

Mainstreaming Reintegration into National Sectoral Plans to Comprehensively Address Returnees' Vulnerabilities

Rabat Process

Thematic meeting on voluntary return and reintegration

Yaoundé, 26 April 2023

OVERVIEW

The target group – overview and profiles

Why the need for a dedicated effort to mainstream returnee's needs?

Practices from the joint response and specific examples

Challenges and recommendations

Target groups:

Unemployed/ youth

Vs

Returnees

Common

Both face common economic environment and have access to similar social services

- Limited livelihoods options or income generating activities
- Family and peer pressure
- Similarity in level of education and skills acquisition

Unique

Returnees face similar environment but with heightened needs and vulnerabilities and worse socioeconomic status especially after the migration experience

- Higher family and peer pressure
- Exhausted own or family savings or assets or got into debt
 - Their families are often in worse situation or need support in understanding returnees better to better support
- Exposure to violence, exploitation and abuses
- Increased need for access to basic social services – deteriorated mental and physical health - Includes highly vulnerable groups
- Exposure and lessons from their journey – experience and skills, higher determination, eagerness, vision...
- Thinly hanging family and community support systems

Target groups:

Status

- A sizeable share of migrants saw their **physical and mental health deteriorate** during their unsafe migration journey
- The **'return'** aspect of the continuum itself brings **additional pressure**: - feelings of shame and guilt; frustration and self-perception as a failure; anxiety and instability; hopelessness and uncertainty about the future etc.
- Returnees also face further **social issues**, such as stigmatisation, marginalisation, isolation from others; family disputes; relationship breakdowns. This is particularly the case for women, who are often suspected by the family/ community of having suffered sexual violence during their journey.
- Most migrants returning to West and Central Africa are in **debt** (68%). The failure of their migration project puts whole families at risk of falling into more abject poverty, especially when assets have been liquidated or held collateral (land, productive assets...)

- Why the need for action to ensure mainstreaming?
 - Due to relatively higher vulnerability and urgency
 - The need to prevent further impact on communities of origin
 - As there can be barriers to returnees' effective access, including:
 - the lack of availability of particularly needed services,
 - lack of understanding of returnees' particular experience and needs,
 - lack of information or necessary documents for returnees to access the services.
 - Contribution, influence and impact that returnees may have on their communities – economically, social and cultural, shaping youth mentality, exposure, knowledge and skills, ...

RESPONSE

The Gambia

- MoH's five-year Strategic Framework for the provision of MHPSS to migrant returnees (2020 – 2025).
- A curriculum was developed along the framework, which is now taught as a 6-month training programme in the Gambia College.
- As per the framework, four Migrant Peer Support Groups were set up, facilitated by staff from the Ministry of Health on a voluntary basis.

Senegal

- IOM-National Agency for Universal Health Coverage cooperation agreement to facilitate returnees' access to health care:
 - Cost are shared to give access to a 2 years' community health insurance plan covering.
 - The regional Universal Health Coverage focal points already take part in the counselling sessions

Burkina Faso

- IOM works with the **national social safety net project (PFS)** to identify synergies of actions.
- Actions: the inclusion of vulnerable returnees in the PFS cash transfer schemes, and the joint funding of capacity building activities on financial inclusion and financial literacy.
- In the pipeline: the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and Universal Health Insurance (UHI) to develop similar synergies.

Cameroon

- Under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education – a programme aimed at reinsertion of diaspora also engaged in reintegration of returnees
- Enacting emergency protocol to allow returnees access to national healthcare while also waiving ID requirements

Nigeria

- FGN mainstreaming structures and budget for the running of MRCs; Reception and post-arrival support into NEMA's framework; State level initiatives – Lagos, Edo

MAINSTREAMING REINTEGRATION INTO NATIONAL SECTORAL PLANS – PRACTICES

- Importance of understanding **the extent** and recognizing the **needs and vulnerabilities** of returnees by all sector MDAs
- Centrality of **capacity development and advocacy** efforts: at senior political and technical levels are critical – robust efforts are needed
 - Policy makers | National planning & budgeting systems | Thematic ministries, departments & agencies | Civil society
- Where there are **migration policy and strategic frameworks** in place, it serves as a foundation for mainstreaming related discussions.
- Need to define **comprehensive response on reintegration** – via strategies, SOPs, or other frameworks
- The higher the level of **whole-of-government** and whole-of-society approaches to migration governance attained; the easier mainstreaming related discussions becomes.
- Importance of **coordination** among the **development cooperation** funding sources
- Introduction of results-based **monitoring, reporting and evaluation** mechanisms into coordination platforms fosters dialogue on mainstreaming
- A significant improvement can already be achieved by focusing on **‘ensuring accessibility’** of existing services – as opposed to trying to design new ones.

Challenges

Limited **data and information** on migration, returnees...

Despite the progress, there are significant **gaps in overall capacity** at various levels – especially on understanding the peculiarities of returnees' vulnerabilities and needs

Budget constraints from government agencies' side – often linked to competing priorities

The relatively new migration **coordination structures** are yet to yield results at mainstreaming level

The overall progress of member states towards ensuring **whole-of-government approach to migration governance**

Countries' progress towards having clearly defined **migration policies** designed based on up-to-date frameworks and principles is not matching the dynamic nature of migration

Legal and policy barriers: often seen on pre-existing frameworks

Limited coordination with **development agencies**

Recommendations

Designing and investing on robust and interoperable **data collection** and management system

Maintaining the progress made **in building capacities**

Boosting policy and governance level interventions

Complementarity, **cross-sectoral coordination**, linkage with development programmes to optimally use resources; allocate more resources which speaks to the level of importance the topic represents.

Robust **advocacy**, engagement, and sensitization at most senior levels.

Coordination with development actors **at design stage** to sure alignment.

Support to on **legal and sector policy reviews**

Strengthen **monitoring and evaluation** efforts under coordination structures

THANK YOU!