of returns is too low since the pool of potential beneficiaries whose profiles could match and who might be interested in getting involved would be too restricted.

Finally, the geographical concentration of returnees greatly facilitates the management and monitoring of community-based projects. In Tunisia, for example, where the AVRR unit has recently implemented

⁷² IOM has already implemented a number of community-based AVRR projects that do not directly involve any returnee (see section 3.4, which identifies the community-based approach initiatives implemented, and section 6.1, which presents the types of possible community-based projects). This is the case in Sri Lanka and Guinea (Conakry), where field visits were conducted for this study. It is also possible to include only one returnee per community-based AVRR project. However, it is more efficient and profitable to directly involve a number of returnees within the same project, just to maximize the impact of community-based projects on the reintegration of returnees (one of the main objectives of the AVRR projects).

community-based projects funded by the Government of Switzerland,⁷³ approximately about half of the recipients are from the province of Sfax, mainly from two rural areas in the north of the city. The concentration of beneficiaries in this region has enabled IOM to partner with and mobilize local authorities for training and monitoring.⁷⁴ IOM teams in Ethiopia, on the other hand, face the following problem: “The returnees come from very disparate regions, and the returns are dispersed through very large geographical areas. It would be very difficult to implement community-based projects in this context, and it would be very difficult for us to ensure the follow up on such projects.”

Not only do migrants have to return in large numbers in one or a few regions, but they must return to the same communities within those regions and not to remote villages away from each other. This is the challenge facing Burkina Faso, for example, where most migrants return to the same region but do not come from the same villages, which is why IOM staff members who have been interviewed believe that it would be very difficult to bring together returnees into collective or community-based projects in the country.

If the design of projects covering several municipalities and involving residents of different villages might appear to be a solution, it is unrealistic in many countries of origin. Indeed, the local context and the situation of the migrants upon return do not enable them to have an activity in a location too distant from the family home. The poorly developed road infrastructure and the lack of reliability of the public transportation system, for example, can make the daily round trips difficult. While the financial situation of the returnees does not enable them to lodge elsewhere than in the family home if daily return round trips are not an option.

Neither are returnees necessarily willing to get involved in an activity if they need to travel a certain distance. In Sri Lanka, for example, female members of some community-based projects visited explained that it was difficult for them to walk too far to take part in an activity because they were responsible for the daily care of their children. Some of them have chosen to move their community-based activities from the building set out in a neighbouring village to the home of one of the group's members (the one with the most children).

So far, the critical mass of returns conducive to the implementation of community-based projects has been mostly reached in the case of non-voluntary returns (waves of cross-border displacements and forced returns). This explains the currently limited number of community-based projects implemented under the AVRR. The limited resources available do not allow to assist all beneficiaries that want to voluntary return. This issue is connected to the difficulties to obtain funding for the current AVRR approach (see sections 4.2.1 and 5.1.3). Therefore, it would be difficult to attain a sufficiently high volume of returns needed for the implementation of community projects without an evolution of the AVRR approach.

“The number of voluntary returns is often too low and returnees too dispersed to implement community-based programmes.”

– IOM staff member at the Headquarters

It is also conducive to have a large flow of returnees returning from the same country of destination. The establishment of community-based AVRR projects is indeed extremely difficult when IOM offices in the countries of origin receive few migrants at a time who have lived in different countries, with different instructions for their reintegration depending on donors. The fact that they have lived in the same host country and have shared similar experiences may also facilitate cohesion within the group.⁷⁵

⁷³ Individual projects of migrants including members of the unemployed local community; see details in Annex 8, “List of Identified Community-based Approach Initiatives”.

⁷⁴ An example of this is the creation of a regional technical committee for the pre-validation of cases, whose members included representatives of Tunisian institutions, namely, CONECT, Tunisian Solidarity Bank, the Office for Tunisians Abroad, and the Office of Livestock and Pasture.

⁷⁵ See section 5.3.2, which discusses the management of human relations within a group as a possible limitation of community-based approaches.

In the case of the main countries of return of migrants in Morocco, voluntary returns currently seem relatively geographically concentrated in the capital as well as in one or two specific regions. In Conakry, Guinea, approximately 40 per cent of the returnees are heading towards the city of Mamou, the other main centres of return being the capital Conakry and Fouta. In Cameroon, approximately 90 per cent of returns from Morocco concentrated in two cities: the capital Yaoundé and Douala. In Nigeria, returnees tend not to return to their villages of origin (often in Edo and Anambra states) but rather go to the suburbs of Lagos. In Côte d'Ivoire, returns are essentially carried out to Abidjan and the eastern region of the country. In Senegal, most migrants come from the south and south-east regions.

As detailed in section 5.2.2, it is essential to carefully consider and map the exact volume and locations of returns before designing programmes involving community-based AVRR approaches.

Profiles and capacities of migrants

Just like it is conducive to the implementation of community-based AVRR projects that the migrants return in large numbers to the same communities, it is also preferable that they have similar profiles, particularly in terms of age, community of origin, time spent abroad, family status, qualification level, work experience, areas of interest and life plans. Because they require teamwork, community-based projects face two specific challenges with respect to the other forms of AVRR: returnees' interest in collective work as well as the management of human relations within a group (see section 5.3.2). Returnees are more likely to be motivated to work together if they ideally have similar profiles, objectives and sector preference. Finding common ground will also facilitate group cohesion and easy management of common projects.

In regions where several languages are used in each country, such as West Africa, it is not obvious that returnees coming from the same region can communicate. The mother tongue and the other spoken languages will therefore be criteria to be taken into account. It will also be important to be responsive to potential preexisting tensions that may be reflected within the group. These phenomena are observed in Sri Lanka, where the challenges of the lack of a common language and of potentially persisting tensions require caution in terms of the grouping of beneficiaries and selection of projects in the areas where Sinhalese and Tamil people live. Sri Lanka experienced a period of civil war until 2009 and tensions persist between the Sinhalese and Tamil populations, who were in opposing sides of the conflict. Various humanitarian and development actors provide assistance to the Tamil population on a priority basis, which adds to other tensions as it widens the opportunities for members of this population to migrate legally (e.g. as asylum seekers). The majority of citizens speak only one of the two official languages – Sinhalese and Tamil – and do not understand the other languages. English helps establish a link but it is spoken by only approximately 10 per cent of the population.



Community-based fish breeding project supported by the IOM AVRR unit in Munnakkara, Sri Lanka.

The profiles of returnees within the same region are sometimes different, as is the case for Guinea. Migrants returning from Switzerland are older, have spent more time abroad and have more work experience (most of them have developed commercial activities in Europe) than migrants returning from Morocco. They are mostly young men (15–25 years), single, low-skilled and have not had the opportunity to develop an activity in Morocco.⁷⁶ According to IOM staff members interviewed on site, returnees from Morocco are also generally not interested in the possibility of attending training courses.

While it is preferable that returnees show interest and have experience in the same professional field to work together on a project, it is first of all essential that at least one of them has strong skills in this particular field, and it would be preferable if all of them have basic skills or preliminary experience in the field. In order for the group projects (and a fortiori community projects) to operate, it is then essential that at least one member of the group be an expert in the chosen field.

In the event that none of the returnees has expertise in the field of the implemented project, other ways of transferring skills will have to be considered: either by ensuring that one of the non-migrant members of the group has the required expertise⁷⁷ or by establishing partnerships with associations with expertise in the field (for example, groups that emerged from projects supported in the past, as proposed in section 6.2), or by including specific technical training in the project's budget (for example, study visit and apprenticeship, at least for some members of the group, who can then share their knowledge).

The importance of expertise as a project success factor could be verified in Conakry, Guinea, where the presence of young veterinarians (non-migrant local residents) in a community-based poultry farm project set up by IOM represented a considerable asset for the success of the project, while other poultry farm projects, in which none of the group members had the required expertise in the field, were not so successful. Similarly, market gardening projects worked well when they were led by groups already experienced in this sector.

⁷⁶ The labour market in Morocco is closed for irregular migrants. For the few migrants who have found or started an activity, it is often a daily work.

⁷⁷ This is applicable only to community-based projects that directly involve community members (and not to returnees' collective projects nor to community-based projects that impact the community without involving at least one member of the community).

Interest in collective work and community-based projects

Another prerequisite for the implementation of community-based AVRR projects is the interest in this type of project, of both migrants and key actors in the local community. Stakeholders' motivation is crucial to the success of any initiative.

The motivation for migrants to get involved in such initiatives varies according to their profiles and their countries of origin. Several key informants interviewed for this study highlighted the “everyone for himself” attitude of migrants returning from Morocco. According to the informants, these returnees were suspicious of one another and there was not a big demand from them to pool their resources and get involved in collective projects, except in a few cases of returnees belonging to the same families or circle of friends coming from the same neighbourhood and having the same level of education.

The interest of migrants in collective or community work depends on cultural factors, and the situation is not necessarily identical for returnees coming from countries other than Morocco. For example, one of the IOM staff members interviewed believes that in Ghana, returnees from Morocco remain more motivated to get involved in community-based projects than those who returned from Europe, who are more educated, have better defined business plans and prefer to adhere to their respective individual projects.

As is the case for migrants, the interest in community-based projects of local actors is the product of the sociocultural context. The IOM staff interviewed noted some cultures that were not conducive to group projects in some major countries of return of migrants in Morocco. For a key informant in Cameroon, for example, “in Central Africa, it is just very hard for people to get together for a project. Cameroon is an individualistic society. From experience, I believe that it will not be easy to set up a group project. However, I think it might work in Benin or in Côte d’Ivoire.”

In the main countries of return from Morocco, it seems that the individualistic tendency is predominating among the candidates for the AVRR. **If they had to choose between individual assistance and assistance through a collective or community-based project, the interviewed respondents generally preferred to be independent.** The interviewed migrants showed relatively little interest in collective/community-based projects if they could instead obtain individual grants.

However, if it was stated that the two types of assistance were not mutually exclusive, migrants indicated that they would be willing to get involved in community-based projects. The degree of consent of migrants and their preferences, however, may be difficult to assess, as returnees tend to accept any assistance that is offered to them (see section 5.3.3, which explains the challenges related to the selection of beneficiaries). In Guinea, for example, the interviewed returnees tended to respond “Yes, of course” to the question “Would you be interested in participating on a full-time basis in a group project with other former migrants and members of the community if IOM offers assistance to help you start the activity?” However, they seemed more reluctant when the details of what such a project would involve were discussed.

On the other hand, as noted in the report *Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants*,⁷⁸ some migrants may feel unable to be helpful upon return to their communities that including them in projects with community members could be counterproductive. It is therefore necessary to evaluate on a case-by-case basis the relevance of participation in a community-based project for a returnee.

Security, stability, economic potential and availability of infrastructures in the region

The stability of the country and the safety of returnees are vital factors for the success of projects (as is the case for individual projects). As mentioned by one of the IOM staff members interviewed for this study, the situation of countries of origin in West and Central Africa is very uneven at this level: “There is at least one

⁷⁸ K. Koser and K. Kuschminder, *Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants* (Geneva, IOM, 2015). Available from www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/AVRR-Research-final.pdf

country in the region where stability has enabled the civil society to develop, and another in a diametrically opposed situation, where the development of projects and of a civil society in general has faced instability. The stability of the country is a factor to be taken into consideration.”

The economic context also greatly impacts the viability of projects and is a prerequisite to evaluate. The MAGNET project established in the Iraqi Kurdistan region is an excellent illustration of the influence of the economic situation. The objective of the project was to link returnees with locally based companies offering work. The project was implemented in two phases. During the first phase, in 2012–2013, the region experienced real economic boom. The dynamism of the local economy and the existence of companies requesting workforce then made the project a success. On the other hand, during the second phase (launched in April 2014), the rise of the Islamic State organization and the resulting humanitarian crisis as well as budgetary and fiscal crisis led to a sharp drop in economic growth (drop in foreign investments, withdrawal of foreign companies and drop of the tourism industry). The decline in wages and the decrease in job vacancies then hampered the project.

The existence of basic infrastructure – roads, means of transportation, electricity, access to water and telephone networks in particular – at the place of implementation is essential to the success of community-based projects. In the main countries of return from Morocco, this infrastructure is sometimes lacking, especially in remote areas (e.g. agricultural areas). Unless the central objective of the project is actually the renovation or construction of infrastructure (in which case the project is unlikely to offer a sustainable IGA to the members once its immediate objective has been achieved), it is unrealistic to seek to implement community-based projects in the absence of such basic infrastructure. The entire project budget may well be needed to build or purchase these facilities if they are not already available on site.

In Guinea, for example, the budget for community-based projects supported by the IOM AVR unit in 2015 (USD 5,000 per one-year project) would have been clearly insufficient to build infrastructure if there were none on the project sites. Some respondents involved in the implementation of community-based projects led from Niger under the Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) highlighted the difficulty of finding the appropriate equipment in their areas of origin.

5.2.2. OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS

On the IOM side, the general preliminary conditions required to successfully conduct community-based AVR projects include the existence of an updated database; the ability to analyse data and bring migrants together; a local context analysis; the availability and proximity of human resources to ensure that projects are supported and monitored; and the development of partnerships with local stakeholders.

Database of returnees and the grouping of migrants

The design of community-based projects requires an up-to-date database of returnees, which contains a relatively complete profile of each individual in terms of needs, capacities and interests. Indeed, as highlighted by some IOM staff members and some interviewed respondents, migrants returning to the same country around the same period did not necessarily know each other before their return. Some exchanged information during the trip, but not everybody had the opportunity or enough time to get to know each other. If IOM wishes to encourage returnees from the same area to join collective or community-based projects, it must therefore play the intermediary role and promote exchanges between returnees whose profiles may be compatible. It is then necessary, in order to encourage the grouping of migrants who have a compatible profile and could be interested in a joint project, to be able to build on a detailed and updated database of the profiles of returnees.

Essential data for the profiling and potential grouping of returnees within community-based projects

The following information should be collected and taken into consideration as “compatibility criteria”. It is worth mentioning that some of this information is already recorded in the Migrant Management and Operational Systems Application (MiMOSA) used by all IOM mission offices. The MiMOSA database is scalable and it is possible to add categories if necessary.

- Identifier: case number to be used for the follow-up;
- Demographic information: name, age, sex, family status (e.g. with dependent children);
- Migrant contact information and contact information of a family member (to increase chances of remaining in touch);
- Place of return/residence (to be categorized by district or region, then exact location);
- Spoken languages;
- Ethnicity, if appropriate;
- Migratory characteristics: host country, duration of migration, date of return (if it is theoretically possible to group together migrants who return from different countries or have returned to their countries of origin during different periods, it seems unrealistic in practice, based on the interviews conducted during field visits, that they have enough in common to get close);
- Educational level;
- Areas of expertise and skills (and, where appropriate, vocational training);
- Prior work experiences;
- Wishes in terms of activities and preferred sectors;
- Interest in group projects;
- Acceptable distance between the place of residence and the location of the activities.

To ensure the use of the database and the updating of the information contained therein, IOM offices in different countries must have an identical software solution to view and edit the profiles of migrants. IOM mission offices around the world are currently using the data management system MiMOSA to enter the biographical information of each migrant as well as the support they receive (in terms of health care, training or return assistance, for example). The interface enables to perform recording, manage cases and flows, and search for a profile. For each case, the system provides in particular the following fields:

- Biographical data: name, date of birth, marital status, place of birth, nationality, case number, type of migration (e.g. “return”), migrant classification (e.g. “victim of trafficking”);
- Prerequisites for travel (travel requirements);
- Contact information;
- Travel documents;
- Education and spoken languages;
- Professional skills.

While all IOM mission offices use MiMOSA, the reintegration component of the interface is relatively new and the compliance rate is not always high, particularly because of connectivity problems and the need for training in the use of the database.

This information on potential returnees is collected from the first interviews in the host countries and the challenge is initially lying in the harmonization of data collection procedures for all beneficiaries. In Morocco, for example, data is currently collected in paper form before being entered later on: (1) into an Excel file, consolidated and analysed every three months to draw quarterly reports; and (2) on MiMOSA (before each departure). Standardization is essential in host countries: profiling during interviews, computer data input tools, database management, established categories and data filtering. This involves training IOM staff in handling the data entry software and listening to migrants.

Upon arrival in the country of origin, it is essential to complete the profile and verify the accuracy of the data. Some information may have evolved frequently (e.g. contact information), and the returnee will be most likely able to answer some questions (e.g. those about projects and objectives, or about the acceptable distance between the returnee's place of residence and the location of activities) than during the interview prior to the return conducted in the host country.

It is then necessary to regularly update the knowledge and the database. Even during the first interview in the country of return, it may be difficult to accurately complete the profiles of migrants because of the limited period of time and the tendency of some returnees to not provide correct information. According to one of the IOM partners in Senegal: "When they are [interviewed] by IOM, migrants [share] that they are interested in agriculture when actually at least 3 out of 15 already have skills in another field."

Interviews with key informants highlighted the importance of the availability of reliable and accessible data to all offices for the implementation of community-based projects. For an IOM staff member in Tajikistan, for example: "It is necessary [for the design of community-based projects] to map the exact areas with a high rate of returns at the beginning of the process. This is delicate because people rely on a data collection structure which is not very good, and which is based on information and figures that are not always reliable." In Tunisia, one of the IOM partners in the implementation of community-based AVRR projects funded by the Government of Switzerland has encountered "a lot of difficulties for the follow-up and support related [...] to inadequate location data provided by returnees to partners". It is therefore important to create opportunities for regular updating of the database, for example by systematically updating it during follow-up visits or every six months.

Once the system for collecting, managing and updating the data on returnees is standardized, it will be important to systematically analyse the data. Community-based AVRR projects that are feasible and useful to be established in each region depend, among other things, on the profiles of migrants. However, the analysis of the data will make it possible to carry out regular preliminary studies on the profiles and the volume of migrants. In order to carry out these regular analyses, the challenge lies primarily in the capacity and availability of human resources in the countries of origin. It is therefore necessary to take into account, when defining any community-based project, the training and time available to the AVRR teams of the IOM offices.

IOM's experience with comparable assisted voluntary return and reintegration databases

IOM already has data collection and management tools similar to a global database of AVRR returnees. For the purposes of the MAGNET project (job placement) in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, for example, a database of AVRR returnees and jobs available within locally based companies has been created. The project is a success on this point and the experience demonstrates the feasibility of setting up and managing a database of AVRR returnees. According to one of the key informants involved in the project, “the database is a tool that has not posed any particular problems given that the staff is properly trained and is relatively inexpensive. It has cost approximately EUR 10,000 for this project.”

Another example is the database of returnees (returning under the AVRR programme or not) maintained by the IOM AVRR unit in Sri Lanka. Administered using the Access software, the database includes the name of migrant, case ID number, migrant profile number, return type (voluntary or not; and if voluntary, carried out under the AVRR programme or not), return date, date of arrival, location, contact information, sex and level of education.

Migrants' profiles are subsequently supplemented, if applicable, with information on the type of assistance (e.g. provided accommodation or transportation) and reintegration support offered (categorized by sector of activity, project and amount). Altai's interlocutors within the IOM office emphasized the need to train the teams in the use of the software and in conducting interviews to ensure the proper functioning of the tool. They also argued that the accuracy and therefore the usefulness of the database is linked to the effectiveness and duration of project monitoring: The data is up-to-date because information is updated regularly after each follow-up visit to beneficiaries. The hotline established in Sri Lanka (see details in section 6.2, “Best Practices”) also allows the database to be updated regularly, which is done systematically after each call.

Analysis of the local context and community needs

Another prerequisite for the success of community-based AVRR projects is the completion of a preliminary, regularly updated study on the operational context and the needs of the stakeholders in the main areas of return.

As an initial step, in order to identify the regions to prioritize in the implementation of projects, it is necessary to know exactly the main return communities that do not already benefit from IOM's assistance (or of other actors'). A robust database of returnees, as recommended in the previous section, may serve as a starting point for the analysis of return communities that express the greatest needs. There should also be up-to-date data on projects already implemented by the AVRR unit but also ideally by other IOM departments and other agencies or NGOs working on the same themes. To identify areas of convergence between high numbers of returns and the lack of projects, it would be useful to incorporate a visual aspect in the analysis of the data, representing them on a map.

The main areas of return may change over time; hence, the need for regularly updated assessments. The representatives of the countries of origin of migrants in Morocco present during the training organized by IOM in Rabat in May 2016 pointed out that the migration trends in their countries were evolving and required dynamic analysis. In Guinea, for example, the main migrant return areas have changed over the years: while the south-eastern forest provinces represented a major return region a few years ago, returns are now mainly concentrated around coastline and the cities of Conakry and Mamou.

Interviews with key informants have also revealed difficulties in identifying high-return areas in some countries. In Iraq, “the identification of return areas has been a major challenge [during the preparatory phase of the MAGNET project]. The area covered has changed over time: returns to Baghdad are now more frequent than those to Kurdistan region of Iraq”. The exact places of return may also vary depending on the host country where the returnees have been staying. In Ghana, for example, most of the returnees are from the Bron-Ahafo region, but the situation is somewhat specific for returnees arriving from Morocco, the vast majority of whom comes from Greater Accra.

As it is necessary to determine which areas are most in need of assistance, the analysis of the local context must also identify the living conditions, the needs and migration factors in the target areas. Just like the tracing of returns, these factors can evolve rapidly and require a regularly updated analysis.

As detailed in section 6.2.1, some types of community-based AVRR projects are more suitable to local contexts than others.

Before defining the project, it is therefore important to understand the situation and the needs in the region. The needs in communities may be varied and range from vocational training centres or support for general education to places where community mediation can take place through psychosocial services.

An exploration of conditions in the target area also makes it possible to identify the risks related to project implementation.

“For such projects, it is necessary to study local conditions, to understand the returns and the profiles and skills of migrants, as well as to target areas of low development.”

– IOM staff member in Tunisia

Finally, it is essential to identify the authorities and the local stakeholders present in a location where a project is being planned. Maintaining a regularly updated list is crucial for the exchange of information and the establishment of partnerships with these stakeholders. Their involvement facilitates the identification of local needs, the selection of beneficiaries, and the implementation and monitoring of the project, and maximizes the impact in terms of preventing irregular migrations as well as reducing any potential tensions between the community and migrants. A mapping of local actors in the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco is planned, for example, as part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants, funded by the EU and implemented by IOM.⁷⁹

Example of Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism Projects

Community-based projects carried out recently under the MRRM in several West African countries for migrants returning from Niger represent a good pilot project in this area. Although useful, the database created and maintained from Niger is not entirely reliable given the changing nature of information. That is why the involved IOM staff members noted the need to corroborate it with work at the level of the country of origin to confirm the data. Analytical work during the outreach visits and group discussions on the subject was therefore carried out in various countries concerned prior to project initiation.

⁷⁹ For further details on this subject, see the subsection “Establishing Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities”.

Analysis of growth-generating sectors and local regulations

Prior assessment of economic opportunities and relevant activities in the target area is also a *sine qua non* condition for the success of community-based AVRR projects. This preparatory work will help to identify the types of relevant and sustainable projects according to the specific local context and to ensure the viability of each IGA or created job. The analysis may be conducted within IOM or subcontracted if the team lacks the necessary expertise internally. In the absence of preliminary and up-to-date research, poor market knowledge may lead to economic failure of the projects.

Finally, it is also necessary to know the regulations in force within the country or the region concerned. This includes, for example, the registration procedures for associations or cooperatives (if registration is mandatory, can it be done locally or is it necessary for members to travel to another city or region?). This may also include sector-specific legislative provisions such as hygiene measures to comply with in agri-food production, mandatory declarations and inspections. IOM staff members are not necessarily well informed about these specific rules and the returning migrants are generally even less so.

In Tunisia, for example, according to the interviewed interlocutors involved in the community-based projects, the legal framework in the country is not conducive to collective ownership and therefore to the creation of cooperatives. The land for agricultural projects can only have a single official contractual owner. Similarly, for the groups of women selling handicrafts, the store must be rented in the name of a single person. This situation has prompted the IOM team and its partners to encourage returnees to work with their family members rather than with acquaintances. This legal context would also have rendered impractical the concept of trying to put the returnees in contact with members of the community (vulnerable individuals or whose profile would correspond to the project, for example) that they did not previously know.

Establishing partnerships with civil society organizations and local authorities

The third essential prerequisite for the success of community-based projects is the existence of partnerships with the authorities and local CSOs; or at least, in the absence of pre-established partnerships, the possibility of creating them on the basis of an assessment of the available local organizations. Without the support and involvement of local authorities and CSOs, it is indeed considerably more difficult for IOM to ensure day-to-day management and the monitoring of projects (for details, see section 6.2.3, “Best Practices Relating to the Management of the Projects”).

Example: Tajikistan

The procedures for the implementation of community-based projects in Tajikistan highlight the importance of the existence and support of CSOs and local authorities. One of the IOM members in the country explains: “We have strong partnerships with local NGOs and public authorities. All our projects are always executed through one of the many local NGOs with which we have established partnerships, a local division of the Ministry of Labor or the University of Central Asia. It would be very complicated, if not impossible, to implement such projects without established partnerships with local NGOs. Partnership with the government is also particularly welcome and vital. The Ministry of Labor has participated very actively in the reorientation of beneficiaries, the dissemination of funding opportunities, the outreach of the project [the ability to reach a wide audience] and training.”

The possibility of building partnerships primarily implies the availability in the target area of qualified, effective and interested partners to get involved in reintegration initiatives. The development of civil society and the capacity of the local public authorities vary widely between countries and regions, depending on the recent history and the overall development environment; hence, the importance of mapping the local actors

mentioned above. In the main countries of return of migrants in Morocco, a preliminary work of mapping the actors of return is currently being carried out as part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants funded by the EU and implemented by IOM, coordinated through the focal point appointed in each country.⁸⁰

For partnerships with local CSOs to be useful and effective, it is essential that they be sufficiently trained and their capacities developed to be able to manage themselves and not require intensive monitoring by IOM. In Tunisia, for example, IOM was unable to establish partnerships with local NGOs for the implementation of community-based projects funded by the Government of Switzerland: during the project design stage, few local NGOs were sufficiently equipped and had the capacity to train and support AVRR returnees in their projects. As part of the EU-funded project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants, IOM Morocco trains NGOs with a view to strengthening partnerships with the local civil society.

“To ensure the functioning of the inter-agency nature, the authorities must be sufficiently engaged and mobilized, and able to attend and participate in long meetings.”

– IOM staff member in Tunisia

In addition, public authorities must have a local presence (a decentralized administration) and have sufficient capacity to be involved in projects carried out by IOM. The lack of political will in the countries of return (changing priorities, politicization of the subject) as well as government structural changes at the national and local levels (frequent staff turnover) may represent obstacles. In Senegal, one of the IOM partner NGOs raises in its final report on the implementation of AVRR community-based projects the “difficulties in involving the local administrative authorities and the BAOS⁸¹ due to the poor flow of information”. In response to this situation, it recommends the “establishment of a supervisory board composed of local administrative authorities, BAOS and youth organizations”.

Human resources in the IOM offices in the countries of return

Finally, in order to implement community-based projects, it is essential to have a steady and sufficient supply of human resources in the IOM offices in the countries of return. All phases of the projects require the availability of dedicated staff: design, selection of beneficiaries, preparation (e.g. establishment of partnerships), management and monitoring. The need is particularly acute during project monitoring.

Even in the case where IOM works with local partners for project implementation (see the recommendations in section 6.2), it is essential to provide the necessary resources to monitor with these organizations, which can be very time-consuming when their capacity still needs to be strengthened. In Tunisia, for example, IOM had to urgently create a temporary field office composed of two people in Sfax after the start of the community-based AVRR projects funded by the Government of Switzerland to address the need for a close local monitoring (despite the involvement of local partners in the public and private sectors).

The number of human resources needed per project depends largely on the type of the community-based project chosen (see section 6.1), as well as on the local context (proximity between the IOM office and the project areas, the existence of an office in the region, the level of involvement of local actors and the quality of transportation infrastructure). In this regard, the differences in contexts between Sri Lanka and Guinea, for example (two countries where field visits were conducted), are very clear. In Sri Lanka, the AVRR unit has strong partnerships with effective and well-established local NGOs, while it is sometimes impossible to find such organizations in the main areas of return of migrants from Morocco. IOM in Sri Lanka also does not have to cope with the transport difficulties that can be encountered in the main

⁸⁰ At the time of writing this report, this work was in progress or was about to be carried out in Guinea, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire. A mapping activity was also carried out in Nigeria in 2015 as part of another project.

⁸¹ Bureaus of Reception, Orientation and Follow-up of Actions for the Reinsertion of Emigrants, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad.

countries of origin of migrants in Morocco: the small area of the island suggests that the distances to be travelled between projects are limited, road infrastructure is of good quality and the rainy seasons generally do not raise any particular accessibility problems.

IOM teams should also be trained in the implementation of community-based projects, including preliminary analysis of the local context and market, identification of partners, setting up and monitoring of group projects, and integration of a local development component. The AVRR units do not always benefit from the extensive experience that other IOM sections may have (such as the Labour Migration and Human Development Division or the Department of Operations and Emergencies) in terms of identification and management of community-based projects. They also lack the level of experience related to development projects that other actors specialized in the field (NGOs or development agencies) may have.

“The size of the team is not the most important factor. It is especially the knowledge of the environment and the subject of the person who operates that matters.”

– IOM staff member in West Africa

Finally, IOM staff must have technical expertise and/or be well informed about the sectors to which the projects relate. This technical expertise as well as a thorough and realistic analysis of the potential hazards associated with the activity is necessary to predict the risks of the project and prepare it accordingly (choice of an appropriate season, understanding of disease risks). IOM in Guinea, for example, has experienced difficulties in implementing community-based projects in sectors such as livestock when the AVRR unit members do not have the technical expertise required to guide beneficiaries who also lack knowledge of and experience in the sector.

In the absence of in-house sector expertise, it is important to integrate a technical expert in the project – ideally a representative of public authorities to strengthen partnerships with local authorities, project ownership and sustainability after the suspension of IOM's support. This is the case for one of the community-based AVRR projects visited in Sri Lanka – a dairy shop. Since both IOM and the beneficiaries lack veterinary expertise, the head of the Veterinary Government Surgeon Office in Poonakari has been associated as a technical expert on the project, and he mentioned having spent approximately one hour per week advising members of the project's executive committee.

Conditions conducive to the success of community-based initiatives in Sri Lanka

The situation in Sri Lanka illustrates several of the contextual and operational conditions required for the establishment of community-based AVRR projects, which are detailed throughout section 5.2:

- Migrants returning to Sri Lanka are relatively geographically concentrated. While all provinces in the country have experienced returns since the implementation of the AVRR programme in the country, it is by far in the province of Jaffna where returns are greatest, followed by Colombo and Puttalam.
- Most of the returnees had a job before their departure: a number of them were qualified and experienced in the sector chosen for the project (with the obvious exception of projects aimed at training returnees).
- The country is currently stable, returnees do not generally face security risks, the economic situation enables the creation of a viable IGA and the basic infrastructure required for the operation of the projects is present.
- The AVRR unit has strong relationships with a few donors who fund large long-term projects, which enables it to recruit and retain sufficient human resources. The AVRR unit represents by far the largest IOM division in Sri Lanka in terms of human resources.

The team members interviewed have also been working within the unit during the past few years on average.

- With 10 staff members in the capital and 10 others in three different regional offices, the AVR unit is also highly decentralized and therefore able to closely monitor and regularly visit the projects.
- The members of the AVR unit distribute the workload of the projects into areas and the same person thus follows each project from design to evaluation.
- The AVR unit has received training in community development, and regular team-building seminars are organized to update training, disseminate information and exchange best practices.
- IOM has a reliable and detailed database of migrants in Sri Lanka, updated on a regular basis during follow-up visits and after each telephone call received by the hotline.
- After identifying the areas to be prioritized (communities with the highest number of returnees and where projects are not already carried out), unit members conduct field research and consultations with communities to assess the local context and the needs.
- The types of projects implemented are selected based on the findings of the preliminary context analysis, and the AVR unit demonstrates flexibility in terms of procedure for granting assistance. Creativity is encouraged according to the promising sectors in the region.
- The AVR unit has worked hard to build partnerships with local CSOs, the private sector, local public authorities and public vocational training centres, all of which are involved in the community-based projects being implemented.

5.3. POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

The research enabled the identification of several limitations of the community-based approach: the adaptation of available assistance to the specific needs of migrants (section 5.3.1), the selection of projects and beneficiaries (section 5.3.2), the management of human relations within the group (section 5.3.3), and other constraints already identified with the current AVR model, such as the challenges related to funding, the prior preparation of the projects, monitoring, and income shortfall initially identified by the projects (section 5.3.4).

5.3.1. ASSISTANCE PERSONALIZATION

The community-based approach complicates the assistance personalization for migrants according to their specific individual needs, capacities and risks, in particular for victims of trafficking or children, which, as mentioned in section 4.2.5, already represent a challenge with the individual approach.

IOM attaches great importance to assistance personalization and the consideration of the specificity of each case. The AVR offered must be relevant to each case and follow a personalized assessment of the needs, capacities and risks for each returnee. One of the IOM Tunisian partners for the implementation of community-based projects, for example, stressed “the paramount importance of the environment”, whether involving family, socioeconomic or cultural aspects, in the selection and success of reintegration projects.

Key factors specific to each individual influencing the success of reintegration

Reintegration strongly depends on the individual characteristics of migrants. The key variables specific to each individual and which are most important for the reintegration process include the following:

- Migration experiences:
 - The duration of the stay abroad (the longer the stay, the less personal links are maintained with the country of origin), and the difference with the duration originally planned;
 - The conditions influencing the return decision (e.g. risk of imminent forced return, health-related reasons or genuine desire to resettle in the country of origin);
- Personal capacities: experience, skills and technical expertise;
- Social capital upon return (including family support);
- Psychosocial factors:
 - The spirit of entrepreneurship and leadership (which includes the ability to analyse the situation, creative thinking, and a tendency to seek solutions and to diversify activities if necessary);
 - Interest, motivation, ownership of the project and active participation in all stages of the reintegration process;
 - Possible psychological trauma: challenges of identity-related adaptation; a feeling of dependency on the host government's social benefits; feelings of shame, loss, failure, disorientation, anxiety, insecurity and stress (accentuated by the poor economic opportunities and security concerns); potential trauma related to trafficking and gender-based violence.

The considerable impact of the beneficiaries' individual characteristics explains the importance of determining who has specific needs and what is the relevance of a community-based project of socioeconomic profiling of the potential returning candidates and of the pre-departure and post-arrival individual counselling (as mentioned in the previous sections).

Example: Tunisia

As part of the community-based AVRR projects funded by the Government of Switzerland in Tunisia, IOM partners for training and project support highlighted the “difficulty” of the psychosocial profiles of returnees, which complicated the assumption of responsibilities in community-based projects.

The vast majority of male returnees between the ages of 25 and 45 (and some young men between 18 and 20 years old) from poverty-stricken rural areas (characterized by unemployment and low living standards) with a low level of education (some illiterate) and complicated family situations had varying levels of mental acuity.

Some had become addicted to drugs in Europe or drifted into petty crime, and some were aggressive. Most felt strong feelings of shame and hopelessness (broken dreams and failure) and were expecting a lot from the programme (more than what IOM could offer). The programme included both returnees who immigrated to Europe in 2011 and more senior immigrants.

This complexity of profiles prompted the interviewed partners to declare that the community-based approach was perhaps not the most relevant. They agreed to recommend an individual approach with greater involvement of the family rather than truly community-based projects with the objective of responding to the community's needs and seeking to involve other community members rather than the relatives of the returnees.

The age of returnees was a clear psychological differentiation factor. The older ones being often more likely trying to settle, while the younger ones always had a desire to reemigrate.

It is thus easier to personalize assistance and show flexibility to address specific needs under individual projects. If community-based projects provide solutions to some of the limitations of the current voluntary return and reintegration model, individual assistance remains therefore essential to support specific cases. Access to psychosocial counselling is also critical, and all the more effective as it is individualized.

There is a risk of a lack of support for migrants in a particularly vulnerable situation and marginalized groups in community-based projects. These cases of high vulnerability may include, for example, unaccompanied minors, who, above all, need to continue their education or apprenticeship. They may also be returnees with health-related needs or other special needs (in the event of addiction, for example). In those cases, it is particularly necessary to maintain a mechanism for individual reintegration support, as was the case during phase 1 of the MRRM programme as part of the community-based AVRR projects conducted in Niger for migrants returning to Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, the Gambia, Cameroon and Guinea-Bissau. Reintegration assistance offered to returnees was exclusively provided in the form of community-based projects (and not an additional individual assistance and community-based projects that complement it), but it was planned that for “specific cases” requiring individual assistance (referred to as “vulnerable migrants”), an individual activity had to be established.

“Wherever there is an individual befitting response, it should be given. A community-based project must not prevent migrants who require an individual approach from receiving the appropriate assistance. If that is the case, it is a discriminatory situation that needs to be corrected.”

– IOM staff member in West Africa

5.3.2. MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS WITHIN THE GROUP

With group projects, human relations management issues emerge within a group, such as management of disagreements including disagreements over the project's strategic orientation, transparency of the management team, fairness and equity of decisions taken, or even stress management.

As a starting point, it is necessary to build a relationship of trust and team spirit among the members of the project, as well as to find a consensus on the project, its objectives and the strategy to achieve them. In Senegal, for example, IOM staff members interviewed explained that they were, for the time being, quite skeptical about community-based approaches because the returnees often did not know each other and came from different backgrounds. In the absence of already established trust relationships, the fact of asking a disparate group to carry out a community-based project together constitutes a considerable challenge. One of the civil society partners in charge of implementing MRRM community-based projects in the country has confirmed this challenge, describing “great difficulties in getting people to work together”.

The distribution of roles and responsibilities of everyone within the project is also a challenge for all collective projects (including therefore community-based projects). The skills of each individual determine the types of possible activities (see section 5.2, “Conditions Required for the Implementation of Community-

based Projects”) and the role they can take within the project. When the number of project members is high and an executive committee is required (as is the case for most community-based projects in Sri Lanka), the selection of the executive committee members shall be based on transparency.

IOM is then responsible for maintaining a delicate balance between leaving all responsibilities to project members and ensuring that decisions are taken in a fair and transparent manner. To avoid possible tensions or conflict, it is necessary to ensure that responsibilities, together with the plan of action, have been formulated and approved by all the beneficiaries of the project.

“The more individualistic the culture of returnees, the more participants will seek to appropriate the project for themselves, which may create tensions and lead to failure because of the lack of cooperation. In Tunisia, for example, some projects have been affected by disputes between brothers of the same families.”

– IOM staff member in Tunisia

5.3.3. SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

Because of the high cost of each community-based project, it is difficult to implement as many community-based projects as there are returnees or communities with the highest rates of departures/returns. This therefore raises the twin problems of the selection of a beneficiary region and the beneficiaries within the area.

Selecting the site, particularly when migrants come from a variety of regions, and managing the tensions that may result from this choice constitutes the first challenge for IOM. The interviews in Senegal reveal the difficulty posed by the selection of the project site. According to an IOM staff member interviewed for this study: “It’s not something we can do alone. We did it with NGOs, authorities and local communities.” Section 6.2.2, which presents best practices relating to the selection of projects and beneficiaries, proposes possible solutions to address this constraint of community-based projects.

Another challenge is selecting the participants from the local community and reaching a consensus for the definition of the project. As is the case for the choice of a recipient area, the selection of projects and beneficiaries may prove to be political. It is important to make sure to respect the “do not harm” principle and be particularly careful not to create tension. Letting returnees choose the community members with whom they wish to carry out a project, for example,⁸² may be perceived as a form of positive discrimination against migrants and their relatives and would result in the loss of the potential benefit of community-based projects in terms of minimizing the risks of resentment between returnees and members of the community.

In Nigeria, the interviewed AVRRI staff reported difficulties in implementing community-based projects⁸³ when selecting recipients because resources were limited, “all young people wanted to participate” and it was hard to identify the most vulnerable individuals among potential beneficiaries. For these first projects, which constituted a pilot phase, the following criteria had been retained: return in the last five years for returnees, family income (e.g. income of parents cannot meet their needs), absence of a personal source of income and school dropout.

As detailed in section 6.2.2, which presents best practices relating to the selection of projects and beneficiaries, there are several possible options and/or criteria for migrants’ selection that will be more or less relevant depending on the types of the community-based projects implemented. Some countries, such as Sri Lanka, have developed over the years a sound yet time-consuming methodology, while others such as the Gambia (for its pilot projects) have preferred to leave that decision to returnees and/or to local partners in charge of project management. Whatever options are chosen, it is essential to establish clear rules on the eligibility of beneficiaries in order to avoid ambiguities and the tensions that may result from poor miscommunication.

⁸² Recommendation of an interviewed IOM staff member involved in the implementation of MRRM projects.

⁸³ These projects were part of the pilot phase of the MRRM project implemented from Niger.

The process of selecting projects and beneficiaries taking as a starting point the preferences of returnees in the Gambia

In the Gambia, three community-based projects have been implemented under the MRRM in the following sectors: fisheries; marketing of fishery products; and garment manufacturing. Each project involved approximately 20 members, including 10 from the community. All migrants came back from Niger and knew each other from Niger. The groups have been established based on affinities and localities of origin.

The selection of members of the local community who would be involved in the projects has been a major challenge at the beginning of the project.

Since the project was in a pilot phase, the eligibility criteria had not been defined in advance. Due to a lack of time and elements to define vulnerability criteria adapted to the local context, IOM has allowed returnees and local NGOs to invite members of the community (e.g. members of their immediate circle).

The process of selecting projects and beneficiaries taking as a starting point the preferences of the local community in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the AVRR team has developed a systematic selection process to address the need for a methodology with as much equity and transparency as possible. The process, which is time-consuming and resource-intensive, is organized according to the following steps:

- Organization of a safe migration campaign (see section 6.2, “Best Practices”) in “at-risk” communities where income are low, for example.
- During the presentation in the community hall (one of the components of the awareness campaign), a discussion about what the village needs and a group reflection on the idea of IGAs is launched.
- IOM then conducts an initial sorting of ideas.
- A member of the AVRR unit (trained within this mission) then conducts a study on the local context and needs. This analysis involves interviews with key community stakeholders and group discussions.
- Project development work involves a lot of meetings within the community, every one or two weeks.
- This community design results in a project proposal, prepared on the basis of consultations. Although the AVRR team’s objective is to draft the project proposal by the communities themselves, in an attempt to save time, the document is currently being prepared by the IOM staff member who conducted the preparatory work.
- Many factors are indeed complicating the drafting of such a document by the members of the community. These include low capacity, lack of experience in and/or access to the necessary technology (e.g. computer and word processing software), illiteracy (especially within fishing communities), and language barrier (the majority of citizens speak only one of the two official languages – Sinhalese and Tamil – and do not understand the other language; English helps establish a link but it is spoken by only approximately 10% of the population).
- Project selection by IOM on the basis of project proposals and criteria detailed below.

Selection criteria for selected projects

- Regions where the volume of irregular departures and returns is important (“high risk” areas): the geographical location at the regional level is therefore already defined by IOM at the beginning of the process detailed above.
- Low income in the community (disadvantaged areas) and the project’s potential for income generation.
- Low employment rates within the community and the project’s potential for job creation.
- Sustainability: Who will be able to manage the project? The project must check all the boxes of the Sustainability Matrix developed by the AVRR team.
- Local commitment: Is the community truly motivated? Will the project involve the community in the broadest sense? According to a member of the AVRR unit, “some communities want projects but are not ready to work hard to implement them.”

5.3.4. CONSTRAINTS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

There are constraints identified for the individual AVRR (section 4.2) that IOM may also encounter in the development of community-based approaches in terms of: funding; prior preparation of projects; monitoring of migrants; and immediate income for beneficiaries.

Funding

As for individual assistance (see section 4.2), IOM faces challenges related to the funding of reintegration assistance and the difficulty of managing the specific constraints of the different donors involved in the AVRR for each country of origin. An IOM staff member explained that “every State wants to work for itself and it is therefore impossible to have a common approach that is suitable for all. Governments that fund the AVRR are sometimes very interested in the individual approach and are not willing to try another approach, while for others it is just the opposite.”

Community-based AVRR projects often require a larger budget than individual projects.⁸⁴ There is a risk of funding projects that are too small and do not allow the implementation of ambitious and sustainable activities. The budget constraint for the implementation of community-based projects was stressed by an IOM partner NGO in Senegal:

“The budget deficit linked to the negotiating terms; the inadequacy of payment conditions requiring the provider to pre-fund, the absence of a financial section assigned for staff and operations (travels, communications, coordination, etc.) have had a substantial impact on implementation.”

However, as stated in section 5.1.3, community-based projects also make it possible to consider other types of funding.

⁸⁴ As highlighted in section 2.3.2, which presents the limitations of the research, it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study on the cost/impact of assisted return through an individual approach and a community-based approach, by systematically comparing the total budget with the number of beneficiaries receiving assistance for community-based and individual projects led by IOM. For this purpose, it would be necessary to establish impact criteria in order to optimally compare projects with clearly different objectives.

Preparation of projects in advance

In the same manner as for individual reintegration projects, migrants are not often in ideal conditions in the host country to prepare their projects in advance (see section 4.2.2 for details on the difficulties in terms of access to the basic needs encountered by migrants in Morocco). It is also particularly difficult to prepare for reintegration from the host country if it is carried out through a community-based project; challenges include difficulties in choosing and contacting the involved local community members if they are not already relatives, inadequate appreciation of realities on the ground if migrants do not return to their communities of origin or have been gone for a long time, difficulty in selecting a project linked to local economic realities, and others.

In general, any group project (whether it be a collective project of migrants or a community-based project) will require more preparation time than individual projects, due to the time required to strengthen the group and reach a consensus on roles, objectives and activities (see section 5.3.2).

Traceability and tracking of migrants

Traceability of migrants is a challenge even with community-based projects. In the Gambia, as in Senegal, for example, IOM staff members noted that some migrants were not able to participate in community-based projects under the MRRM because IOM was unable to keep in touch with them once they arrived in their countries of origin. Between the interviews of migrants in the host country and upon their return to their home countries, there are indeed frequent changes in telephone numbers or even names. Migrants who have often lost confidence in the authorities do not indeed always want to give their real identities. Identifying and maintaining contact with migrants is a challenge for this reason, whether in terms of providing individual or community support. On the other hand, the involvement of returnees in group projects in theory enables to reduce the risk of losing contact once the project is launched (see section 5.1.2).



A returning migrant and a community member work with a truck funded through the MRRM for their IGA community-based project in the Gambia.

As detailed in section 5.2.2 (“Operational Conditions”), it is necessary to provide for long-term monitoring (and funding) to ensure the success of community-based projects. Community-based initiatives have a broader scope than individual projects and take longer to be implemented before management is stabilized and the members become autonomous. One of the IOM staff members interviewed in Guinea, for example, relates the case of a community-based agricultural farm project: “We trained the members of the project and built the premises, and then we provided support for the first six months before withdrawing. But for an agricultural farm, it takes 12 months so that it can be self-managed and generate enough resources to address expenses. The beneficiaries therefore faced many difficulties and had no resources to feed themselves. Agricultural

products processing machines are there but they do not have adequate working capital for the machines to function. Instead, it would be more appropriate to provide for monitoring over one year.”

Individual income limited at the initial stage

Another potential limitation of community-based projects is that they often do not generate enough income at the beginning to address the needs of migrants and their dependants. This challenge is also present in the context of individual assistance, but it is exacerbated with any collective project for which the starting capital will be higher but the income (potentially low initially) will have to be shared among the members of the group. The final report of the community-based AVRR projects carried out in Senegal therefore notes: “In view of the large number of beneficiaries, a few concerns over the low dividends at the time of profit sharing are to be noted.”

Unless the migrant joins a well-established project that generates sufficient income (see section 6.1, “Types of Possible Community-based Projects”), community-based projects are therefore not the most appropriate mechanism to meet the immediate needs of returnees who experience a difficult economic situation upon their return. As stated by an IOM member interviewed in Tunisia, “the success of some community-based projects can only be measured in the long term (two years or more).”

Returnees below the poverty line are therefore difficult to motivate for community-based projects because they first need to meet their immediate survival needs. The final report of a community-based project in Senegal mentions “difficulties, in some places, for the mobilization of beneficiaries, because they are engaged in reactive survival activities.” This limitation of community-based projects is an argument in favour of combining individual and community approaches: the individual AVRR (in the form of project support or if necessary cash assistance) will then enable the returnees to supplement their income.

Flexibility and responsiveness

Finally, the last existing challenges of the individual AVRR model to which community-based projects cannot provide a solution are the lack of flexibility and the delays encountered in the process of getting assistance. During the implementation of the EU-funded community-based project Stabilizing At-risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Management to Enable Smooth Transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (START) in Tunisia, for example,⁸⁵ some beneficiaries had been waiting more than nine months for their training and for the payment of assistance. Despite the administrative constraints facing IOM (detailed in the Funding subsection), in order to meet the needs of beneficiaries, it is essential to seek to shorten the deadlines for file reviews and make funds available as quickly as possible.

Similarly, constraints on the implementation of community-based projects may make it difficult for IOM to adapt to unexpected situations, while on the contrary, it would be necessary to improve responsiveness to scenarios such as the sudden keen interest in a programme. One case in point is the challenge that confronted IOM Tunisia and how it successfully dealt with the situation – in this circumstance, the number of returns from Switzerland in connection with the community-based AVRR projects far exceeded expectations, which complicated the management process for IOM. Initially, 250 people were expected, but the word-of-mouth phenomenon between members of the same communities increased the number of returns to more than 700 (of which 64% have entirely completed the procedure to create a project), mostly from two localities north of Sfax. IOM had to immediately triple the size of the team to manage the situation.

⁸⁵ The project Stabilizing At-risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Management to Enable Smooth Transitions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (START), funded by the EU, was implemented from 2012 to 2015. In Tunisia, the third component of this programme was aimed at building the capacities of “at-risk” communities of migration (communities with high unemployment, among other things) in four target regions in the northern part of Tunisia. In order to achieve this objective, IOM funded IGA projects implemented by five Tunisian NGOs, namely, Insaf El Kef, the Tunisian Association of Agricultural Engineers (ATIA), Kolna Tounes, Tenmya 21, and Organization of the Maghreb Studies and Human Resources Development (Organisation Maghrébine des Etudes et de Développement des Ressources Humaines (OMEDRH)). The projects involved sectors such as beekeeping, fish farming, ecotourism, craft shops and livestock. The beneficiaries, all members of local communities and not necessarily returnees, were selected via provincial authorities according to criteria related to profile, age and vulnerability (e.g. women and young unemployed graduates).



Implementation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration community-based projects: Types of possible projects and best practices

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS: TYPES OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS AND BEST PRACTICES

How should the findings presented in the previous sections be applied and the AVRR programmes be implemented through an effective and useful community-based approach in a given context? This chapter provides perspectives related to the types of possible community-based initiatives and seeks to envision appropriate approaches adapted to voluntary return (section 6.1). It also looks at the opportunities for complementarity between the possible combined approaches and joint projects (section 6.1.4). It then identifies the best practices related to community-based projects and drawn from the research (section 6.2).

Summary

As stated in this report, the community-based AVRR initiatives may take on different aspects. Depending on the local context, some forms of community-based projects are better adapted and likely to have more impact than others. Community-based projects can be classified into four main categories:

- Initiatives initially based on the reintegration needs of one or more returnees;
- Initiatives initially based on the development and response to the needs of the local community;
- Initiatives seeking to integrate one or more returnees into existing projects (implemented by IOM or other donors);
- Joint initiatives combining several types of approaches.

Although relatively few community-based AVRR projects have so far been conducted around the world, best practices are already emerging, such as best practices for the selection of beneficiaries; best practices for project design, implementation and monitoring; best organizational practices for IOM; and best practices in terms of information, awareness and communication.

6.1. TYPES OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to all types of situations for the AVRR. The most relevant community-based approach model depends on the local context, on community needs and on the profiles of migrants. This section therefore proposes different scenarios, their advantages and disadvantages, illustrated by concrete case studies.⁸⁶

The definition of community-based AVRR projects proposed by Altai and used in this report (see section 3.3, “Definitions”) emphasizes the twofold basic objective of the projects: reintegration assistance for migrants and direct positive impact on the local community. The impact on the local community and the way of assisting returnees to reintegrate can take different forms. Starting from the two ends of the continuum presented in section 3.4, it is possible to group the different forms taken by the community-based projects into two categories:

- Community-based projects focusing on migrants, which involve members of the community in one way or another, or address the needs of the community;
- Community-based projects which, on the contrary, are focused on the needs of the local community and which, in one way or another, involve one or more migrants.

The different scenarios presented in this section are grouped according to these two main categories, in addition to another possible type of projects: those that start from already existing projects (implemented by IOM or other actors) and seek to include returnees to facilitate their reintegration.

Table 3 summarizes the main advantages and disadvantages of each type of approach.

⁸⁶ In order to develop this study, and in particular to identify the possible types of projects, Altai examined the AVRR projects as well as the community-based projects implemented by IOM outside the scope of the AVRR.

Table 3: Possible approaches for community-based assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects

| Type | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages | Notes |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Initiatives initially based on the needs of returnees | Returnees' group projects or individual projects in which IOM calls on the returnees to involve the community. | Have a strong impact on migrants; meet their needs. | Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of the community. Limited impact in terms of reducing the risk of tensions between returnees and the community due to lesser involvement of the community. | This is the simplest type of project for the AVRR units to implement. However, it is more complicated to enable members of the community to benefit from an integration project than vice versa. |
| Initiatives initially based on the needs of the community | Community development projects into which IOM integrates migrants. | Have a strong impact on the community; effectively meet the needs of the local community. | Risk of limited impact on returnees (who are sometimes not involved at all): these are more projects for the prevention of irregular migration and local development rather than for reintegration assistance. | These projects might be difficult for the AVRR units to implement (as they require expertise in development and significant resources). It is easier, however, for the returnees to benefit from development projects than vice versa. |
| Initiatives initially based on existing projects | Integration of returnees into projects that work well: projects implemented by the AVRR unit, other IOM departments, or other donors who have received support in the past or are currently benefiting from support. | Guarantee in advance that the projects work well and generate regular and sufficient income for the beneficiaries. Serve as a solution to funding problems (budget savings for IOM) and to the lack of specific expertise of the AVRR teams; provide a learning opportunity for migrants who do not have specific skills. | Need for IOM to connect migrants to a project (detailed and updated databases of existing projects and returnees, determination of compatibilities). Require an agreement establishing relationships between the returnees and the already trained group. IOM does not necessarily have hold of projects. | This type of project has many advantages but remains probably an exceptional situation in view of the necessary prerequisites for its implementation. |

6.1.1. INITIATIVES INITIALLY BASED ON THE NEEDS OF RETURNEES

This section analyses the community-based projects that focus on returning migrants, involve members of the community in one way or another, or meet their needs. Two main categories emerge: the initiatives that start with an individual microproject of a returnee and those that start with a group project of different returnees.

In both cases, these initiatives have a strong impact on returnees and a lesser impact on the local community. They have the advantage of directly supporting the reintegration of migrants, as they are focused on their needs, but have the disadvantage of not always meeting the needs of other residents, which are of secondary importance. For the IOM AVRR units, this type of project is often easier to implement than the other community-based project models described in this report.

Individual assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects of returnees which directly benefit the community

Community-based AVRR projects can take the form of individual microprojects of returnees in which the community is involved or that meet the needs of the local community. Typically, an example of this is an IGA initiated by a returnee who hires a non-migrant member of the community (e.g. a relative). The returnee, the primary beneficiary, therefore defines his/her project with no necessary consultations with the community.

Different methods may be considered to motivate the returnee to integrate other members of the community into his/her project. Migrants show interest in the additional scholarship system implemented in Tunisia when another person has been involved (37% of migrants wishing to return from Switzerland through the AVRR programme have chosen to develop such community-based projects rather than individual projects).⁸⁷ Other approaches may be considered within this type of project, such as the programme implemented in the Republic of Moldova to reduce tensions between the local community and the returnees: in this project, IOM offers, for each returnee, a reintegration assistance to a vulnerable person of the community of return. For each return, both the migrant and a member of the community thus receive support for the implementation of separate individual micro-projects.⁸⁸

For the AVRR units, this type of project is relatively easy to implement as long as, in most cases, it is close to the AVRR formula to which the members of the IOM AVRR teams have become accustomed (and in which they have undergone training). Neither does it require prior efforts to establish relationships between migrants, nor between migrants and community members (if the choice of community beneficiaries is left to the returnees).

In terms of the selection of community beneficiaries, it is possible to:

- Leave the choice to the returnee to select the person(s) he/she wishes to involve: The returnees then choose some relatives, which has the advantage of increasing the involvement of the family (whose role is essential to sustainable reintegration, as noted in section 4.1.3). This practice also minimizes the risk of misunderstanding within the group. However, this type of community-based project does not really reduce the potential frustration of the community towards returnees (section 5.1.1) since only migrants and their relatives receive direct assistance.
- Establish basic criteria of vulnerability (e.g. job seekers) or compatible skills (e.g. people with valuable expertise or prior experience useful for the project) and let the returnee choose a person who meets these criteria: This practice also minimizes the risk of disagreement within the group but complicates the identification of potential partners for the returnee.

⁸⁷ Figures of June 2014, taken from the European Training Foundation report *Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective (MISMES): Tunisia* (Turin, Italy, 2015). According to the report, among the 451 projects created by Tunisian returnees, 283 (63%) were individual projects and 168 (37%) were community-based projects. The report is available online at: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/36845>

⁸⁸ However, this approach seems quite difficult to implement in countries that have to deal with migrants' reintegration assistance whose amounts are already particularly limited, as is the case for the returnees from Morocco.

- Suggest candidates preselected by IOM on the basis of defined criteria: For example, individuals who have demonstrated a particular motivation/enthusiasm for the creation of a project, inclusion in the register of government job seekers, pre-identified vulnerable persons, motivated individuals who have successfully completed vocational training provided by IOM, and government partners or civil society. This process ensures the benefit of the assistance provided to the members of the community who need or deserve it, and extends the social circle of returnees (who do not work only with their relatives). On the other hand, it is difficult to identify potential compatible partners and create a team spirit if the partners do not know each other in advance (see section 5.3.2).

This type of project offers common advantages over individual projects, such as the possibility of customizing assistance and responding directly to the individual needs of the returnees. The creation of jobs for non-migrants within the community through the funding of individual projects of migrants is also a means of achieving a positive and direct impact, although on a small scale, on local economic development without having to implement large projects that are budget-demanding and time-consuming.

The main disadvantage of this type of project is the low impact on the community, especially when the choice of the community's beneficiaries is left to returnees, who therefore prefer to work with relatives. **To give this type of project an ever-increasing community-based dimension, it might be possible to encourage migrants to orient their choice of projects towards the needs of the community,** for example, by offering an additional allocation if the project includes a social dimension that meets the needs of the community identified as priorities (valuing apprenticeship for early school leavers, etc.).

One of the possible risks of this approach is providing insufficient amounts for each project – the temptation to operate on budgets similar to those of the individual AVRR projects, which would not be enough to create IGAs that would enable beneficiaries to have satisfactory and sustainable income (see section 4.2.1). Doubling the amount of the allowance in the case of the employment of a person from the community, for example, would not be sufficient for migrants returning from Morocco to reach a “critical start-up capital” that would allow generating a sustainable income. This phenomenon has been observed in Tunisia, where at least 22 per cent of returnees have abandoned the project,⁸⁹ often delegating it to a family member (brother, father and sometimes women) so as to seek more profitable opportunities. IOM partners in Tunisia involved in the implementation stressed during the interviews that the amount of the allocations was very clearly insufficient to develop adequate sustainable projects for returnees and their relatives.

Example: Austria assisted voluntary return and reintegration project in Kosovo/ UNSC 1244

In Kosovo/UNSC 1244, where unemployment is a major challenge, IOM encouraged migrants returning from Austria under the AVRR programme and wishing to create their own small businesses to partner with and/or employ members of the local communities. The project, implemented between 2008 and 2012, was co-financed by the European Return Fund, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior, and the federal provinces of Lower Austria, Carinthia and Tyrol.

Over the life of the project, an average of 2.75 jobs were created per returning migrant (among the 95% of those returnees who had chosen to start a business with their reintegration support

⁸⁹ Statistics of June 2014 drawn from the report MISMES: Tunisia (European Training Foundation, 2015). According to the report, project monitoring visits have demonstrated that six months after the final payment, 78 per cent of the reintegration projects were still active and viable. On the other hand, IOM's local implementation partners interviewed in June 2016 agreed that after two years, only approximately 50 per cent of the projects were still active. They described to Altai the observed situations of abandonment of the projects by the migrants: the partners then received confirmation from their neighbours that the migrants had returned to Europe and had either closed or passed the projects on to their family members.

allowances). That is, a total of 695 jobs created, according to the external evaluation of the project carried out in May 2012 by Riinvest. Most employees were members of the migrant families, but 23 per cent of migrants also employed other members of their communities. IOM's career guidance programme was also open to both migrants and members of the local communities.

At the time of the external evaluation of the project, 93 per cent of returnees had a functional business, and 30 per cent employed additional staff. Three-quarters (74%) of the migrants interviewed for the evaluation felt they had contributed to the development of their communities by employing other people.

Collective assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects of returnees which directly benefit the community

Community-based AVRR projects may take the form of returning group projects that directly involve members of the community (e.g. through jobs) or that directly contribute to local development (e.g. construction of infrastructure). According to some interviewed IOM staff members, this type of community-based project would be easier to implement by the AVRR units than community-based development projects involving returnees. This model may take the form, for example, of small agricultural cooperative farms.

The implementation of this type of project implies a willingness on the part of migrants to work together (and, possibly, the willingness of one or more members of the community to join the project). For IOM, it also means bringing returnees together in order to propose collective projects (sufficient rate of returns, database and establishment of compatibility criteria).

It is possible to imagine a variety of mechanisms to encourage migrants to: (1) get together; and (2) involve other members of the community or work on issues that meet the needs of the community. For example, the allocation of an additional allowance in the event of grouping of returnees around a group project, and/or additional allocation per employed non-migrant resident.

“For the AVRR units, the easiest to create are probably the collective projects of returnees that involve some community members [rather than community-based development projects that directly involve returnees].”

– IOM staff member

The advantage of the “returnees’ group project model employing one or a few members of the community” is that it enables returnees who do not have the necessary skills to succeed in a project alone to benefit from the expertise of other returnees or other members of the community (when they are selected on the basis of their skills). In comparison with returnees’ individual projects involving the community (discussed in the next section), these collective initiatives also enable to initiate more ambitious projects by pooling resources within a larger group. Through the collective reintegration of returnees, they also encourage the development of networks of returning migrants.

One of the risks of this type of project is the time limit before generating sufficient income for each member. For example, the involvement of other members of the community may then take place at a later stage when the project becomes profitable. In Ghana, IOM has supported migrants returning from Libya in the establishment of a cooperative that cultivates sunflowers sold in local markets to produce oil and biodiesel derivatives (the Sunflower Initiative project). The project has afterwards provided employment opportunities and raised the living standards of migrants’ relatives and the local community.

The limitation of this type of project is that it is less likely to meet the immediate needs of the community, especially if the residents are only involved in the second phase, than a “community development project” in which migrants would be involved. Ideally, migrants and community beneficiaries should be equal members

in the project from the very beginning (and not employer/employee) and should design the project together. But the question arises as to the selection of the community beneficiaries, since the selection criterion cannot be their skills in a given sector if the group of beneficiaries is determined before the definition of the project. The case of the MRRM project led from Niger for migrants returning to the Gambia and Senegal illustrates these issues.

Example: Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism project in the Gambia and Senegal

The MRRM, established for the first time in Niger in 2015, is a comprehensive IOM strategy aimed at providing direct assistance to migrants in reception and transit centres, providing operational support to public authorities, facilitating the identification and registration of migrants, and supporting the collection of data to inform policy and programme development.

In September 2015, IOM Niger launched a six-month pilot phase of the mechanism (with EUR 1,000,000 funding from Italy) for migrants who live in Niger and wish to return to their countries of origin within the framework of the AVRRE programme. For this pilot phase, the two main countries of origin from Niger were Senegal and the Gambia. The pilot phase included collective projects of returnees and members of the community. Following the pilot phase, the first phase was launched, always coordinated from Niger for migrants returning to Senegal, the Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau. Phase 1, funded by the EU (up to EUR 1,500,000) and by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) (GBP 1,382,000), will be completed in November 2016. Phase 2, funded through the European Union Trust Fund, is in the process of being signed.

After an awareness-raising activity in Niger, migrants were brought together upon their return to the capital cities of their countries of origin (all migrants transit via the capital). The division into groups took place during a seminar on vocational training, according to affinities and places of origin. Migrants returning to remote areas and those with specific needs received individual assistance. For the others, assistance went exclusively through community projects (and not through a combination of community projects and individual assistance).

In the Gambia, three community-based projects were implemented under the MRRM in 2015 – fishing cooperatives, marketing of fishery products and garment manufacturing. Each project brought together between 5 and 20 members (a total of 35 beneficiaries), half of whom were returning migrants and the others were community members. Project management and monitoring were done by the National Youth Council (IOM's local partner under the Ministry of Youth). Procurement procedures were however carried out directly by IOM Gambia, which was not the case in Senegal, where IOM partner NGOs were in charge of this aspect.

In Senegal, six community-based projects involving approximately 20 people were implemented in the agriculture sector (market gardening) and livestock (fattening) in two different regions. Two local IOM partner NGOs (Experma and La Lumière) managed and monitored the projects.

These first community-based projects conducted under the MRRM highlighted the following challenges:

- **Pre-launch delays of community-based projects:** Returnees did not all come at the specified time, and the first ones had to wait for the rest of the group to participate in the joint training in the capital and be split into groups. During the time, IOM lost contact with some migrants, several of whom had decided to leave the country again.

- **Lack of methodology:** The lack of specific methodology with respect to the sequencing, selection of beneficiaries, design of community-based projects and monitoring: this project being in the first phase which, was set up very quickly, the methodology and the procedures were not yet clearly laid down.
- **Budget constraint:** The limited budget for each project did not allow for ambitious projects and quality monitoring.
- **Other delays:** There were additional delays in the implementation of projects (due to cumbersome administrative procedures) and thus productivity delays in activities when IOM subcontracted an NGO and did not directly deal with procurement (as was the case in Senegal where the distance between the Dakar office and the project locations was greater).

6.1.2. INITIATIVES INITIALLY BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

This section analyses the community-based projects that focus on the needs of the community and involve and support reintegration of one or more returnees. This model usually takes the form of a local development project for the community, conducted by an AVRR unit, into which migrants are integrated.

This type of project requires training of the members of the AVRR unit in the management of development projects and a strong knowledge of the specific sector chosen (internally or through a partnership with experts from the private sector, the public sector or the civil society). It is also necessary to provide significant resources to ensure financial support and monitoring over the long term insofar as the budgets, agendas and objectives of development projects cannot be compared to those of microprojects that have been established by returnees.

As a result, these initiatives may be difficult to implement for the AVRR units with limited budgets. In addition, the issue related to the selection of beneficiaries (e.g. definition of criteria by IOM, transparency of the process) is becoming ever more important (see section 5.3.3, “Selection of Beneficiaries”).

Finally, it is particularly complicated to prepare such projects with migrants ahead of return (which would primarily involve regular communications with the members of the community of origin, therefore implying that the beneficiary community has already been selected by IOM).

These initiatives have the advantage of responding directly to the needs of local residents and offering more opportunities to involve communities at the design stage of the project (collaborative development of projects; see text box describing project selection process in Sri Lanka in section 5.3.3). As a result, those initiatives have a greater potential to minimize the resentment felt by local residents towards returnees and to contribute to the prevention of irregular migration.

This type of community-based project also allows easy integration and provides support to returning migrants who have not returned through the AVRR programme (forced returns or independent voluntary returns) and who cannot, most of the times, be eligible for other types of assistance from IOM. According to several interviewed IOM staff members, it is also easier to make returnees benefit from development projects than to make communities benefit from returnees' projects. This type of initiative is therefore more likely to benefit both parties.

The main risk of this type of project is its limited impact on returnees. As is the case in Sri Lanka and Guinea (see the following text box), sometimes no returnee is included among the direct beneficiaries when the eligibility criteria chosen do not impose a quota of migrants.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ This happens when the selection of beneficiaries, for instance, is carried out based on their vulnerability, motivation, or skills within regions or communities with a large number of departures/returns.

The relevance of the categorization as “community-based AVRR projects” of these community-based projects implemented by an AVRR unit but not directly involving any returnee is controversial (how do they directly contribute to the reintegration of migrants upon their return?⁹¹). Even when returnees participate in the project, they are rarely strongly involved in its design and the project does not take into consideration their specific needs. Since this type of initiative offers fewer guarantees to meet the needs of migrants, it is important that the community project comes to complement (cumulating) an individual assistance for returnees.⁹²

It should be noted that it is important to ensure that women are paid as much as men in community-based development projects that subcontract companies employing returnees, for example, in the case of infrastructure rehabilitation or building projects subcontracted to local companies that must employ a minimum quota of returnees in order to be eligible. In Sri Lanka, the teams from one of the IOM regional offices noted that women employed for a daily construction work (day labourers) by contracted enterprises⁹³ were paid the usual wage that women would earn in the locations concerned, that is to say, a lower wage than men despite their equal working hours. IOM could require that women and men receive equal wages⁹⁴ and take the opportunity to promote companies’ awareness of the benefits of mixed employment and equal pay.

Example: Swiss assisted voluntary return and reintegration community-based projects in Guinea

In 2011, the Government of Switzerland began funding microprojects to strengthen and support self-employment of young people and women, implemented by the IOM AVRR unit in Conakry. A microcredit programme was launched for groups of young people and women.

IOM subsequently changed its strategy and decided to provide microcredit grants. The exact amount of grant, approximately USD 5,000 per project, depended on the region and the nature of the project (wherein the activities were defined by IOM and the beneficiaries). Between March 2014 and May 2015, eight “economic interest groups” were set up, including four women’s groups and four coalitions of youth associations. Despite the difficult context of the outbreak of the epidemic Ebola virus disease, the creation of the economic interest groups resulted in the set-up of eight microenterprises at the end of the projects.

All young or female residents were eligible for the projects, with no minimum quota of returnees within the group. According to the interviews conducted with IOM staff members, only one returnee participated in one of the projects. Therefore, with the aim of responding to the rural exodus and irregular migration, a geographical selection criterion was used: the area was supposed to be a massive departure area, with a young population and a high rate of young unemployed graduates. The communities heard about the programme through word of mouth, without IOM having to run a particular communication campaign, and the AVRR team chose from the voluntary groups that had been formed.

Project management was carried out at two levels:

- At the national level, through the steering committee set up for this purpose and co-chaired by the Ministry of Youth and Youth Employment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women and Children;

⁹¹ Some IOM staff members interviewed for this study thus feel that these are not really projects assisting voluntary return and reintegration.

⁹² The limitation of this type of initiative is the multiplication of the overall budget required for the IOM office.

⁹³ This employment opportunity was within the framework of community-based projects implemented by the IOM Labor Mobility and Human Development Division (and not the AVRR unit).

⁹⁴ This could be an eligibility criterion for companies, along with the quota of returnees and other conditions contained in the contract.

- Proximity monitoring, carried out by the decentralized services (e.g. the Prefectural Directorate for Youth and Youth Employment, the Prefectural Directorate for Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women and Children, prefects and municipal mayors).

According to the programme's evaluation report, the involvement of all partners in the early stages of project design and planning through the establishment of a steering committee allowed for a better organization.

The interviewed IOM staff members pointed out that even if projects did not necessarily generate sufficient income for beneficiaries, they worked in terms of prevention of migration insofar as they provided members with an occupation to invest in.

In addition, there are various examples of non-AVRR development projects implemented by IOM which have benefitted both the local communities and the migrants (who did not necessarily return under the AVRR programme). In Central and Latin America, for example, the number of AVRR returnees is very low, despite some of the largest migration flows in the world originating from these regions. In 2007, IOM in Costa Rica set up Casa de Derechos (House of Rights),⁹⁵ which organized events (e.g. social and cultural activities) and offered free services (e.g. legal and psychosocial support) to the entire communities, migrants and local residents, at its discretion.

6.1.3. INITIATIVES INTEGRATING THE RETURNEE(S) INTO AN EXISTING PROJECT

This section focuses on the possible approaches that integrate one or more returnees into projects that are already underway and which are functioning well. Many different situations could be envisaged: these may be either projects implemented by the AVRR unit, by other IOM departments, or by other donors, or national development plans. Projects may be currently underway, or might have received funding (from an NGO or another development institution) in the past, or, though probably less often, they may be local initiatives that have never received external support.

This type of project has the following advantages:

- Guarantee in advance that the projects work well and generate regular and sufficient income for the beneficiaries;
- Solution to financing problems (budget savings for IOM);
- Solution to problems related to the lack of specific expertise of the AVRR teams;
- Learning opportunity for migrants who do not have specific skills.

In situations where the AVRR units do not have sufficient budgets or in-house skills required to implement community-based projects, an alternative could therefore be to allow other development actors in the country to implement ambitious projects, and to focus on building partnerships with these actors, so that their projects integrate returnees while providing individual assistance (and/or an emergency support) to migrants who need it most. This approach seems preferable to the implementation by the AVRR units of many projects with no adequate budget to develop, implement and monitor them.

⁹⁵ This project was funded by UNHCR in the Municipality of Desemparados. By providing protection to migrants, refugees and local residents alike, the project aimed to facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants into the community and avoid their isolation. A 2014 project, implemented by IOM (in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and the Municipality) and funded by the EU and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (through the Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DDC)), led to the establishment of the second Casa de Derechos for vulnerable migrants (women in particular). A second component of the project provided microcredit grants to small businesses owned by some migrants.

However, despite the many advantages of the integration of returnees into existing projects, it requires a number of preconditions for implementation, on the basis of which this mechanism is likely to remain a rare case:

- IOM needs to connect migrants to a project, which involves maintaining detailed and updated databases of existing projects and returnees, as well as analysing migrants' referencing opportunities to existing projects (e.g. through the establishment of eligibility criteria for returnees, development of framework agreements with partners and definition of referencing conditions).
- An agreement establishing relationships between the returnee and an already trained group is needed.
- IOM does not manage projects and therefore has no direct control over or visibility on the implementation of projects (e.g. methodology and objectives).
- IOM will sometimes have to contribute financially to the project if it integrates returnees.⁹⁶

The selection of beneficiaries among migrants (whether carried out in the country of departure or upon return in the country of origin) could also be problematic and create tension between returnees even before their return.

Initiatives involving returnees in existing projects established by the IOM assisted voluntary return and reintegration unit

Although no examples were identified during the research, it could be possible to integrate new returnees into individual projects, collective projects of returnees, or community-based projects (whether involving returnees or not) previously supported or currently being implemented by the AVRR units. This means, above all, maintaining contact over time with the previously funded projects and having detailed evaluations of the success of the projects (e.g. capacity of the project to generate sufficient revenues for one or more additional members).

This approach implies an interest on the part of migrants, and also especially from preformed groups that may prefer to integrate other members of the community (relatives or people with skills that are useful to the project) rather than returnees. Members of existing projects will therefore probably need to be sensitized and motivated to integrate one or more migrants, for example, through additional grants. If it is common ground that the project generates enough proceeds to provide an income to a returnee, a portion of the individual reintegration assistance could be allocated to the collective project in return for his/her integration into the group as a full member (and as a shareholder just like the founding members).

"It would be difficult to propose to the returnees from Morocco to join a group that already exists because they will not have the same vision."

– Member of the IOM AVRR unit in Guinea

Another possible scenario is to involve the beneficiaries of previous successful AVRR projects (individual, collective or community) in the projects of new returnees to provide them with the expertise and experience they may lack in a given sector. For one of the interviewed IOM staff members in Guinea: "From Morocco, we could encourage potential returnees to get together, especially for those who come from the same city, and then get them supervised by projects and groups already in place, and assign the follow-up of the projects to these groups."

⁹⁶ In the case of projects implemented by other actors for which returning migrants are eligible (see, for example, the text box on existing opportunities for returnees in Cameroon, section 4.2.3), IOM may simply provide orientation to returnees about these opportunities as well as support the preparation of applications, after which returnees would consequently be treated like all the other applicants. However, in order to ensure the systematic inclusion of returnees among beneficiaries, it would also be possible to propose a supplement to the project budget in order to support additional beneficiaries. This would be particularly relevant in order to allow the integration of returnees into projects for which they would not otherwise have met the eligibility criteria.

Initiatives involving returnees in community-based projects in other IOM departments

It would also be possible to develop synergies between IOM departments and integrate the AVRR migrant recipients within successfully implemented projects in the region of return by other IOM departments when they either generate income for their beneficiaries or can facilitate reintegration. Such initiatives would probably represent the most cost-effective scenario for the AVRR units (in the sense that it would be less necessary to participate in project funding than to integrate migrants into the projects of other actors). Another advantage is that it would be easier for the AVRR units to establish partnerships with other IOM departments and to keep abreast of the activities carried out. On the other hand, the requirements of donors will represent a possible limitation to this scenario.

In Tajikistan and Kosovo/UNSC 1244, for example, the AVRR returnees are successfully involved in community stabilization projects carried out by the IOM Department of Operations and Emergencies. In Guinea, IOM has been implementing numerous community health projects since the outbreak of the epidemic Ebola virus disease, such as the Community Event-Based Surveillance System (CEBS), into which it might be possible to integrate returnees if these programmes are relevant to promote their economic or social reintegration.

Initiatives involving returnees in projects implemented by actors other than IOM

The third type of alternative scenario is the establishment of partnerships with other actors who successfully implement development projects or IGAs in returning migrant communities and the participation of the AVRR returnees in these projects. This approach requires the AVRR unit to maintain relationships with the development actors present in the target regions and to identify successful projects before negotiating the integration of an assisted reintegration component for migrants. This approach will be more effective in the case of large projects with substantial budget over several years in terms of sustainability, possible integration of a larger number of returnees and minimization of the number of partnerships to be established.

Example: Synergies between the EU and IOM projects in Georgia

The EU, in collaboration with IOM and several other partners, implemented the Targeted Initiative for Georgia between 2010 and 2014. This EUR 3.02 million programme (funded by the EU) has, among other things, created the Mobility Centre with the aim of supporting the social and economic reintegration of Georgian returnees.

IOM, which set up in 2010 a guidance and employment programme for local communities in the country (through the Job Creation Partnerships Programme (JCP), which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development in the amount of USD 3 million), was able to create bridges between the two projects by referring the returnees at the Mobility Centre to the JCP guidance and employment centres for local communities.

The JCP centres provided any job-seeker residents with services related to: counselling, help with resume writing, contacting potential employers, special training on job search and career guidance, career planning, referral to vocational training institutions, circulation of internship offers, support in the form of start-up funds and technical assistance in the creation of microenterprises.

Between 2011 and 2013, two IOM JCP centres therefore supported 423 migrants (through counselling, guidance and vocational training). Among the 423 migrants supported, 284 had returned through the AVRR programmes from 15 different European countries. In 2013, 100 of the 423 migrants who had received assistance at the JCP centres found permanent or temporary jobs.

Initiatives involving returnees in public authorities' development plans

Finally, it is possible to create a link with government development programmes (national or regional) existing in the country of origin. They can strengthen reintegration projects by providing more options for returning migrants or by addressing some of the AVRR projects' gaps. This is a scenario with a potentially broad impact which requires little or no resources from IOM. In Egypt, for example, IOM has established a project to support IGAs and a vocational training project with the Ministry of Labour, which benefits the AVRR returnees, other migrants and members of the local community. The project is not funded by the funds of the AVRR units. This approach will be more problematic in countries where it is more appropriate for IOM not to be perceived as being associated with the current regime in place (e.g. authoritarian regimes).

Example: Government loans to returnees in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, IOM has oriented Ethiopian migrants returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) towards a government business loan scheme under the Economic Reintegration of Vulnerable Ethiopian Returnees from KSA project. The project, funded by the United States Association for International Migration (USAIM) and with a budget of USD 45,000, was aimed at supporting the many migrants deported from Saudi Arabia between the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014. This project, implemented between January and June 2015, was a pilot project which has not yet progressed to further phases. For this pilot project, four cities in South Wollo in the Amhara region of Ethiopia had been chosen at the suggestion of the authorities as well as because of the presence of many returnees.

A study conducted by IOM highlighted the fact that the aid granted to returnees caused tension with the residents, who also needed jobs. Therefore, IOM wished to benefit not only the AVRR returnees but also the non-migrants from this project. Out of a total of 60 beneficiaries, 50 were returnees (83%) and 10 were members of the community (17%), who were potential candidates for migration. Eighty-six per cent (86%) of the beneficiaries were female.

A government loan equivalent to USD 480 was granted to each beneficiary for the launch of his/her microenterprise, representing approximately 80 per cent of the budget of the business plan. The loan was not offered to beneficiaries directly but was paid to a government-associated microcredit institution. This microcredit institution delivered the funds to the beneficiaries after six months of collecting savings, having surpassed a specified threshold (which can be considered as the 20% savings requirement). The institution also ensured monitoring of the projects.

This partnership with the government has brought a response to the challenge related to the limited presence of NGOs in the target region. It has also proved to have a positive impact in terms of increasing beneficiaries' access to other government funding opportunities (i.e. loans) in the event of the success of the project. Basic training on entrepreneurship as well as technical training according to the needs had been provided to beneficiaries in partnership with technical and vocational education centres. By the end of the project, 75 per cent of the beneficiaries were working on a full-time basis in their microenterprises. However, it would be interesting to assess the success of these individual projects in the medium and long terms.

6.1.4. COMBINED ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION APPROACHES

Combining individual and community-based assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects

On the basis of research work, Altai recommends combining the individual and community-based AVRR approaches. Most of the IOM staff members who had been interviewed agreed on this principle. The type of projects and the most effective combination will largely depend on the context of each country.

“The AVRR community-based and individual projects must go hand in hand, that’s obvious.”

– IOM staff member in Nigeria

Sri Lanka can be considered as an example of a cumulative scenario. IOM offers individual assistance to all AVRR returnees in the country; in addition, community-based reintegration projects are implemented in high-return areas with these three objectives: to support the local community, to raise awareness of irregular migration and to provide assistance for the reintegration of returnees on site (who have not necessarily returned through the AVRR programme). Since all AVRR returnees have already received individual assistance, the AVRR unit has chosen not to require that returnees participate in the implemented community-based projects.



A returning migrant has put up a service station for fishing boats, achieved as part of an individual reintegration project with the support of the IOM AVRR unit in Kanjakkuliya, Sri Lanka.

Rather than cumulating individual assistance for all returnees and community-based projects, it would also be possible to opt for complementarity. Thus, returning migrants who can be brought together in community-based projects are grouped (and do not receive individual assistance), while specific cases (e.g. vulnerable migrants with special needs or migrants returning in remote areas) receive individual assistance. This is the approach that has been put in place by IOM Niger as part of the MRRM.

In the event of this scenario, it will be crucial to respect the wishes of the returnees and not to impose a group project on migrants who do not want it (and will therefore not be motivated). As one member of the AVRR team in Guinea recalls: “It is important that the reintegration project involves the community in one way or another; however, it is necessary to leave the choice to the migrant to decide whether to carry out an individual or a collective project. If he wishes to carry out a project individually, the community can still be involved in a variety of ways: as a supplier for the project, or as trainers/coaches/tutors for community members who have experience in the field.”

Combination or complementarity, the availability of large financial and human resources within the AVRR unit is required, in all cases, over the long term. It would not be realistic to ask the AVRR units in the countries of origin to manage the conventional individual return and reintegration projects and at the same time to develop and monitor new community-based projects without strengthening the teams.

Combining different types of community-based approaches

In the same way that it is possible (and recommended) to combine individual and community-based projects, it is also possible to combine different types of community-based projects to best meet the variety of needs (depending on the local contexts and the individual situations of the returnees).

Example: Community-based assisted voluntary return and reintegration project in Nigeria

In Nigeria, for example, IOM has been implementing, since February 2016, a community-based AVRR project (funded by the EU), targeting irregular migrants returning from Libya and Algeria who are vulnerable to trafficking.

The project includes two types of activities – one initially based on returnees and the other on the community (both types of activities include both returnees and community members, with a twofold objective of local development and reintegration support):

- Collective activities of returnees and non-migrant youth, brought together in groups of 5 to 10, to whom IOM provides in-kind assistance (e.g. project equipment);
- Community development activities, in which residents decide on a consensual basis what IOM could do to improve their living conditions (e.g. access to water), whereupon IOM contracts companies that have to employ young local residents to implement the project.

IOM is working with three local NGOs to lead the project, one in each targeted community (one community by state), but has not established partnerships with the government. Beneficiary communities have been selected by IOM on the basis of a preliminary study and the number of returnees in the area (based on the AVRR unit's database of returnees). The beneficiaries within each project were selected with the help of civil society partners.

6.2. BEST PRACTICES

This section identifies the best practices emerging from community-based AVRR projects carried out around the world. The best practices identified are grouped both chronologically – project design (section 6.2.1), selection of beneficiaries (section 6.2.2), implementation of projects (section 6.2.3), monitoring of projects (section 6.2.4) – and thematically – best organizational practices for IOM (section 6.2.5), and best practices in terms of information, awareness-raising and communication (section 6.2.6).

6.2.1. BEST PRACTICES RELATING TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

It is important that community-based projects are designed for and by the community – involving local residents and meeting their needs in an effort to address the root causes of irregular migration.

The involvement of the community at the project design stage has three goals:

- To encourage the participatory approach (participation of migrants, communities and the various available stakeholders, such as local authorities), which allows, among other things, for capacity-building;

- To benefit from the knowledge of the local residents (not only knowledge of the local context but also technical expertise in the traditional economic sectors, for example);
- To strengthen sharing of information with other actors and the establishment of links.

Choosing the type of community project

As discussed in section 6.1, many types of community-based projects might be conceivable and adapted to different situations. A project cannot be successfully replicated in all contexts. Therefore, it will be necessary to conduct an in-depth study on local needs and operating environment to ensure the viability of the community-based project type being considered in the selected area. It will also be necessary to ensure that the project is compatible with the regulatory framework of the country of origin.

In addition, the type of the project should be chosen according to the available budget and resources (some scenarios requiring more resources and more substantial funding than others). For example, rather than trying to implement local development projects with a too limited budget, it may be more effective to opt for an approach that integrates returnees into existing community projects.

Choosing the sector of activity

In the absence of available technical expertise (either internally or through partners), a solution may be to choose either activities of a lower technical nature or traditional activities in the region.

The type of activities and the selected sector must be favourable to community-based projects. Since resources are pooled for community-based projects, these projects are particularly useful for activities that require a significant initial investment (as in the case of fisheries) and large working capital (as in the case of seasonal agriculture). According to one of the IOM partners in Tunisia, activities focusing on fisheries, for example, offer more opportunities for sustainable income generation in community-based projects than in individual projects, a conclusion that was also observed by the research team in Sri Lanka. The amount of individual assistance would not indeed be sufficient to cover the purchase of vessels allowing to spend the night at sea (which, unlike traditional vessels, allow for high-seas fishing, out-of-season fishing and rescue operations at sea). In cases where an important working capital fund is required, it is recommended that a project schedule be established at the project design stage to ensure that the entire working capital fund is not used for other purposes or is exhausted.

Involvement of all stakeholders

As mentioned above, it is essential to take into consideration the perspectives and needs of local actors in the development of community-based projects, which implies that IOM needs to motivate stakeholders to participate in a collaborative assessment of local needs and in the design of the resulting projects.

It is recommended that the involvement of as many local community segments as possible in the consultations is ensured, and not only those who are directly involved in the project nor those who traditionally have authority and whose voices are more important. In addition to leaders, elders and activists, it is important to give voice to vulnerable or marginalized people (who may have specific needs), to women and to the youth.

Another best practice observed during the research was the creation of steering committees, which will lead the discussion about the design of the project as well as the selection process of beneficiaries (see section 6.2.2). In Niger, for example, IOM has established steering committees for the purposes of the “Early Recovery for Returnees from Libya and Stabilization of Communities of Origin” programme (funded by the EU between 2011 and 2013), comprising 12 stakeholders’ representatives, namely, migrants, local residents, religious leaders, civil society activists, and town council staff and government technical services. According to an IOM member in the surveyed country, the transparency of the committees was highly appreciated locally, as was the strong involvement of non-migrant residents in proposals for activities.

The inclusion of the local community's perspective in project design will enhance the sustainability of the project. The more members of the community are involved in and that acquire the project for themselves, the lower the risk of the project being abandoned. The project and its sequencing will also be more adapted to the local context if the opinion of the residents could be collected. In addition, reintegration programmes should ideally be based on the political priorities of the country of origin at the regional, departmental and communal levels (programmes, strategic plans, planning documents).

Projects developed through constructive community dialogue will, on the other hand, be able to assist the development of local governance, the empowerment of local structures and the strengthening of social cohesion at the community level.

The last advantage of community involvement in the design of programmes is awareness-raising. According to an interviewed member of the IOM Regional Office for West Africa: "Fully involving the local community and the authorities throughout the project, right from its design stage, raises their awareness on the issue of irregular migration".

Training of beneficiaries right from the design stage of the project

The research has pointed out the positive impact of technical training specific to the beneficiaries if it is carried out at the design stage to help them better define and prepare the project.

This training can be carried out by a private-sector partner, a civil-society or government partner, or by an IOM staff member directly. The most important is the fact that the trainer has specific technical expertise relevant to the chosen sector for each project – better than general training common to all returnees, for example. The training can take the form of courses, a learning period or coaching. It is essential that it is carried out in the local language, especially for the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco, where several languages are spoken. It would also be appropriate, when possible, that training is carried out in the areas of return by local experts (benefiting from local economic expertise).

Regardless of the form of training, it should ideally focus on developing the culture of entrepreneurship and transmit to migrants (who often expect immediate revenue inflows) a long-term vision and concepts of reinvestment, business development and strategic planning over the long term. To this end, it will probably be necessary to integrate sufficient financial and economic management bases to enable the drafting of a business plan.

A good practice would be to integrate a personalized coaching time when finalizing the drafting of the business plan (individual for community projects initially based on a returnee or collective for projects that are initially based on a group).

Verification of the economic viability of the project

It is essential to study the economic and financial profitability of the project in relation to the investment cost to ensure that they will generate sufficient revenues for all members. A good practice identified during the research is to involve industry experts in this assessment rather than conducting it internally (for example, those experts may be the same trainers mentioned in the previous section). It will also be necessary to check the profitability of the project within the framework of the local context, taking into consideration, for example, the promising activity sectors in the region and the available opportunities.

It is also important to develop a business plan to: (a) work out the time required for the activities to be productive; and (b) ensure the sustainability of the project. In Tunisia,⁹⁷ for example, migrants' business plans were submitted for analysis, review and validation by a technical committee during regular meetings in the main area of return (Sfax).

⁹⁷ This scheme was done as part of the Swiss AVRR project of migrants' microprojects directly involving non-migrants.

A good practice that could be replicated would be to prepare business plan models for the most common types of activities in the country, which migrants can build upon.

6.2.2. BEST PRACTICES RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

The transparency of the selection process is crucial. The research highlighted two main good practices relating to the establishment of eligibility criteria for beneficiaries:

- Although it may be difficult to assess, it is necessary to include motivation among the eligibility criteria of beneficiaries, as personal motivation has a decisive impact on the project's success. Training ahead of the project can be a good tool to determine the interest and motivation of the candidates for the project.
- The entrepreneurial spirit is also a criterion that will be useful to take into consideration when selecting beneficiaries.

In terms of the selection of beneficiaries among the community members (in the case of community projects initially based on one or more migrants), the following best practices emerge:

- Even in contexts where women represent only a small percentage of returnees, it is possible and useful to include them in the project as beneficiaries of the community. The conducted interviews have highlighted the value of women in the management of activities, to perpetuate the projects and to raise awareness among those around them of the risks of irregular migration. The IOM staff members interviewed in the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco also pointed out that women are usually motivated to participate in community-based projects.
- The key interviewed informants identified the selection of community recipients based on clearly defined vulnerability criteria as a best practice, rather than entirely leaving the choice to the recipients. It would be desirable to collaborate with local authorities to identify vulnerable individuals within the community (e.g. through lists of job seekers).
- Other criteria to consider at the time of the selection include the skills that the beneficiaries will be able to place at the service of the project as well as the proximity and the affinities with the returnees.
- Without making their participation a criterion, it would be appropriate to integrate, if possible, returnees who have not been able to benefit from AVRRE programmes, many of whom are in the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco (voluntary returns using their own means or forced returns).

6.2.3. BEST PRACTICES RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Several best practices relating to the implementation and management phases of the projects have been drawn from the projects studied:

- Emphasize the flexibility of the assistance depending on the situation of the beneficiaries (need of support to carry out vocational training or pursue general-purpose learning, for example, on medical assistance or for assisting in the construction of a dwelling) and seek to simplify as much as possible the process for obtaining the assistance.
- Develop partnerships with public authorities, the private sector and civil society. These three types of actors will be able to ensure monitoring of projects, ensure large market opportunities for the products of IGAs or provide technical support. On the other hand, it will be essential to clarify the responsibilities of each party through a partnership agreement.
- Microfinance and revolving loan funds are an interesting tool for financing community-based projects. However, as observed in Guinea and Sri Lanka, they are not appropriate for individuals living below the poverty line, as they will tend to use the granted amount to meet survival needs and for the purpose of debt repayment rather than investment. In this case, it is more appropriate to shift towards grants to support returnees and members of the community.

- Supporting the development of returning migrants' networks is an inexpensive and effective means of encouraging the social reintegration of returnees, facilitating economic reintegration (e.g. sharing of experiences or having cooperative spirit) and preventing migrants' potential concerns regarding the allocation of funds made available for reintegration. To encourage networks and associations formed by returnees, it is possible to involve them in the implementation of reintegration projects and thereby expose them to the functioning of different institutions and organizations existing in the region. However, it is worth noting the risk that returnees' networks and associations are not perceived as legitimate by all the beneficiaries if they are directly created or encouraged by IOM;
- Including in the implementation of projects the diaspora group that is well established and has the technical and financial means could allow to diversify funding sources, build the trust of migrants and improve migrants' access to projects, and provide information on returnees' profiles and the context of return.

6.2.4. BEST PRACTICES RELATING TO THE MONITORING OF THE PROJECT

Some best practices that can be applied to monitoring also emerge from the projects studied:

- Establish a logical framework and baseline indicators for monitoring (e.g. monthly income of beneficiaries) will be useful, especially if monitoring is carried out by local NGOs.
- Include in the budget the resources required for thorough and sustainable monitoring.
- Use the expertise of former beneficiaries, who have succeeded in the same region and in a similar sector, to coach new project members. This system, promoted by many interviewees in the countries of origin, would further support former beneficiaries whose project is successful, and would offer the new beneficiaries personalized, relevant and sustainable tutoring (rather than a few days of training). It will be possible to replicate this best practice if IOM has remained in touch with the former beneficiaries and if a sufficient number of projects have taken place in the same region and the same sector.

6.2.5. BEST ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES FOR IOM

Some general best practices for IOM have been identified during the research:

- Clearly define which projects are considered to be community-based AVRR projects and establish criteria for success.
- Formally establish guidelines for the implementation of community-based projects, processes and a benchmarking methodology.
- Train the AVRR teams in context analysis, management and monitoring of community-based projects, strategic development of activities, marketing and identification of market opportunities.
- Share experiences among IOM mission offices, each office having been able to acquire specific expertise, as well as among the different departments.
- Develop synergies between the projects of various IOM departments (only possible on long-term projects extended over several years) and direct the AVRR returnees towards projects implemented by other departments.

6.2.6. BEST PRACTICES IN TERMS OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, AWARENESS-RAISING AND COMMUNICATION

The research has also identified the following best practices related to the role of IOM as an adviser and source of information for migrants:

- Properly informing beneficiaries about the exact nature of the assistance that the AVRR unit is able to provide as well as its duration helps to avoid misunderstanding. Brochures written in local languages can be shared with all returnees, supplemented with a systematic reminder at each interview.
- Raising awareness and informing migrants in advance about the importance of remaining reachable makes it possible to address the challenge of migrants' traceability.
- Devoting resources to the reorientation and counselling of returnees is relatively inexpensive and has a strong positive impact on returnees. IOM can thus facilitate the access of returnees to various forms of assistance available to them, such as local social protection and unemployment schemes, public subsidies, bank loans and assistance through CSO/NGO projects. In Sri Lanka, IOM has set up a hotline that has been very successful. This tool requires that one full-time person and another part-time person (to back up when necessary), who speak all local dialects, are trained in psychosocial support and shall be permanently aware of the existing opportunities and projects. To ensure that this type of tool is useful, wide promotion of the hotline is necessary.
- The participation of the AVRR unit in key meetings of the stakeholders in the country (e.g. NGOs, international organizations, and local and provincial authorities) is particularly beneficial, insofar as it shows IOM's presence, enables the collection of information, informs of the progress of the projects, and allows for a full integration with the development team and the national development plans.
- Raising awareness and informing returnees' families and communities about regular migration through campaigns (e.g. media campaigns or on-site campaigns in communities) is essential. The integration of testimonies or, as is the case in Sri Lanka, the participation of artistic personalities increases the impact. This kind of campaigns also helps to include explanations of what is voluntary return for partners and the general public.



Members of the community-based project “Food Processing, Women’s Association for Rural Development” receive equipment funded by the IOM AVRR unit in Kovilvayal, Sri Lanka.



Conclusion and recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 7.1 summarizes the main findings of the research, while section 7.2 draws conclusions for IOM in Morocco and in the main countries of origin of migrants in Morocco. Section 7.3 proposes general recommendations for IOM, specific recommendations for project implementation and recommendations for donors.

7.1. MAIN FINDINGS

The community-based AVRR initiatives are needed to complement the individual approach and address the limitations of this model. On the other hand, because of the constraints of their implementation and their own limitations, community-based projects cannot totally be a substitute for individual assistance.

As noted by IOM staff members interviewed during this research, the need to conceptualize community-based approaches is obvious. Altai proposes the following definition of community-based AVRR projects, emphasizing the twofold initial objective and the direct involvement of both migrants and community members: **the community-based AVRR projects bring together initiatives that directly support the reintegration process of the returnee(s) while directly involving the local community and responding to its needs.**

As defined, the community-based AVRR initiatives take on different aspects and can be grouped into four main categories: initiatives initially based on the needs of one or more returnees to reintegrate; initiatives initially based on the development and response to the needs of the local community; initiatives seeking to integrate one or more returnees into existing projects (be it IOM's or other donors' projects); and, finally, initiatives combining several types of approaches. Depending on the local context, some forms of projects are better adapted and likely to have more impact.

The analysis of reintegration projects has identified the criteria that make an environment conducive to the implementation of the community-based AVRR projects, such as: a sufficient number of migrants with an adequate profile returning to the same community; the interest of residents and the motivation of migrants; the existence of basic infrastructure in the region; stability, security and a minimum of economic opportunities in the region; and strong civil society activism.

Also, on the IOM side, these criteria will help in the implementation of community-based projects: systematic update of database of migrants; the ability to analyse data and bring migrants together; carrying out of a local context analysis; the availability and proximity of the IOM human resources to ensure the support for and monitoring of projects; and the development of partnerships with local stakeholders.

Although relatively few community-based AVRR projects have been implemented so far, a number of best practices are already emerging, and lessons can also be learned from community-based projects carried out by IOM in contexts other than that of the AVRR.

7.2. CONCLUSION FOR MOROCCO AND THE MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF MIGRANTS IN THE COUNTRY

As mentioned in the previous section, the research work has revealed the benefits of the community's involvement in AVRR projects. At the end of this study, it seems possible, and under certain circumstances, desirable to replicate community-based AVRR projects in the context of the main countries of return from Morocco.

In these countries, the flows of returns within the same community are not large enough to generalize migrants' collective projects. On the other hand, the context seems favourable to the combination of individual assistance for all returnees and community-based projects (which may involve only one or two migrants) in areas of high departure.

However, the generalization of community-based projects must be carried out only under certain conditions while integrating the following precautions:

- Projects must be carried out in addition to individual assistance, and not as a substitute, in communities experiencing high rates of departure and/or return.
- It seems more appropriate in the countries of return from Morocco to prioritize the types of projects initially based on the needs of the local community rather than those initially based on returnees. This is in order to best meet the needs of residents, maximize the effect of preventing irregular migration and reducing the risk of tension with migrants, and be able to claim funding sources related to local development.
- The local economic situation and the profile of returnees from Morocco (i.e. poorly qualified) will not allow to replicate projects that connect migrants directly with employers (following the model of MAGNET project in Iraq or the model of the Kosovo/UNSC 1244 project of employment of returnees in private companies contracted for development projects). The creation of IGAs should therefore be encouraged.
- When implementing community-based AVRR projects that are initially based on the needs of the community, it is essential to seek to directly involve returning migrants and/or their families in the activities so that these projects provide direct support to reintegration and help reestablish the relationships between migrants and the local community.

These initiatives should also ideally benefit migrants who have not voluntarily returned or who have voluntarily returned using their own means and therefore do not benefit from individual AVRR assistance – many of whom are in the main regions of return within the countries of origin.

It should be noted, however, that the addition of this criterion makes the implementation of projects more difficult than if it were enough to only select a recipient community according to the number of departures and its vulnerability without establishing an obligation to involve returnees (as is the case in Sri Lanka).

- Ensure that an assessment of the local context (promising sectors, presence of basic infrastructure, local stakeholders), the profiles of returnees and other beneficiaries (assessment of their skills and relations between members), and the needs/risks of the project according to the technical sector has been carried out or is included in the budget and schedule of activities.
- Ensure that the planned projects are economically viable and that they will generate sufficient income quickly for all full-time members involved.
- Involve the local community in project definition (establish a consultation process) and involve local actors in the selection, management and monitoring of the project (after having clearly established the responsibilities of each actor and trained local partners where appropriate).
- Give special attention to the selection of migrants and members of the community who are genuinely motivated and interested in participating in community-based projects; establish criteria and a selection process in order to assess and take account of this dimension.
- Ensure that the budgets of the community-based projects are sufficient to cover the costs of monitoring over the long term (one year minimum, ideally two years) including in terms of human resources (establishment/strengthening of IOM offices in the regions or development of partnerships). The challenges highlighted by key informants interviewed in the main countries of return from Morocco indicate that project monitoring will be complicated in the regions concerned and could not be conducted remotely.
- Identify focal points within IOM offices (i.e. country office and decentralized offices in the region) and local stakeholders (e.g. authorities, private partners and CSOs).
- Provide the contact information of all these focal points to the returnees in order to build their trust, improve their traceability, and facilitate the flow of information and direct communication with local partners.

- Establish a reference methodology and provide guidance in terms of community-based project sequencing, monitoring and evaluation (framework for evaluation and specific criteria), which should be used by local partners if they are in charge of project management and monitoring.

Other ways of reintegration support related to community-based approaches could also be explored for migrants returning from Morocco:

- Encourage collective projects of returnees when they wish to do so while informing migrants in Morocco that this is a possible option, by letting them know about the potential benefits of pooling resources and by facilitating the administrative procedure;
- Seek to integrate returnees into projects implemented by other IOM departments and other development actors present on site (see section 6.1.3, “Initiatives Integrating the Returnee(s) into an Existing Project”), provided that the objectives are the same;
- Encourage migrants to involve, at their level, members of the local community in their individual AVRR projects, for example by providing additional grants in the event of sustainable employment creation for a community member (which would also encourage the beneficiaries of individual AVRR projects to reinvest and expand their businesses);
- Develop other types of community-based activities in the capital or the most common place of arrival if it is not the capital: to improve the handling of the immediate needs of returnees, inform them, direct them towards the other forms of assistance they could benefit from according to their needs and avoid losing their traceability upon their return;
- These activities may take the form of transit centres or small-scale initiatives, such as the development of returnee support networks (which will promote the dissemination of information, assist in monitoring migrants and minimize the stigma that sometimes surrounds returning migrants).

7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.3.1. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM

Increase communication with migrants in countries of destination, transit and return. Communicate in an even more systematic manner on the functioning of IOM, the reasons for the differences between the amounts of grants and the eligibility criteria, the administrative requirements and the time required to implement the procedures. This aspect would require extra time for the interactions between IOM teams and returnees, and that these teams be systematically trained in this information activity.

Enhance the collection of information and maximize the usefulness of databases on migrants. Harmonize the procedure on collecting information about beneficiaries and the type of data collected. Conduct a systematic analysis, both by country and by region.

Develop coordination and collaboration mechanisms within IOM, between mission offices and between departments. Strengthen communication between the IOM offices in destination and origin countries before and during the implementation of the projects. Develop synergies with other IOM departments, particularly those that implement community-based projects. Enhancing coordination between the projects would, among other things, make it possible to integrate returnees into community-based development or stabilization projects.

Strengthen knowledge-sharing and experience-feedback within IOM. It would indeed be useful for the mission offices to have access to a directory of all implemented projects of similar type, their conditions of implementation and the lessons learned from those experiences. Propose a more detailed classification of the projects in the global database, for instance, by adding new subcategories (e.g. distinction between individual and community-based reintegration projects) and exploring the possibility of categorizing the programme components separately. Begin discussions on regular information-sharing modalities and

best practices, for example, by conducting more regular internal and external evaluations, including these elements in the projects database, analysing them and, possibly, by organizing an annual AVRR summit, which would bring together representatives of the mission offices to gather around specific themes.

7.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM RELATING TO THE ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROJECT (IRRESPECTIVE OF THE TYPE)

Encourage greater involvement of offices in the countries of origin in the design of programmes, especially for the procedures to be followed in the implementation of reintegration assistance and recommendations on the types of projects adapted to the local context. The success of reintegration projects, and in particular of community-based projects, actually depends largely on the involvement of the mission offices in the countries of origin of migrants.

Encourage creativity and diversity in reintegration projects. For individual projects, regularly and systematically inform returnees about the range of possibilities, let them know about the promising sectors and promote innovative projects while ensuring that migrants retain control over the choice of their projects, which is necessary to ensure their interest and motivation. Similarly, in the context of community-based projects, it is essential to let the community establish its needs, but it is advisable to suggest during a collaborative process activities that deviate from the traditional production methods, which, often, are no longer able to generate sustainable income.

Focus on project monitoring and early-stage support for the beneficiaries' project: development of the activity, definition of a marketing strategy and, where appropriate, marketing of the products. Regular and close monitoring is an essential condition for ensuring the longevity of projects and the sustainability of reintegration. To this end, it is essential to have IOM offices in the vicinity of the projects, have adequate human resources and local partners, and allot sufficient budget for regular monitoring over the long term.

Strengthen the presence of the IOM AVRR units' members in high-return areas by developing regional offices where they do not already exist or by seconding representatives from the AVRR units in areas of return for key moments of the activities. It is very difficult to implement reintegration or development projects without the close presence of IOM to maintain regular contact with beneficiaries, ensure project monitoring and, where appropriate, coordinate with local partners.⁹⁸

Develop strong partnerships with local CSOs, as well as with the public and private sectors. Such partnerships could, inter alia, provide opportunities for products resulting from IGAs, offer recipients the support of technical experts and sector-specific training, and strengthen monitoring. With regard to community projects, it may also be useful to include the diaspora group that is well established and has the means – through networks and associations already established in destination countries, for example – as this could diversify sources of funding, build the trust of migrants and improve migrants' access to projects, and provide information on returnees' profiles and the context of return.

Give particular attention to the flexibility of aid provided and, in the case of individual microprojects, the involvement of the families of returnees. Work to reduce procedural constraints to best meet the specific needs of migrants (see recommendations for donor advocacy and for the harmonization between various programmes). In return for the simplification of procedure for accessing assistance, it may be efficient to invest more in systematic project evaluations using logical frameworks and pre-defined indicators.

Conduct systematic external evaluations of reintegration projects (especially beyond a certain budget) and consider an evaluation framework and global indicators. A comparative evaluation of returns on investment, sustainability and impact (on beneficiaries as well as on the community) of the different types of AVRR programmes would be important to assess their effectiveness and identify best practices on the basis of systematic data.

⁹⁸ It should be noted that IOM has, for several years, been seeking to establish regional offices, but the budget is often lacking to set up and maintain them from one project to another.

Advocate the creation of a global AVRR fund. A single funding mechanism which would be shared by the mission offices would help to address: (a) the challenges related to assistance differences in the countries of return (in terms of grants, selection criteria, procedures); (b) the difficulties in keeping the teams from one project to another; and (c) the monitoring constraints dictated by donors. Allocation of funds would be conducted according to the needs of country offices – decided by a steering committee on the basis of proposals from IOM mission offices.

This committee would be in charge of the global strategy for the AVRR projects and would ensure an overall coherence of reintegration activities through harmonization of grants for individual reintegration within the same country, definition of the same basic eligibility criteria (especially vulnerability), harmonization of monitoring mechanisms, and improvement of transparency of reintegration activities. This fund would also help to avoid the interruption of the offer of assistance between projects and to raise additional funds quickly at an earlier stage in the event of a crisis in a country.

To ensure accountability of funding, internal and external mechanisms could be established. An internal monitoring team would be dedicated to data collection and systematic analysis of the data obtained. Regular external evaluations would also make it possible to assess the results of the projects and the effectiveness of the steering committee's strategy.

7.3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RESEARCH AND REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

Conduct a theoretical work for the determination of the community-based AVRR approaches. The use of a community-based approach for the reintegration of migrants is recent and needs to be more specifically regulated. Altai recommends retaining a definition focusing on the twofold objective of the community-based initiatives – supporting reintegration and responding to the needs of the local community – as well as the direct involvement of both migrants and residents. The impact on the local community and the way of assisting returnees to reintegrate may subsequently take different forms.

Develop methodological procedures and guidelines for these projects. In terms of procedures, Altai would suggest clarifying the distribution of roles within the teams (e.g. operational role, psychosocial assistance, partnership development) and with local partners. It would also be useful to develop a community-based project implementation manual, which would harmonize monitoring mechanisms. In each office, a focal point could be designated, who would be responsible for conducting the initial studies and the systematic analysis of the needs. This person would also be responsible for maintaining a list of ongoing programmes in the return regions, led by IOM and other development stakeholders.

Involve the community in project design, prior analysis of the needs and the selection of beneficiaries. Be attentive to the inclusion of all segments of the community, including women and the most vulnerable members, as well as to the transparency of processes. In this way, members of the community will be able to ensure ownership of the projects, which will meet the twofold objective of supporting the reintegration of returnees and make a direct and positive impact on the local community.

Avoid trying to implement community-based projects when the available budget is not sufficient to ensure the identified basic requirements for success, as an adequate number of human resources near the projects. In the absence of staff able to carry out a preliminary analysis of the context, to be kept adequately informed to advise migrants, to coordinate the management of projects and to ensure their follow-up over the long term, it will be difficult to support sustainable projects. In the case of a very limited AVRR budget, Altai suggests focusing efforts on individual assistance (by seeking to address the identified challenges of the model) while taking a coordinating and reorienting role. By developing strong partnerships with other actors who successfully implement community-based projects in mass-return areas, IOM could encourage the integration of returnees into these projects.

7.3.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

Work towards the harmonization of AVRR programmes in terms of the amount of assistance provided to migrants, eligibility criteria and implementation procedure. Calculate the amounts of individual AVRR grants on the basis of the socioeconomic context of the place of return (and the vulnerability of the migrant) rather than by project and host country. Simplifying and standardizing the administrative procedure for reintegration would allow the IOM staff members to spend less time on administrative management and more time on supporting and monitoring of migrants. The creation of the above proposed global AVRR fund (see general recommendations for IOM) could be a solution.

Create a distress fund to meet the most urgent needs of returnees who are in extremely precarious situations upon arrival in their countries of origin. This fund would make it possible to grant subsidies to the most vulnerable cases, such as returnees who need emergency medical treatment. This assistance would allow them to cover their immediate costs pending receipt of reintegration assistance.

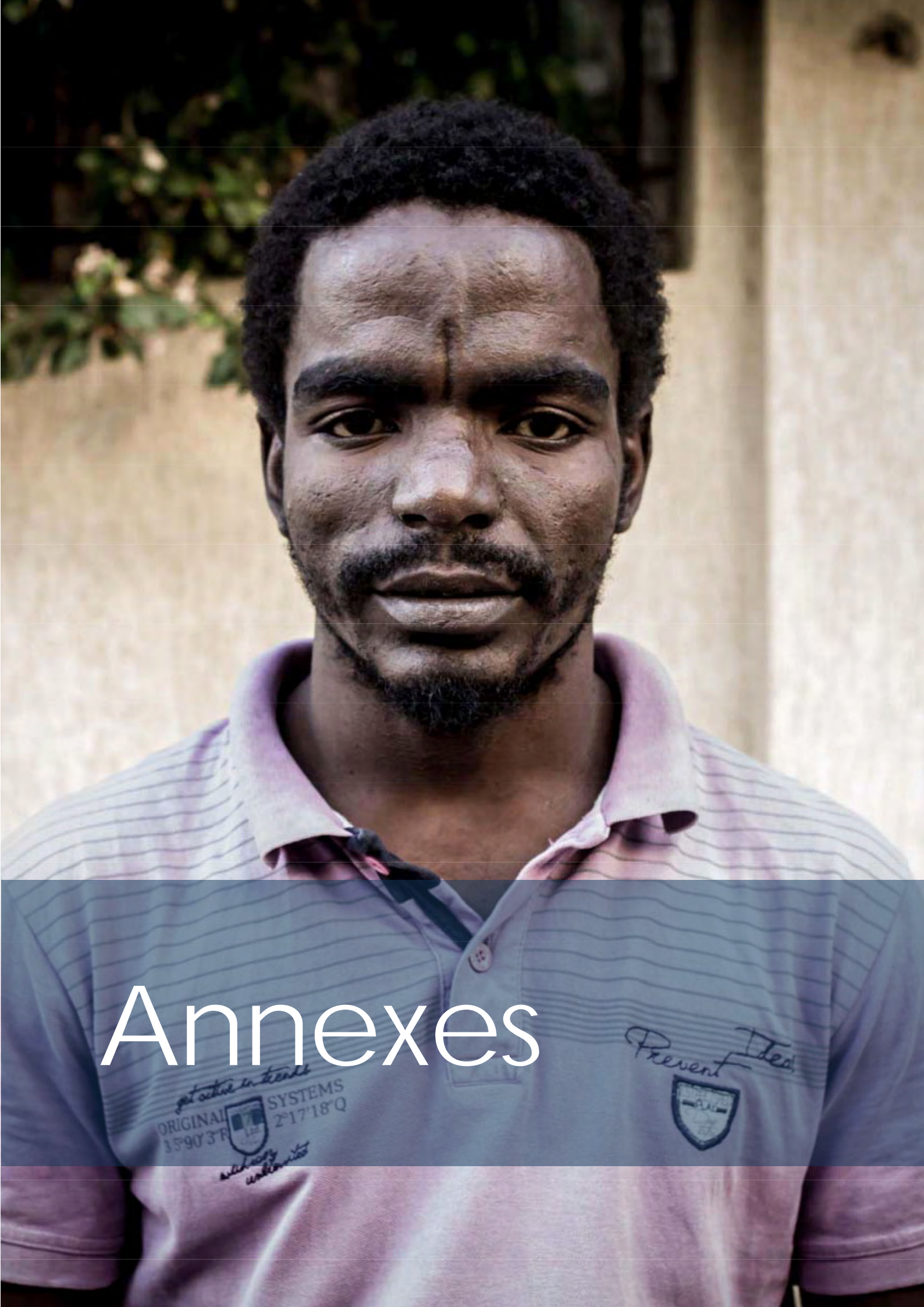
Take into account in the AVRR programme budgets the costs in terms of human resources and time required for the improvement, update and analysis of databases on returnees. The MiMOSA interface, used by all IOM mission offices, is scalable and could be developed and systematized (to include more information, harmonize data categories and data entry procedures in all countries). Integrating staff with special analytical skills would make it possible to have systematically exploited data and hence more elements to evaluate the impact of programmes and develop new initiatives.

Support the development of IOM regional branch offices and their continuity from one project to the other. Developing a close presence of the AVRR unit in high-return areas would not only improve the monitoring and sustainability of projects but also encourage returnees living in remote areas from the capital to get involved in the reintegration process.

Provide the necessary budget for sustained monitoring of reintegration projects to ensure their effectiveness. A regular community-based and long-term monitoring (up to one to two years after launch) seems essential to the success of the projects. Yet, monitoring is currently being completed in many cases, with funding being stopped upon the conclusion of the projects.

Include in the budgets of the AVRR programmes sufficient resources for more personalized support for each migrant in the host country and after the arrival in the country of origin. In host countries, AVRR counsellors should be able to provide relevant, up-to-date and reliable information, on a case-by-case basis, on the countries of origin prior to departure. To that end, they would have to be in regular contact with IOM mission offices and local partners in the countries of origin, and they would have to carry out field visits. In the countries of origin, the aim is to guide migrants during the reintegration process (e.g. help them develop viable business plans) and advise them on access to legal, health-care and education services, as well as refer them to other forms of assistance and/or projects they might benefit from. This support requires that a member of the AVRR unit be able to continuously keep abreast about existing opportunities and coordinate with other local actors. Currently, these high-impact information and support activities (see best practices and the experience of Sri Lanka) are however, in most cases, not planned or budgeted for in the AVRR programmes, and IOM offices do not have dedicated resources to carry them out.

Fund preliminary studies in order to determine the viability of reintegration projects (of any type), to ensure that they are rooted in the local economy and to identify their expected impact on the local community. Systematically determining their viability as early as the design phase would minimize the risk of project failure. This would imply that: (a) a member of the AVRR unit has some information about very small firms and their development prospects, entrepreneurship and business management; and (b) an evaluation on the market, the infrastructure and the situation in the areas of return has been carried out.



Annexes

8. ANNEXES

8.1. SOURCES

The following list provides the main documents collected and reviewed during the documentary research.

Table 4: Main documents reviewed

| Title | Author | Date | Type | Location of Publication |
|---|--|------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Reintegration: Effective Approaches | IOM | 2015 | Study | Switzerland |
| AVRR 2015 Key Highlights | IOM | 2016 | Report | Switzerland |
| AVRR at a Glance 2014 | IOM | 2014 | Report | Switzerland |
| AVRR at a Glance 2015 | IOM | 2015 | Report | Switzerland |
| Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants | Maastricht Graduate School of Governance for IOM | 2015 | Report | The Netherlands and Switzerland |
| Reintegration in the Process of Return to Transitional Contexts | Susanne Klink for IOM | 2015 | Study | Switzerland |
| Migration Initiatives 2016 | IOM | 2015 | Report | Switzerland |
| Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Handbook for the North African Region | IOM | 2013 | Guide | Egypt and Libya |
| Evaluation of RAVEL (Regional AVRR Programme for Stranded Migrants in Egypt and Libya) | Graduate Institute Geneva for IOM | 2014 | Evaluation | Egypt and Libya |
| Evaluation of IOM RAVL | Altai for IOM | 2015 | Evaluation | Libya and countries of return |
| Evaluation of the Humanitarian Repatriation for Stranded Migrants (HSRM) in Libya | Altai for IOM | 2016 | Evaluation | Libya and countries of return |
| Reintegration Assistance to Returnee Communities in Counties of High Return: Aweil East and TWIC | Altai for IOM and SIDA | 2013 | Evaluation | South Sudan |
| Monitoring of MAGNET II – Final Report | Altai for IOM | 2016 | Presentation | Iraq |
| MAGNET Steering Committee Meeting (Presentation) | Altai for IOM | 2013 | Presentation | Iraq |

| Title | Author | Date | Type | Location of Publication |
|--|-------------------------------------|------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Reintegration of Returnees in Iraq: Local Economy Absorption Capacity, Scalability of IOM Programmes and Potential Local Partners: A Study in 7 Governorates | Altai for IOM | 2013 | Study | Iraq |
| IOM Community Revitalization Programme, Phase I | IOM | – | Evaluation | Iraq |
| Understanding the Return and Reintegration Process of Afghan Returnees from the UK | Altai for IOM | 2009 | Study | Afghanistan |
| Final Evaluation Report: AVRR Programme IOM Morocco 2013–2014 | Antonia Maria Carrión López for IOM | 2014 | Evaluation | Morocco and countries of return |
| Guiding Principles for the Development of Migration Policies on Integration, Return and Reintegration | IOM | 2014 | Guide | Central America |
| Manual de Reintegración: Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes Migrantes Retornados | IOM | 2010 | Guide | Central America |
| Evaluation Report: Enhanced Capacity-building in Migration Management to Support Effective Return and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees to Sri Lanka | Tom Hockley for IOM | 2009 | Evaluation | Sri Lanka |
| Evaluation of IOM Sri Lanka's "Community-based Reintegration and Economic Recovery Support to Vulnerable Communities in the Newly Resettled Villages in the Northern and Eastern Districts in Sri Lanka" Programme | IOM | 2013 | Evaluation | Sri Lanka |
| External Evaluation of IOM Sri Lanka's "Community-based Reintegration and Economic Recovery Support to Vulnerable Communities in the Newly Resettled Villages in the Northern and Eastern Districts in Sri Lanka" Programme | EML Consultants for IOM | 2013 | Evaluation | Sri Lanka |
| Displaced Persons Programme Final Report – Project: "Community Stabilization through Livelihood Support and Information Campaign in Districts with High Concentration of Irregular Maritime Departures to Australia" (COSTAL – Sri Lanka) | IOM for the Government of Australia | 2015 | Report | Sri Lanka |

| Title | Author | Date | Type | Location of Publication |
|--|--|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Report on Institutional Capacity Development Training for Community-based Organizations Assisted by IOM Sri Lanka's "AVRR through CBOs" project | P. B. Tennakoon | 2014 | Report | Sri Lanka |
| Final Report: "Developing Social Capital to Reduce Irregular Migration" Project | United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) | 2014 | Report | Sri Lanka |
| Reintegration and Development – Regional Information System on the Reintegration of Migrants in Their CoOs – Chapter 3: Return Migrants in Mali | Jean-Pierre Cassarino | 2014 | Study | Mali |
| Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria | Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) | 2013 | Report | Nigeria |
| Post-arrival Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopians Returning from the [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia] | IOM | 2014 | Presentation | Ethiopia |
| Return Migrants to the MAGHREB Countries (MIREM) Project – Analytical Report | Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies | 2008 | Report | Maghreb |
| Return Migrants to the Maghreb Countries: Reintegration and Development Challenges | Jean-Pierre Cassarino | 2008 | Report | Maghreb |
| The Role of the Family for Return Migration, Reintegration and Reemigration in Armenia | Annett Fleischer | 2012 | Study | Armenia |
| Assessment of the Socioeconomic Situation and Needs of Ethiopian Returnees from [the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia] | IOM Ethiopia | 2014 | Presentation | Ethiopia |
| Evaluation of AVRR in Afghanistan 2008–2013 | Samuel Hall for IOM | – | Evaluation | Afghanistan |
| Community Stabilization Fact Sheet | IOM Tajikistan | 2016 | Fact Sheet | Tajikistan |
| Chief of Mission Kosovo/UNSC 1244 Presentation | – | – | Presentation | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Referral Guide for Reintegration of Returnees in Armenia | IOM | 2013 | Guide | Armenia |
| Programme and Strategies in Austria Fostering Assisted Return to and Reintegration in Third Countries | European Migration Network | 2008 | Report | Austria |

| Title | Author | Date | Type | Location of Publication |
|--|---|------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| GIMMA Information Sheet | IOM Ghana | 2016 | Fact sheet | Ghana |
| EU – Beautiful Kosovo Catalogue 2011–2013 | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | 2013 | Catalogue | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Showcase Projects 2015: Fostering Labour Mobility and Human Development | IOM | 2015 | Report | Eastern Europe |
| Building and Reinforcing Inclusive Communities in Kosovo (BRICK) Phase 1, Component 3 | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | 2015 | Project document | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Building and Reinforcing Inclusive Communities in Kosovo (BRICK) Phase 2, Component 2 | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | 2016 | Project document | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Questionnaire for the MSME Grants Beneficiaries: Microenterprise Midterm Assessment | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | – | Questionnaire | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| MSME Grants Programme: Midterm Assessment Analysis | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | – | Presentation | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Questionnaire for the MSME Grants Beneficiaries: SME Midterm Assessment | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | – | Questionnaire | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| MSME Grants Programme: Baseline Assessment Analysis | IOM Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | – | Presentation | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Recommendations for the Return and Reintegration of Rejected Asylum Seekers: Lessons Learned from Returns to Kosovo | Danish Refugee Council | 2008 | Report | Kosovo/UNSC 1244 |
| Migrant Resource and Response (MRRM) leaflet | 2016 | IOM | Fact sheet | Niger and countries of return |
| Measures to support migrants with regard to employment and skills (MISMES): Tunisia | European Training Foundation | 2015 | Report | Tunisia |
| Harmonization of Reintegration in Africa | Caritas International practices, Maatwerk bij Terugkeer | 2010 | Report | Africa |

8.2. LIST OF IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH INITIATIVES

Table 5 outlines the community-based approach initiatives carried out by IOM and identified during the research. The current ongoing projects are highlighted in gray. Note that this list is not exhaustive (see section 2.3.2 of the report, which presents the limitations of the research).

Table 5: Identified Community-based Approach Initiatives

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|--------------------|---|---|----------------|
| Afghanistan | | | |
| Afghanistan | 5 return and reintegration programmes for migrants returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan as well as internally displaced persons | Small-scale community development projects (infrastructure) involving returnees and internally displaced persons | 2008–2013 |
| Burundi | | | |
| Burundi | Community Stabilization and Social Cohesion Programme | Collective activities for returning migrants including community members | 2016 (ongoing) |
| Burundi | Assistance to vulnerable Burundian migrants in the host community in Burundi | In support of the Burundian communities expelled from the United Republic of Tanzania, support for collective projects and social infrastructure benefiting the entire community of return | 2013–2014 |
| Ethiopia | | | |
| Ethiopia | Economic Reintegration of Vulnerable Ethiopian Returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | Pilot project for migrants returning from Saudi Arabia (70% of beneficiaries) and members of the local community (30% of beneficiaries). Each beneficiary sets up an individual microproject with financial support through a microloan | 2014 |
| Georgia | | | |
| Georgia | Orientation and employment project targeting returning migrants and local communities (as part of the AVRR programmes in 15 European countries) | Support for the reintegration through a network of guidance and employment centres for returnees, and also for unemployed non-migrants | – |
| Ghana | | | |
| Ghana | Community-based sanitation project in Accra | To be confirmed, ongoing | 2016 (ongoing) |
| Ghana | Agricultural cooperative project under AVRR | Collective assistance to 35 returnees from Libya who have created an agricultural cooperative with an impact on the local community | 2010 |

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Iraq | | | |
| Iraq | AVRR | Community assistance projects in returning communities | 2010–2011 |
| Iraq | Community Revitalization Programme (CRP), Phases I and II | Improved conditions for socioeconomic inclusion of vulnerable individuals in communities with large populations of internally displaced persons and returning migrants | Phase 2: 2012–2013 Subsequent phases in progress |
| Iraq | Human Security and Stabilization in Iraq | Promoting the socioeconomic reintegration of internally displaced persons and returnees through income-generating opportunities benefitting returnees and other vulnerable populations | 2009–2010 (18 months) |
| Iraq | Contributing to Stabilization in Iraq by Promoting Sustainable Socioeconomic Reintegration of Returnees | Facilitating the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced populations by developing income-generating opportunities benefitting both returning migrants and other vulnerable populations in returning communities | 2009–2010 (12 months) |
| Iraq | Emergency assistance to vulnerable internally displaced persons, returnees and host community members | Emergency humanitarian assistance (livelihoods, rehabilitation of health infrastructure, etc.) for the most vulnerable populations among internally and externally displaced persons as well as families in returning communities | 2009–2010 (12 months) |
| Iraq | Programme for Human Security and Stabilization | Facilitating the sustainable return and the socioeconomic reintegration of displaced populations by developing income-generating opportunities benefitting both returning migrants and other vulnerable populations in returning communities | 2010–2011 (12-months) |
| Iraq | Humanitarian Assistance to Vulnerable Populations in Iraq | Improved emergency response capacities and assistance to both returning migrants and other vulnerable populations | 2010–2012 (18 months) |
| Iraq | Human Security and Stabilization in Iraq | Facilitating the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced populations by developing income-generating opportunities benefitting both returning migrants and other vulnerable populations in returning communities (direct assistance to underemployed or unemployed individuals) | 2010–2011 (4 months) |

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|----------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Latin America | | | |
| Colombia | Community centres for migrants | Community centres for migrants jointly implemented by IOM and the Government of Colombia to facilitate the reintegration of migrants (mostly non-AVRR returnees) | – |
| Costa Rica | Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) – Casa de Derechos | A community centre for migrants facilitating the organization of events and providing services to the community (e.g. sociocultural activities, and legal and psychological support) | – |
| El Salvador | Assistance to the reintegration of unaccompanied minors returning from the United States | Personalized support for unaccompanied minors (forced returns), their families and their communities of origin, with a view to prevent irregular reemigration | 2009–2010 |
| Nicaragua | Human Security Programme in the indigenous areas of Nicaragua | Reintegration projects for victims of trafficking (projects of groups of income-generating activities; most beneficiaries are women) | In progress |
| Mali | | | |
| Mali | Community Cohesion Projects in Areas Hosting Returnees from the Central African Republic | Community cohesion projects in areas hosting migrants returning from Central African Republic | – |
| Niger | | | |
| Niger | Direct assistance for the protection and promotion of durable reintegration solutions for Nigerien returnees as a result of the social and political crises in Libya | Projects of grouped migrants selected by community committees to reintegrate returnees from Libya and stabilize and improve the welfare of host communities | 2011 |
| Niger | Early recovery for returnees from Libya and their host communities | Support for the reintegration of former migrant workers returning from Libya to Niger and projects that benefit the host communities | 2012–2014 (Phase 1) |
| Niger | Reintegration of returnees/ youth at risk and stabilization of their host communities | Reintegration of 500 migrants returning from Libya, including youth at risk and former combatants and community-based projects in 10 communities in Agadez region | 2013 |
| Niger | Youth, Peace and Development (YPAD) (implemented by IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) | Community projects and training of young returnees to support the consolidation of peace and the promotion of social cohesion in Tchintabaraden and Tassara | 2013 |

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|--------------------|---|--|-----------|
| South Sudan | | | |
| South Sudan | Reintegration Assistance to Returnee Communities in Counties of High Return: Aweil East & TWIC | Community-based projects, and rehabilitation of wells and schools in high-return areas | 2013 |
| Sri Lanka | | | |
| Sri Lanka | AVRR through community-based organizations | Implementation of AVRR programmes through community-based initiatives, microcredit programme and support to income-generating activities (e.g. training in marketing and business development) | 2013–2014 |
| Sri Lanka | Community-based Reintegration and Economic Recovery Support to Vulnerable Communities in the Newly Resettled Villages in the Northern and Eastern Districts | Training of rural community groups in departure areas, offering of loans (revolving loan funds) to initiate the projects of these community groups and training in business management | 2011–2013 |
| Sri Lanka | Enhanced Capacity-building in Migration Management to Support Effective Return and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees | Support for the reintegration of rejected asylum seekers (most of whom are young people) and irregular migrants; 17 community-based projects implemented, 11 of which directly supported the education of minors; support for start-up companies and training in business management. | 2006–2007 |
| Sri Lanka | Community Stabilization through Livelihood Support and Information Campaign in Districts with High Concentration of Irregular Maritime Departures to Australia (COSTAL – Sri Lanka) | Reducing the flow of irregular migration to Australia by improving the livelihoods of returning migrants and newly resettled families. Development of productive infrastructure (1,260 beneficiaries), provision of livelihoods (568 beneficiaries) vocational guidance programmes (including apprenticeship: 1,311 young people), technical training for 2,332 local community members | 2013–2014 |
| Sri Lanka | Community Stabilization through Reintegration Assistance (CSRA) | Community development projects in areas of departure (subsidies for the acquisition of production infrastructures, training, support for the search for opportunities for the products and the search for funds); support for vocational guidance and access to employment (training and apprenticeship schemes) for young people in the departure areas; Safe migration information and awareness campaigns; support for the reintegration (individual aid) of returnees who have not entered through the AVRR programme; hotline service for migrant support for vocational guidance and access to employment (training and apprenticeship schemes) for young people in the departure areas. | |

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|--|--|---|--|
| Sri Lanka | Global Assistance to Irregular Migrants (GAIM) | Support for the reintegration and development of professional skills for irregular migrants in distress in West Africa after failing to go to Canada | 2013 |
| Sub-saharan Africa, multi-countries | | | |
| Cameroon, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal | Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) Niger, Phase 1 | Pilot project for voluntary returns of migrants coming from Niger. Collective activities by groups of migrants and projects for the community | 2015–2016 |
| Ghana, Mali and Niger | Reintegration Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Egypt (RAVEL) | AVR including collective reintegration actions (training in the formation of cooperatives), for Nigerien, Malian and Ghanaian migrants from returning from Libya | 2011–2013 |
| Tajikistan | | | |
| Tajikistan | Community Stabilization in the Tajik–Afghan Border Areas (Gorno–Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast) | Transboundary livelihood improvement activities for community reunification benefiting migrants returning from the Russian Federation as well as other community members | Phase 1: 2013–2015 Phase 2: 2015–2016 Phase 3: 2016–2020 |
| Tunisia | | | |
| Tunisia | AVRR for migrants returning from Switzerland | Individual projects of migrants which include unemployed local community members | 2012–2015 |
| Tunisia | Stabilizing At-risk Communities and Enhancing Migration Governance in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia (START) | Programme of stabilization and creation of employment opportunities in communities experiencing difficulties in absorbing migrants returning from Libya | 2012–2015 |
| UNSC resolution 1244-administered Kosovo | | | |
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | Support for the reintegration of returnees and communities in return areas | Information and advice for returnees and the community in areas of return on employment opportunities that may emerge from common projects generating income between returning migrants and inhabitants | 2010 |
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | AVRR for returning migrants from Austria | Individual projects of returnees who employ members of the local community; start-up grants for the launch of businesses; 95 per cent of returning beneficiaries had established income-generating activities at the end of the project; employment subsidies (up to 6 months); provision of temporary housing (in addition to grants, for 7% of beneficiaries) | To be confirmed |

| Location | Name of Project | Description | Date |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | EU–Beautiful Kosovo (EU-BK) Programme | Community infrastructure building projects enabling the employment and training of vulnerable community members (including returnees) in the workplace; 46 projects were implemented during phase 1, and 27 were implemented in phase 2 (construction and renovation of buildings, health facilities, school yards, cultural and sports centres, parks, etc.); infrastructure projects were proposed by the town halls; the programme targeted unemployed people (76% of beneficiaries were registered in employment centres) | Phase 1: 2011–2013 Phase 2: 2013–2016 |
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | Community Stabilization Programme (CSP) | Individual grants for the creation or the development of small enterprises and grants for the launch of community-based initiatives; most beneficiaries are returning migrants from minorities | Phase 3 in progress |
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | Building and Reinforcing Inclusive Communities in Kosovo (BRICK) | Support for social enterprises benefiting returning communities (projects must include returnees) and individual reintegration assistance; recipients are returnees (including forced returns) and displaced persons | Phase 1: 2015–2016 Phase 2 in progress |
| Kosovo/ UNSC 1244 | Support to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Kosovo (MSMEs Grants Programme) | Support to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) employing returnees: subsidies for upgrading of production (e.g. investment in new equipment) and capacity-building; 230 new jobs have been created at the end of the project | 2014–2016 |

