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**EU-IOM**

Joint Initiative for  
Migrant Protection  
and Reintegration

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# BIANNUAL REINTEGRATION REPORT

JULY 2021



Project funded by the European Union  
Project implemented by IOM

Reporting period: 1 April 2017 – 31 January 2021





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## ACRONYM LIST

ACRA	Associazione di Cooperazione Rurale in Africa e America Latina (Organization for Rural Cooperation in Africa and Latin America - ACRA Foundation, Italian NGO)
AD	Action pour le développement
AGPC	Association guinéenne de psychologue cliniciens (Guinea)
AJESUD	Projet d'accompagnement des jeunes vers l'emploi au sud du Sénégal (Senegal)
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
AMCPU	Automated Mobile Cassava Processing Units
ANAPEJ	National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (Mauritania)
APIP	Agency for the Promotion of Private Investment
ARD	
ARSIM World	L'Association de recherche de solutions et d'informations pour les migrations dans le monde (Burkina Faso)
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CADEL	Comité d'Appui au Développement Local (Local Development Support Committee) (Niger)
CB	Capacity Building
CBI	Cash-based Intervention
CBR	Community-Based Reintegration
CCIM	Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (Mauritania)
CHEW	Community Health Extension Workers
CMET	Case Management Expert Team
CONASUR	National Council of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Burkina Faso)
CORESUR	Regional Councils of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Burkina Faso)
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease – 2019
CPDD	Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (Mauritania)
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DGC	Directorate-General for Communities (Guinea Bissau)
DGEP	Direction Générale de l'Économie et de la Planification (Burkina Faso)
DGIE	Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Etranger (Côte d'Ivoire)
DREPS	Directorate of Post-Primary and Secondary Education (Burkina Faso)
DTM	Data Tracking Matrix
DUE	Delegation of the European Union
ECICA	Ecole Centrale pour l'Industrie le Commerce et l'Administration (Mali)
ENABEL	Belgian Development Agency
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation

EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
FAFPA	Fonds d'appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage (Funds for the Support of Professional training and Apprenticeship) (Niger)
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GEDD Gao	Groupe Éducatif pour le Développement Durable (Educational Group for Sustainable Development) (Niger)
GESTDOC	Gestão Documental (Guinea Bissau)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Cooperation Agency)
GRDR	Francesa de desenvolvimento comunitário (Guinea Bissau)
HIMO	High Intensity Labour Programmes
IFCPLP	Instituto de Formação da Comunidade dos países da Língua Portuguesa (Guinea Bissau)
IGA	Income-generating activities
IGID	landa Guiné Djunto (Guinea Bissau)
IM	Implementing Partners
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMVF	Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (the Gambia)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Center
JEEN	Youth Employment and Work in Niger
JI	Joint Initiative
LGA	Local Government Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies (Nigeria)
MEEVC	Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change (Burkina Faso)
MhGAP	Mental Gap Action Programme
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIDEC	Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (Mauritania)
MiMOSA	Migrant Management Operational System Application
MINAS	Ministère des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Social Affairs) (Cameroon)
MINEFID	Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Development (Burkina Faso)
MINJEC	Ministère de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Civique (Ministry of Youth and Civic Education) (Cameroon)
MINREX	Ministère des Relations Extérieures (Ministry of External Relations) (Cameroon)
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoI	Ministry of Interior (The Gambia)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OEMIT	Organisation pour l'Eveil des jeunes sur la Migration Irrégulière et la Traite des personnes (Organisation for youth Awakening on Irregular Migration and Traffick in person) (Cameroon)
PBE	Ecole Polytechnique de Niamey
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PHC	Primary Health Care
POE	Points of Entry
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSS	Psychosocial support
PSSVM	Psychosocial Volunteers Mentors
RC	Reintegration Committee
RRR	Return, Readmission, and Reintegration
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
SEC	Secretary of State for Communities (Guinea Bissau)
SMIC	Solutions Aux Migrations Clandestine
SNMig	National Migration Strategy (Burkina Faso)
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDP	UN Sustainable Development Partnership
VDC	Village Development Committee
VoTs	Victims of Trafficking
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association

## INTRODUCTION

As the United Nations described it, COVID-19 is beyond a global health crisis but a human crisis.<sup>1</sup> According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the world has entered a recession worse than the great depression.<sup>2</sup> In West and Central Africa, the number of COVID-19 cases showed a constant surge from November 2020 until the end of the reporting period, 31 January 2021. Termed as the second wave of the pandemic, the region recorded 150,000 additional cases in three months, which is half of the number of cases recorded in eight months between March to October 2020.<sup>3</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic aggravates an already weak socio-economic standing of the West and Central African region. In the face of the crisis, returnees are more than ever, exposed to socio-economic shock due to the restrictive measures the target countries<sup>4</sup> governments have imposed to stop or slow down the spread of the virus. Amidst such an unprecedented situation, the ingenuity of the response should match the exceptional nature of the crisis and the magnitude be parallel to its scale. In this regard, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has acted quickly to adapt its initiatives to the ongoing crisis. Adaptation of the assistance includes the provision of reintegration through cash-based interventions (CBI), providing cash to assist the most vulnerable, as well as mainstreaming COVID-19 response to all the Joint Initiative's activities.

This fifth biannual reintegration report presents the progress of the adaptation of the Joint Initiative's reintegration assistance in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, which has commenced in the previous reporting period. The report showcases how the Joint Initiative continuously supports COVID-19 national responses. The report also highlights the development of the continuous effort of the Joint Initiative on promoting ownership and accountability of the reintegration initiatives. Furthermore, updates of the previously reported activities are presented. Finally, the monitoring and evaluation section provides the results of the satisfaction survey of the beneficiaries on the Joint Initiative's assistance before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> [Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression](#)

<sup>3</sup> [West and Central Africa Region – COVID-19 Situation Report No. 11, UNFPA](#)

<sup>4</sup> The reintegration pillar of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad region is implemented in 12 countries, namely: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

# 52,190

MIGRANTS COMPLETED  
THEIR REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE



The programme has already engaged **382 community-based reintegration projects** in target countries with 5,490 beneficiaries comprising **2378 (43%) returnees** and **3112 (57%) community members**. *More details in [Community-based reintegration assistance](#) page 33*



The adapted Framework Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (Framework SOPs) in Nigeria and Ghana has been launched during the reporting period. *More details in [Standard Operating Procedure](#) page 19*



There have been **146 capacity-building activities** conducted in **12 countries** benefitting approximately **3,594 key partners** in reintegration assistance including government, civil society organizations, and NGOs since the inception of the programme. Due to the restrictive measures, several capacity-building were conducted remotely. *More details in [Capacity-building for delivery of reintegration assistance](#) page 20*



A COVID-19 adapted economic reintegration survey was conducted to determine the satisfaction of the beneficiaries on the Joint Initiative's assistance prior to and during the pandemic. Prior to COVID-19, **84 per cent** of the beneficiaries are satisfied including **17 per cent** who reported that they were very satisfied. During the COVID-19, **82 per cent** of the beneficiaries report that they are satisfied, with **32 per cent** saying that they are very satisfied. *More details in [Monitoring and Evaluation](#) section page 44*



With the gradual lifting of restrictions during the reporting period, IOM was able to conduct a mixed approach (virtual and in-person) in providing psychosocial support. COVID-19-specific psychosocial support continued in the reporting period. The Joint Initiative continues to provide social assistance to the returnees through medical, education, housing, and access to documentation. *More details in [Psychosocial and Social support section](#) page 38 and 41*



The adapted Framework Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has **successfully either built on existing partnerships or created new ones during the reporting period**. Several new partnerships built, facilitated the Joint Initiative's support on the COVID-19 national response. *More details in [Governance and partnerships](#) page 10*

## 1. GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

### a) COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE EU-IOM JOINT INITIATIVE

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Sahel and Lake Chad (hereinafter referred to as the 'EU-IOM Joint Initiative') has shown that coordinated action with established governance structures facilitates sustainable reintegration for returnees. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad has successfully brought together the target countries' governments, civil societies, private sectors, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other international development organizations to harmonize and maximize the reintegration assistance provided. Thus, strong coordination and effective governance of reintegration go beyond getting the stakeholders to work together and strategically identify priorities; it warrants an integrated approach to address the manifold needs of the returnees. The established governance structures and coordination were particularly beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic, for adaptation of assistance provided given the restrictive measures imposed by the governments in the Sahel and Lake Chad region (See [Reintegration Report #4](#))

#### PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEES (PSC)

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) plays a crucial role in the implementation of the Joint Initiative. Represented by the key state institutions, civil societies, and development organizations, as well as the EU Delegations and IOM, the PSC provides policy direction and operational guidelines for the programme.

Several PSC meetings were postponed in the first half of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as discussed in the previous reintegration report. By the second half of 2020 until the end of January 2021, five PSC meetings were conducted either remotely or face to face in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, particularly in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Gambia, Mauritania, and Nigeria.

In Burkina Faso, a Technical Monitoring Committee<sup>5</sup> meeting was held online on 14 January 2021. Chaired by the Director of the Population Policies, the meeting was attended by government and non-government organizations. It was an opportunity to take stock of activities and progress towards indicators along the four axes of the project for the period from January to December 2020. IOM reported on the institutional support it provided to government structures, while the *Direction Générale de l'Économie et de la Planification* (DGEP) presented the evaluation of the 2018-2020 action plan of the National Migration Strategy (SNMig) funded the Joint Initiative. Participants also reviewed the report of the joint monitoring and evaluation mission of reintegration activities carried out by members of the Committee from 28 September to 1 October 2020 in the Centre-East region.

In Cameroon, the PSC meeting was conducted on 17 November 2020, to present the programmes' achievements as well as to identify sustainability strategies. Among the important points highlighted in the meeting is the urgent need to develop and validate a National Strategy on Return and Reintegration to further harmonize all interventions on AVRR, in which IOM was recommended to assist in the process. On this matter, the PSC gave responsibility to the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX) to mobilize government stakeholders and encourage budgetary allocations in each involved ministerial department.

The 8<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting in the Gambia was held online on 24 September 2020 to update on the project progress and discuss strategies on the Joint Initiative's continuous support for the National COVID-19 response. Proposed support included mobilization of reintegration beneficiaries in the production of masks for school children, soap for border communities, personal protective equipment for border officials, and the provision of a generator to the National Public Health Laboratory to facilitate the processing of the COVID-19 test samples.

<sup>5</sup> Reference to the Ministerial Decree 2018\_0092/PRES/PM/MINEFID (15 February 2018); name is changed from Project Steering Committee meeting to Technical Monitoring Committee meeting.

The committee also discussed the planned consular visit to Niger on 25-31 January 2021 aimed at exploring consular procedures for stranded Gambians and facilitating the issuance of travel documents (See [Partnerships with Governments](#)). The meeting was co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior and the outgoing EU Ambassador. It was attended by officials from key government agencies including the office of the Vice President and the embassies of the EU Member States.

In Mauritania, a PSC meeting was facilitated on 5 November 2020 to present the status of the activities, and the challenges faced by the programme. Close coordination with the government agencies on the reintegration interventions has been lauded in the meeting, particularly with the Ministry of Health, which provides medical assistance to returnees through the national hospitals with which IOM established partnerships, and the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (ANAPEJ), which provides training to returnees on business set-up and management. The steering committee was chaired by the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (MIDEC) and the Delegation of the European Union in Mauritania.

In Nigeria, the 3<sup>rd</sup> PSC meeting was facilitated on 9 December 2020 with key government officials and non-State actors, to discuss updates on the status of the project implementation and solicit recommendations on the planned activities. The PSC recommended establishing more flexible options in terms of creating returnee reintegration plans to better accommodate the varying preferences of the beneficiaries. This is due to the observed preference of the returnees to venture more on individual economic reintegration assistance rather than a collective one. Another suggestion is for the business skills training offered to returnees to be extended beyond four days, for returnees to have more in-depth training, and better retain information.

## TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS (TWG)

Technical Working Groups (TWG) were established in the target countries to facilitate an effective engagement of the various ministries and technical departments as well as non-state actors on the return and reintegration interventions under the Joint Initiative. With their expertise and broad knowledge of the local situations and realities, the TWG provides technical guidance which is fit and effective with the national context of each target country. At the beginning of 2020, in the face of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, the TWG showed adaptability in its decision making, and quickly acted to assist the target countries in their national COVID-19 response (See [Reintegration Report #4](#)).

Enhancing the already established collaboration, a meeting of the working group on migration was held in Guinea Bissau on 14 January 2021. Participating organizations were *'Ianda Guiné Djunto'* (IG!D), Manitesse, *'Francesa de desenvolvimento comunitário'* (GRDR), *'Gestão Documental'* (GESTDOC), Assas Socorro and *'Action pour le développement'* (AD). During the meeting, participants presented updates on the status of the implementation of the projects of their respective organizations and new members of the working group were introduced. Moreover, the meeting was a venue to share information on the adaptation and actions planned for the gradual resumption of the conventional reintegration activities, as the country gradually lifts its restrictive measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This coordination allowed the working group to avoid duplication of assistance for the COVID-19 response in the country.

Two TWG meetings were held in Nigeria in September 2020. Funded by GIZ and DFID, the first assembly on 8 September was a high-level coordination meeting for the Reintegration Committee (RC), a State-level coordination structure established under the Joint Initiative. Representatives from State and non-State institutions participated in the meeting. Promoting ownership, the meeting focused on how to better involve the RC in reintegration activities through coordination of the Case Management Expert Team (CMET). The roles, expectations, and deliverables of the RC have been clearly defined. Finally, through this coordination, training on socio-economic reintegration was organized for CMET.

The second meeting in Nigeria for the TWG on Migration and Development was held on 17 September 2020. In collaboration with IOM, the meeting was organized by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI). The meeting provided updates on the status of the activities, challenges, and planned future activities. In attendance were key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), as well as civil society

organizations involved in migration development, to facilitate information sharing and ideas as well as to enhance institutional collaboration and coordination.

In Guinea, several technical working group meetings were held during the reporting period, particularly in Kankan, Boke, N'zerekore, and Conakry. Through these working group meetings pending socio-economic reintegration projects have been accelerated, especially projects that have been affected by COVID-19 restrictive measures.

Finally, in Côte d'Ivoire, TWG meetings were held remotely in August, September, November, and December 2020. The meetings in the earlier months focused on reintegration assistance adaptation with the evolving restrictive measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As in the first half of 2020, the TWG decided to continue the shift from implementing field activities to remote counseling as well as to continue to provide reintegration assistance through cash payments. The meeting also facilitated the resumption of returns in August 2020 and monitoring activities in September 2020. In addition, the working group recommended enhancing the consultations being done on the needs of community members and not only focusing on returning migrants in the community-based reintegration projects to appropriately match with their strengths, resources, and concerns.

The TWG on 8 December 2020 led to the validation of the National Return and Reintegration Plan, following the stakeholder workshop done in September 2020. The Plan had been submitted to the council of Ministers in January 2021, however, the recent elections had slowed down the response from the government.

## b) PARTNERSHIPS AND REFERRALS

The EU-IOM Joint initiative continues to explore, enhance the already established, and conclude new partnerships with key stakeholders towards effective referral pathways, aiming for the sustainable reintegration of returnees, and addressing cross-sectoral returnee necessities covering economic, social, and psychosocial dimensions.

### BOX 1 : STAKEHOLDER MAPPING IN NIGERIA

To have a comprehensive assessment of the willingness, needs, and capacity of a variety of stakeholders in Nigeria, a mapping of stakeholders started on 11 December 2020.

Co-funded by the Department of International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom Government, under the project "Protection and Reintegration of Nigerian Migrant returned from Libya under Federal Government of Nigeria – facilitated chartered flight", stakeholder mapping and socio-economic profiling exercises will continue over the next reporting period in seven states in Nigeria (Abuja, Edo, Lagos, Delta, Yobe, Ogun, Imo State).

On top of mapping stakeholders, the assessment also aims to: a) identify opportunities and challenges to the sustainable reintegration of migrants at the community, local government, state, and federal levels; and b) ensure that migrants returning to their community of origin are supported towards attaining sustainable reintegration, taking into consideration individual, community, and structural factors.

This exercise builds on the previous mapping carried out by Samuel Hall under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative and extended to other geographical areas to identify more opportunities and focus interventions available for returned migrants to consider for reintegration activities. to the sustainable reintegration of migrants at the community, local government, state, and federal levels; and b) ensure that migrants returning to their community of origin are supported towards attaining sustainable reintegration, taking into consideration individual, community, and structural factors.

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## PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative works closely with government agencies to mainstream and align the reintegration interventions to their development planning while promoting ownership and accountability.

In Burkina Faso, IOM assisted the Directorate General of Economy and Planning (DGEP) of the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Development (MINEFID) with the validation of the Action Plan (2021-2023) of the National Migration Strategy (SNMig). This action plan will serve as a reference tool for the planning of migration actors for the period 2021-2023. The workshop held in Ouagadougou on 27 November was attended by 16 government officials and seven representatives from non-government organizations.

In Mauritania, the Directorate of the Social Register of Taazour and IOM signed a data-sharing agreement on 16 December to facilitate supplementary support for vulnerable migrants in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott. IOM has since referred 53 migrants from Nouadhibou to the Directorate, who will determine if they are eligible to receive State social protection services. If eligible, they will be included in the Social Register – a list of poorest households that will be used by the State for selection of their support. The Register is also set to be shared with other NGOs and UN agencies, with protection services provided ranging from subsidies to cash transfers.

Also in Mauritania, a partnership agreement is underway with the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (ANAPEJ) to conduct microbusiness training for returning Mauritanian migrants as part of their reintegration. The agreement is scheduled to be signed in the next reporting period.

In Mali, activities such as agriculture and animal husbandry are very important pillars of the economy. Returnees usually choose these sectors for their economic reintegration assistance. To make sure that the projects comply with the national plan for agriculture and animal breeding or farming, IOM continuously works with the Malian Ministry of Agriculture. During the reporting period, IOM sought guidance on the recommended quantities of different types of food that animals need in different regions of the country for both animal husbandry and livestock management. In particular, in the region of Kayes, Regional Directorate for Animal Production and Industry, and the Regional Directorate for Agriculture provided guidance and training to migrants on agriculture techniques and responsible handling of chemicals involved in crops.

In Guinea, a partnership with the Agency for the Promotion of Private Investment (APIP) was established during the reporting period. The partnership will facilitate legal recognition or formalization of the socio-economic projects of returnees. 25 are already in the process of being formalized as limited liability companies (LLC, or *Sociétés à Responsabilité Limitée*, SARL in French), while 40 others are pending.

In Guinea Bissau, IOM met with the new Secretary of State for Communities (SEC), and the Directorate-General for Communities (DGC) on 13 August. Following a presentation of IOM's initiatives, the SEC indicated that a revision of the Migrant Status of 1986 is planned.

Finally, the Joint Initiative not only ensures collaboration within the national and local level stakeholders but also between the host countries and countries of origin. For instance, in the Gambia, the government observed a significant number of Gambians returning from Niger, while there is no Gambian diplomatic representation in Niger. Through the Joint Initiative, IOM, therefore, supported a consular visit from the government of Gambia to Niger from 25-31 January 2021. This visit allowed Gambian officials to meet with Nigerien authorities to develop closer links and inquire about the situation of Gambian migrants in Niger. They also met with the Gambian Association in Niger to assess the opportunity of appointing an honorary consul in Niger, one of the main recommendations from the visit. The delegation also visited IOM transit centres in Niamey and Agadez and identified and issued travel documents to 30 Gambians.

Following discussions with Nigerien authorities, specifically, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, IOM in Libya, and the Gambian migrants in Niger, the following recommendations were advanced for consideration by the Government of the Gambia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Gambians Abroad:

- Appointment of an Honorary Consul for the welfare of the Gambians and identification and issuance of emergency travel documents to Gambians in need.
- Empowering the Gambian Association in Niger to assist in the identification and issuance of emergency travel documents to Gambians.
- IOM to facilitate interviews via video conferencing software (such as Skype) for the Gambia Immigration Department to identify Gambians so that the Nigerien Directorate for Territorial Surveillance (DST) can issue travel documents for them.
- Establish contacts with the Nigerien authorities to ease the identification and documentation of Gambian migrants who are either en-route to Gambia or residents in Niger.
- Organize similar consular visits to other major migration transit locations where Gambian migrants find themselves stranded, such as Algeria and Morocco.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH EUTF PARTNERS

To offer a wide variety of services and opportunities to returnees, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative strives to develop partnerships with other organizations, particularly those funded by the European Union Trust Fund (EUTF). While the programme was confronted with several challenges in the development and implementation of referral mechanisms to other EUTF-funded programmes, as mentioned in the previous [reports](#), the Joint Initiative continued to actively seek operational partnerships with other EUTF-funded stakeholders targeting similar beneficiaries.

During the reporting period, consultation meetings took place in Burkina Faso with the ITC - Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI). In September 2020, discussions took place to plan activities within the framework of the referral of migrants for reintegration assistance, and to facilitate experience-sharing and the harmonization of approaches for communication and awareness-raising on the country's opportunities and the risks of irregular migration. These exchanges resulted in the referral of a returnee for training in the field of weaving and dyeing of textiles during the reporting period. Two migrants who had previously been referred to EFI for trainings were hired as textile workers after the training: one with a one-year renewable fixed-term contract, starting 1 December 2020, and the other with a nine-month contract starting 1 January 2021, both on textiles works.

In the Gambia, significant progress was made in the referral of returnees to the Tekki Fii programme<sup>6</sup> partner Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF). During the reporting period, 14 returnees benefitted from a six-day training in business development. The training enhanced the skills of the beneficiaries in setting up their micro business as part of their reintegration assistance.

Another Tekki Fii partner ENABEL, provides returnees Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) opportunities in the Gambia. Returnees who benefitted from these TVET opportunities are then included in ENABEL's cash-for-work programme in the construction sector. The cash-for-work programme considerably improved the well-being of the four returnees that have been referred in the reporting period. During the M&E survey, one of the returnees in Farafenni explained *"I lost hope of reestablishing my life back home because I came with nothing, but thanks to IOM and ENABEL through the referral programme, I now have savings that I could reinvest in my microbusiness to expand my source of income"*

Through this initiative, on 13 January 2021, 12 returnees who had previously benefitted from the TVET opportunities with ENABEL registered their group as an association engaging in commercial compressed bricks production. IOM supported them in formalizing their association and in operationalizing their brick production.

However, discussions have not yet led to an operational partnership with the EUTF-funded projects implemented by the Spanish Red Cross, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes in the Gambia, due to delays in the implementation of these projects. It is also anticipated that few cases will be referred to in the framework of reintegration, as these projects mostly target migrants stranded or in transit rather than returnees.

<sup>6</sup> Tekki Fii implementing partners are the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in the Gambia, International Trade Center (ITC), GLZ, Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF) and the Belgian Development Agency (ENABEL)

In Mali, a virtual meeting was held on 19 January 2021 with the Danish Red Cross to advance the finalization of the partnership with IOM. Once finalized, IOM is set to refer returnees to the Danish Red Cross for psychosocial and medical assistance, including in areas where IOM does not have access such as the Kidal and Ménéka regions. The draft agreement covers a) the coordination of psychosocial and medical assistance whenever possible; b) the implementation of joint actions to assist vulnerable migrants in the Humanitarian Services spaces as well as in the reception centers in the common regions of intervention; c) the awareness-raising activities on the rights of migrants and the services available while respecting the mandate and principles of both parties, and d) the strengthening of local capacity to protect and assist returnees and migrants in transit.

Also in Mali, IOM provided technical support to the elaboration of three training manuals on social assistance, psychosocial support, and legal advice, being developed by Caritas Suisse in the framework of the EUTF-funded PROMISA project.

In Niger, IOM partnered with 'AgriProfocus', a local organization working in consortium with the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and OXFAM in the framework of the Youth Employment and Work in Niger (JEEN) project. Returnees who have already completed their reintegration process participated in a fair organized by 'AgriProfocus' on 7 October 2020. These returnees were able to expose their agricultural products such as peanuts, millet, sorghum, and beans. The returnees who have recently started their economic reintegration activities also attended the fair and were able to meet small entrepreneurs (including other returnees), and ask for advice, guidance, and inspiration.

Also in Niger, 49 migrants have been referred to ENABEL in September 2020 to join income-generating activities or High-Intensity Labour Programmes (HIMO) in Zinder. However, none of them was able to be included in ENABEL's activities so far, due to restrictive geographical criteria that apply in order to be able to participate in HIMO. ENABEL has nevertheless ensured that in the following months they will try to reach those beneficiaries to give them tailored support in the development of their income-generating activity.

COUNTRY	Referrals to EUTF- funded programmes - reporting period (1/8/2020 – 31/1/2021)	Referrals to EUTF- funded programmes – cumulative (1/4/2017 – 31/1/2021)	Actual support confirmed - cumulative
Burkina Faso	1 (Ethical Fashion)	8 (Ethical Fashion)	6 (Ethical Fashion)
Chad <sup>7</sup>	0	2 (ACRA)	2 (ACRA) <sup>8</sup>
Gambia	14 (IMVF (4) ENABEL (8) ITC (3))	111 (34 ITC, 25 ENABEL, 46 IMVF, 6 GIZ)	41 (37 IMVF, 4 ENABEL)
Guinea	82 (ENABEL)	191 (138 ENABEL, 30 ITC, 23 UNDP)	79 (26 ENABEL, 30 ITC, 23 UNDP)
Niger	49 (ENABEL)	202 (84 ENABEL, 118 FAFPA)	15 (14 FAFPA, 1 ENABEL)
Senegal	54 (ENABEL)	63 (54 ENABEL, 1AIDA, 8 AJESUD)	63 (54 ENABEL, 1AIDA, 8 AJESUD)
Mali	0	249 (SNV)	12 (SNV)

*Table 1. Referrals to EUTF funded programmes*

<sup>7</sup> Chad is not covered by the reintegration pillar of the Joint Initiative but receives funding from transit and host countries to provide reintegration support to returnees. In this case, the reintegration assistance of the two migrants referred was covered through the Joint Initiative in Niger.

<sup>8</sup> Their training has been suspended due to COVID-19 but is expected to resume during the next reporting period

During the reporting period, efforts to strengthen the partnership with the ARCHIPELAGO program continued particularly in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, and Senegal. In Burkina Faso, several meetings and activities took place with the ARCHIPELAGO partners during the reporting period. In November 2020, IOM took part in a business planning meeting and project monitoring committee meeting organized by ARCHIPELAGO. ARCHIPELAGO officials also participated in the vocational guidance sessions organized by IOM for returnees to present them with the opportunity to receive support with entrepreneurial projects linked to the mango sector (e.g. cultivation, harvesting, processing, and selling). In addition, IOM supported an awareness-raising campaign organized by ARCHIPELAGO, from 7-9 December 2020 in Bobo (region of Hauts-Bassins) and Banfora (region of Cascades). This campaign allowed IOM to raise awareness on the risks associated with irregular migration through powerpoint and movie presentations, while ARCHIPELAGO presented economic opportunities linked to the mango sector. In total, 570 returnees, community members, women, and youth participated in the activity.

In Cameroon, coordination meetings between ARCHIPELAGO partners and IOM were held during the reporting period. These meetings led to the development of a joint workplan and activities envisaged to commence in February 2021. One of the prioritized activities identified is the selection of migrants for agro-pastoral entrepreneurship and milk production and processing trainings, to be conducted during the next reporting period.

In Chad, training has not yet resumed for the two returnees referred to the ACRA Foundation during the last reporting period but is expected to resume during the next reporting period. Meanwhile, discussions continue to refer additional returnees to this ARCHIPELAGO partner.

In Côte d'Ivoire, meetings were held in November with '*RH Excellence Afrique*' and the Chamber of Agriculture, which are implementing an ARCHIPELAGO project. An MoU has been prepared to allow IOM to refer returnees to their training activities in the upcoming reporting periods.

In Mauritania, IOM continued its discussion with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (CCIAM) an ARCHIPELAGO partner to facilitate returnees' referral to vocational training opportunities conducted by CCIAM. However, challenges are anticipated to refer returnees, given the fact that the eligibility criteria require participants to be French-speaking with at least secondary education, which does not match the profile of IOM beneficiaries. Following the discussions, a data-sharing agreement was developed and set to be signed in the next reporting period.

In Senegal, IOM took part in a workshop organized by the "Dual training and entrepreneurial training programme adapted to the needs of local businesses", one of the ARCHIPELAGO projects implemented in Senegal, on 15 September 2020. The workshop focused on research made on promising sectors within the Kolda region and allowed to establish contacts between IOM and the ARCHIPELAGO partners implementing this project, in order to identify and refer return migrants wanting to engage in fish farming. Some migrant associations supported by IOM have already come forward, showing their interest in taking part.

In January 2021, a regional online workshop was organized between ARCHIPELAGO partnership projects and IOM to discuss the terms of cooperation for the socio-professional integration of returning migrants. Topics covered included modalities of cooperation, key points in establishing referral mechanisms, and experience-sharing from the field. This workshop is second of its kind, however, progress in terms of referrals to ARCHIPELAGO projects has been observed to be slow, mainly due to delays in the implementation of the ARCHIPELAGO activities, impacted by COVID-related restrictions, as well as low matching between proposed activities and profiles, needs, and/or geographical targets.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In Burkina Faso, the partnership with '*L'Association de recherche de solutions et d'informations pour les migrations dans le monde*' (ARSIM World) has led to identifying more than a hundred 'unreachable' returnees and conducting home visits with migrants living in the Central East region. ARSIM World is a civil society organization that supports



IOM with some service contracts to mobilize the returnees for priority activities, support the monitoring and data collection from beneficiaries (home and/or business visits), and support if necessary the M&E team to carry out surveys.

In the Gambia, IOM entered a Service Agreement with the [Mbolo Association](#) (a not-for-profit organization based in the Gambia that acts as a delegation of the Africa Mbolo<sup>9</sup> Association for the Gambia and Senegal) to train the returnees on sanitization, quality control, and packaging – maximizing their tailoring skills to handle the production of COVID-19 reusable facemasks. 50,000 reusable face masks were requested by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education – (MoBSE) for the students to be able to safely go back to school. IOM referred 36 returnees who were previously trained in tailoring and received sewing equipment on a Cash-for-work basis. 35,000 facemasks were produced during this period of reporting the remaining 15,000 are going to be distributed in the next reporting period.

On a different note, IOM met with the new training partner '*Instituto de Formação da Comunidade dos países da Língua Portuguesa*' (IFCPLP) in Guinea Bissau on 07 December. IFCPLP presented its training proposal for the returnees to IOM, clarifying the methodology, training duration, and training courses to be covered. Among the training offered by IFCPLP are English language, Project Management, Entrepreneurship, basic computer use, photography, catering, bartending, and mechanics. The first training started in January 2021.

In Mali, a partnership is underway with UNICEF to develop a national document on psychosocial assistance to children and the establishment of a technical committee for community support and in emergency and displacement situations.

During the reporting period, IOM in Senegal established or is in the finalization stage of several partnerships with key stakeholders. On 22 January 2021, IOM signed a data-sharing agreement with the Catholic Relief Service (CRS). Following the signing of the agreement, 24 migrants were referred to CRS for training on resilience in mental health, which aims to enable migrants to regain their internal balance and identity and acquire coping skills for their well-being. In addition, a new partnership has been established in January 2021 with '*La Maison des Yvelines de Matam*'. This collaboration allows IOM to refer returnees to training in the field of construction, particularly in the Nubian vault construction programme. Following several discussions, IOM referred eight returnees to the construction programme. The objective is to hone the skills of the returnees to become master masons.

Another newly established partnership in Senegal is with the Regional Development Agency of Saint Louis (ARD), which has set up a project for a farm with ten hectares of developed surface area and 50 hectares under reserve. The project is open to the public and has 25 returnees currently being trained in agriculture. The Director of ARD expressed interest in collaborating with IOM to benefit returned migrants who would wish to follow ARD's training and eventually work on the farm.

Finally in Senegal, in addition to the two MoUs being considered with the NGOs '*Association de Coopération Rurale en Afrique et en Amérique*' (ACRA) and 'Trees for the Future', discussions are underway with 'Child Fund' in Kolda and 'Young Men Christian Association' (YMCA) in Ziguinchor. Once signed, these partnerships will allow beneficiaries to attend training sessions in agriculture, animal husbandry, and poultry farming.

## 2. OWNERSHIP AND REINTEGRATION MAINSTREAMING

Fostering ownership and accountability is at the core of the approach of the reintegration interventions of the Joint Initiative. In this regard, the Joint Initiative actively works in mainstreaming reintegration on the government migration policies and ensures that interventions are embedded in the target countries' development plans as well as other UN strategies. Development has been made on ownership and reintegration mainstreaming in the target countries since the roll-out of the Joint Initiative.

The Joint Initiative's reintegration programme contributes to Pillar 3 of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) "sustainable inclusive growth, decent jobs, and food security" in Burkina Faso. The reintegration programme contributes to the creation of decent jobs for young people and economic growth. All these through the creation of income-generating activities (IGA) for return migrants, community initiatives such as cash-for-work or inclusive vocational training (masonry and related trades, electricity, plumbing, manufacturing, and laying of paving

<sup>9</sup> Africa Mbolo, created in 2003, is a mixed association, created by immigrants of Gambia-Senegal and Catalonians who have visited Africa, committed to work together for the development of these communities with the principles of respect, autonomy, grass root participation and sustainability.

stones, cold and climates, etc.). Reintegration is also mainstreamed in the National Migration Strategy (SNMig) 2016-2025 developed by the Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Development in Burkina Faso. The overall objective of SNMig is to promote coherent, efficient, integrated, and concerted management of migration to achieve sustainable human development. The reintegration programme contributes specifically to Action 1 of Strategic Axis 1 of the SNMig which aims to "support strategies for securing young people in their regions" by creating jobs.

In Guinea, advocacy and actions are being carried out by IOM to better consider or take into account the issue of migration and in particular reintegration assistance in the new National Economic and Social Development Program, version 2(PNDES 2) in progress.

During the reporting period, advocacies were facilitated in Ghana for reintegration assistance to be mainstreamed in the 2021-2022 UN Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP). Moreover, IOM's input was solicited for the development of Ghana's National Labour Migration Policy as well as the Workplan for 2021, in which reintegration is integrated. The policy is yet to be launched.

In the Gambia, reintegration assistance as support to returning migrants who are mainly youth is an effort that contributes to the achievement of the national blueprint – the National Development Plan 2018 to 2021. This development plan aims to reap the demographic dividend and enhance youth productivity. The work done by the Joint Initiative has now been mainstreamed into the Thematic Working Group on Return & Reintegration of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration. IOM in the Gambia, also through support from the Joint Initiative has supported the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare to develop a National Referral Mechanism for Vulnerable Migrants that includes references to reintegration assistance.

The preparation of a new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 has started in April 2019 in Guinea Bissau. IOM in Guinea Bissau has contributed to the preparation of the document, mainstreaming reintegration. The document is in its final revision phase and is expected to be completed in the upcoming reporting periods.

In Mali, a workshop was organized by IOM to officially validate the national policy document 'National Referral Mechanism for the Most Vulnerable Migrants in Mali' on 21-22 January 2021. The workshop brought together key ministries and civil society partners who work directly on migration management and migrant protection. This national policy document is particularly structured for the protection of migrants and members of their families, migration management, and better support for the reintegration of returnees.

In Mauritania, reintegration activities are included in the 2020 report and 2021 planning of the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (CPDD) 2018-2022. Reintegration and inclusion of returned migrants were incorporated in the different interventions to address the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19.

IOM in Niger works to raise awareness of government counterparts and partners on the issue of the reintegration of returning migrants and the need to mainstream it into wider national policies and local development plans. To this aim, IOM will organize a training on reintegration in Niamey at the end of May 2021.

IOM in Senegal's activities under the Joint Initiative is accounted for in Senegal's 2021 UNDAF Workplan. The reintegration activities are captured under Result 1: Inclusive and durable economic growth, Output 2.1. By 2023, vulnerable populations (youth and women) have technical and entrepreneurial capacities for economic empowerment.

In addition, IOM's reintegration activities, as well as all initiatives involving returning young migrants specifically, are in the process of being incorporated in Senegal's Youth Strategy. The United Nations System is supporting the Government in the deployment of this Youth Strategy, which is planned to be finalized by the end of 2021 through a consultative process. Youth development and youth mobilizations are central cross-cutting issues for the planning frameworks of the United Nations system in Senegal (CCA, UNSDCF 2019-2023) and the Sustainable Development Agenda to 2030.



*Key stakeholders validate the 'National Referral Mechanism for the Most Vulnerable Migrants in Mali' in Bamako. @ IOM 2021/ Mousa Tall*

### 3. SOPS ON ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

As part of its efforts to foster local ownership of the reintegration process, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative successfully carried out consultative processes to nationally adapt its “Framework Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (Framework SOPs)” in all target countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. [IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration](#), they ensure that implementation of reintegration is harmonized and in line with international standards, while also being adapted to the local context. As mentioned in Reintegration Report #4, all 12 Framework SOPs adaptation have already been finalized, and during the current reporting period, the SOPs in Nigeria and Ghana were launched.

In Nigeria, the SOP on Return, Readmission, and Reintegration was officially launched during the meeting of the Working Group on Return, Readmission, and Reintegration (RRR) held on 8 December 2020. The meeting was attended by 61 participants comprised of State and non-State actors. Following the launch, IOM disseminated the SOP to the key stakeholders<sup>10</sup>.

In Ghana, the Government, IOM, and the EU Delegation officially launched the ‘SOP for Reintegration of Returnees in Ghana’ on 02 September 2020. The SOP aims to ensure a consistent approach to the management of returns to Ghana and the returnees’ subsequent reintegration into their communities. The virtual launch saw the participation of more than 38 people from different government and non-governmental organizations. Trainings on the SOP are planned for the half of 2021.

<sup>10</sup> The organizations that have received the SOP as at date include Centre for Youth Integrated Development (CYID), Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (FMWA), National Commissioner for Refugees Migrants and internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), Federal Ministry of Justice (FMOJ), AYG, Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Web of Hearts Foundation, Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Woman (COSUDOW), Idia Renaissance, Humanity Foundation, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Patriotic Citizen Initiative (PCI), Edo State Government Taskforce Against Human Trafficking, The Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHASD), Society for Empowerment of Young Persons (SEYP), Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE), Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Federal Ministry of Education (FME).

COUNTRY	STATUS OF THE SOPS NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROCESS (END OF JAN. 2021)
Burkina Faso	SOPs validated in March 2019 (workshop).
Cameroon	SOP validated in September 2017 (PSC)
Chad <sup>11</sup>	SOP validated in June 2019 (PSC)
Côte d'Ivoire	SOPs validated in October 2017 (workshop).
Gambia	SOPs validated in October 2018 (workshop) SOPs validation and launch of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) February 2020
<b>Ghana</b>	<b>SOP validated in March 2019 (PSC) and launched in September 2020</b>
Guinea	SOP validated in January 2019 (PSC)
Guinea Bissau	SOP validated in August 2018 (PSC) a simplified version was presented and approved in August 2019 (PSC)
Mali	SOP validated in March 2018 (PSC)
Mauritania	SOP validated in January 2018 (workshop), updated internally 2019
Niger	SOPs for Niger as country of origin (reintegration) and Niger as host country and transit validated in May 2019 (workshop)
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>SOPs validated in October 2019 (TWG) and launched in December 2020</b>
Senegal	SOPs validated in December 2018

#### 4. CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

To further support the national coordination structures and partners presented above, and ensure the sustainable reintegration of returnees and ownership of the reintegration activities at the national level, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative seeks to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders involved in the provision of reintegration assistance.

Since April 2017, it has facilitated 146 capacity development activities for reintegration interventions in all target countries, benefitting 3,594 stakeholders. Despite the restrictive measures implemented in the target countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity-building activities were held either remotely or face to face. From the second half of 2020 until the end of January 2021, 21 capacity-building activities were facilitated, which shows a return to pre-COVID figures (22 facilitated in the second semester of 2019, against 11 facilitated during the first semester of 2020 - see previous Reintegration Report #4). Among the capacity development activities offered so far are SOP drafting and implementation including SOPs for COVID-19 response, establishing an operational referral pathway, mental health, and psychosocial support skills, data collection and management, management of transit centers, and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.

<sup>11</sup> IOM adapted the regional SOP on assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) to focus on specific modalities of assisted voluntary return in Chad, while keeping the general information on reintegration. Since the JI does not cover reintegration in Chad, IOM primarily uses the SOPs developed by sending countries to ensure appropriate provision of reintegration assistance.



	Capacity building activity			Participants	
	Type	Topic	Description	Number	Description
Burkina Faso	Workshop	Reintegration	<p>IOM, in collaboration with SP/CONASUR, organized a training session for the members of CORESUR of the Centre-South on the integrated management of return migrants. This workshop had four specific objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- To strengthen the knowledge of CORESUR members on the national disaster and humanitarian crisis management system and the project "EUTF-IOM Initiative for the protection of migrants in Burkina Faso" in its main axes;</li> <li>2- To inform the participants on the missions of IOM;</li> <li>3- Improve the skills of CORESUR members for the protection of migrants in Burkina Faso;</li> <li>4- To establish a whole-of-government approach on the reintegration assistance</li> </ol> <p>10-12 August 2020</p>	31	<p><b>State structures (28):</b> Regional Directorate of Youth and Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship of the Centre-South, Governorate of the Centre-South, High Commission of Bazèga, High Commission of Zoundweogo, High Commission of Nahouri, Manga City Hall, Regional Directorate of FSNFAH of the Centre-South, Provincial Directorate of FSNFAH of Zoundweogo, Provincial Directorate of FSNFAH of Bazèga, Provincial Directorate of FSNFAH of Nahouri, Regional Directorate of Post-Primary and Secondary Education (DREPS) of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of Water and Sanitation of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of Human Rights of the Centre-South, National Gendarmerie, Regional Directorate of Non-Formal Post-Primary Education, Regional Directorate of Infrastructure of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of Animal and Fisheries Resources of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of the National Police of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of the</p>

					Environment of the Centre-South, Regional Directorate of Agriculture and Hydro-Agricultural Developments of the Centre-South, SP/CONASUR <b>CSOs (3):</b> Red Cross, Regional Coordination of Women of the Centre-South, Departmental Coordination of Women of Manga
Cameroon	Workshop	Cash-based interventions (CBI)	IOM facilitated a workshop for government and NGO workers on the practice of Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs) and their impact on the protection and reintegration of migrants. The objective of this workshop was to build the capacities of actors on the best practices of CBIs in the delivery of reintegration assistance; identify the impact, risks, and mitigation measures associated with cash interventions on the protection and reintegration of returnees. The workshop also allowed participants to brainstorm on the identification of elements of the Joint Initiative exit strategy and empowerment of local actors on return and reintegration.  11-15 December 2020	23	Representatives from the ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX), Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education (MINJEC), and NGOs namely 'Solutions Aux Migrations Clandestine' (SMIC) and 'Organisation pour la l'éveil des jeunes sur la migration irrégulière et la traite des personnes' (OEMIT).
Côte d'Ivoire	Training	Reintegration	The training aimed at strengthening government and local partners' capacity in the development, management and monitoring of reintegration assistance by supporting them a) develop a good understanding of the integrated approach to reintegration; b) familiarize themselves with the vulnerability and protection factors and tools available to assess migrants' needs and skills; c) understand and experiment ways to integrate a psychosocial approach to the reintegration assistance process, to organize reintegration counseling sessions and to develop reintegration plans; d) identify the important indicators and	30	Joint Initiative implementing partners, and representatives from the General Directorate for Ivorians Abroad (Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Etranger – DGIE)

			<p>information to collate as part of community assessments; and finally e) understand how to plan for robust monitoring and evaluation of reintegration programs.</p> <p>Funded by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub and targeting implementing partners contracted by the Joint Initiative and supporting JI returnees.</p> <p>25 – 27 January 2021</p>		
Gambia	Training	Business Plan Development, project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation, and conflict resolution skills	<p>Reintegration Subcommittees of the Regional Migration Subcommittees in the West Coast Region, Lower River Region, and North Bank Region respectively were trained on Business Plan Development, Project Appraisal, Monitoring, and Evaluation and Conflict Resolution skills. The training enhanced the knowledge skills of the participants in the review of project proposals, monitoring and evaluation, conflict resolution, and Business plan development.</p> <p>7 – 10 December 2020</p>	15	The participants are heads of line Ministries and Departments in the regions which form part of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) under the chairpersonship of the regional Governor. This is the body responsible for reviewing and endorsing the business plans developed by returnees involved in Community- based projects.
	Training	Business Plan Development, project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation, and conflict resolution skills	<p>Reintegration Subcommittees of the Regional Migration Subcommittees in Central River Region and Upper River Region were trained on Business Plan Development, Project Appraisal, Monitoring, and Evaluation, and Conflict Resolution Skills. The training enhanced the knowledge and skills of the participants in the review of project proposals, monitoring and evaluation, conflict resolution, and Business plan development.</p> <p>16 – 19 December 2020</p>	10	The participants are heads of line Ministries and Departments in the regions which form part of the Technical Advisory Committee. (TAC) under the chairpersonship of the regional Governor. This is the body responsible for reviewing and endorsing the business plans developed by returnees involved in Community- based projects.
	Training	Project Management	The Basse sub-office trained three communities (Sare Bogal, Sare Sandige, and Sanunding) on project management. The training imparted skills on effective	45	Participants were composed of the executive committee and Village Development Committee (VDC)

			management of community-based projects such as bakery and threshing and milling grains in the three communities. 21 – 22 December 2020		members of ongoing community-based projects.
	Training	Project Management	A three-day training on project management was conducted for 15 participants from the village of Sait Maram. Participants gained skills in managing finances, record keeping as well as communication strategies, and dissemination of information among members. 13 – 15 January 2021	15	Seven of the 15 participants were executive members of the community's returnee association and the other eight were members of the Village Development Committee (VDC).
Nigeria	Training	WHO Mental Health Gap Action Plan for Health professionals (Edo State)	Training on the identification and treatment of mild to moderate mental health conditions with a focus on the specificities of the mental health and psychosocial distress most typical of returning migrants 10 – 13 Nov 2020	20	Primary Health Care (PHC) workers nurses, community health extension workers (CHEW) and extension workers in charge of several PHC in the six local government areas with the highest number of returning migrants (Edo State)
	Training	Training for Psychosocial Volunteer Mentors	This first training session presented participants with an introduction to the Psychosocial Approach to Reintegration; helped them develop basic psychosocial skills and knowledge on Psychological First Aid (PFA); presented the Mentoring Approach; and familiarized them with the principles of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) 16 – 19 November 2020	14	Returnees assisted by IOM and belonging to several Associations of returnees including: Go Getters, Greater Returnees Foundation, Great Essan Returnees Association,
	Training	Training for Psychosocial Volunteer Mentors	The second training session developed the participants' capacity to facilitate psychosocial group session, psychoeducation sessions and art-based activities, while providing them with basic knowledge on case management 2 – 4 December 2020	14	Returnees assisted by IOM and belonging to several Associations of returnees including: Go Getters, Greater Returnees Foundation, Great Essan Returnees Association,

	Training	WHO Mental Health Gap Action Plan for Health professionals (Edo State)	<p>Training on the identification and treatment of mild to moderate mental health conditions with a focus on the specificities of the mental health and psychosocial distress most typical of returning migrants</p> <p>12 – 15 January 2021</p>	22	Primary Health Care (PHC) workers including Medical Doctors, nurses and community health extension workers (CHEW) in Delta State
Senegal	Training	Job placement	<p>The training covered integration through self-employment, entrepreneurship and integration through salaried employment. Participants were trained on profiling of migrants, mapping of structures for recruitment, classification of employment types, identification of structures supporting integration, and post-integration follow-up.</p> <p>The content proved very useful for facilitators, who started identifying opportunities for local economic integration. The session is expected to be replicated in Vélingara, Sédhiou, and Ziguinchor during the upcoming reporting periods.</p> <p>24 September 2020</p>	8	Community facilitators in Kolda
	Training	Reintegration	<p>Designed to promote local authorities' participation in the governance of reintegration, the training resulted in a better understanding of participants on identifying the economic, social, and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration. Participants also reported increased knowledge of the integrated approach to reintegration. The training also served as a venue to discuss opportunities for referrals and identify the role and responsibilities of participants in the reintegration assistance process.</p> <p>Co-funded by the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub</p>	21	Local authorities such as mayors and presidents of local councils, representatives from youth, women and migrant associations, as well as members of technical government agencies and services, and chambers of commerce, joining from eight regions of Senegal (Dakar, Fatick, Kaolack, Kolda, Saint Louis, Sédhiou, Tambacounda, Thiès)



			8 – 10 December 2020		
	Online Training	Training for community facilitators	<p>An online training was organized for community facilitators on the integrated approach to reintegration, protection and psychosocial support, monitoring and evaluation, including beneficiary feedback mechanism, as well as case registration and management in MiMOSA, and new procurement and finance processes (such as cash transfers to vendors). The training also allowed IOM staff to present the example of a community-based project in Walicounda.</p> <p>26 January 2021</p>	26	Community facilitators

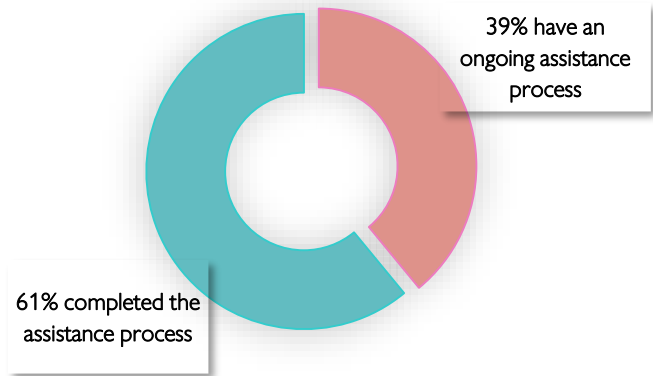
## 5. SUPPORTING RETURNEES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

### a) OVERVIEW OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

As mentioned in the previous report, extensive work has been done on the transition of internal databases to MiMOSA in all 12 target countries. Efforts in cleaning and data verification in the target countries to ensure coherence and accuracy have continued during the reporting period. Most of the data reported in this report were extracted from MiMOSA.

By the end of January 2021, 52,190 migrants started the reintegration assistance process in the region and remained active, showing a 14 per cent increase as compared to the previous reporting period with 45,936 (1 April 2017 to 31 July 2021). Part of the reported active caseloads is the reintegration assistance process completed with 32,921, indicating a 22 per cent increase from the previous reporting period with 27,056. The breakdown per country is presented in the table below.

ACTIVE CASELOAD HAVING STARTED  
REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE BY JANUARY 2021



As of end January 2021	Active caseload having started the assistance process	Assistance process completed
Burkina Faso	1,979	1,061
Cameroon	3,297	2,300
Côte d'Ivoire	5,464	2,467
Gambia	3,760	3,500
Ghana	1,466	527
Guinea	7,004	5,434
Guinea Bissau	628	565
Mali	12,812	4,851
Mauritania	25	14
Niger	1,441	848
Nigeria	11,741	7,912
Senegal	4,039	3,442
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,190</b>	<b>32,921</b>

*Table 1 : Number of returnees assisted in their reintegration (EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad)*

The table below presents the disaggregation of support provided by dimension. During the reporting period, 46,727 already received economic support, 11,977 acquired social support and 19,736 for the psychosocial support. These numbers indicate an increase of 14 per cent, 75 per cent<sup>12</sup> and 91 per cent<sup>13</sup> respectively on economic, social, and psychosocial support provided as compared to the previous reporting period.

<sup>12</sup> This increase results from a data verification exercise which led to the update of the social assistance recorded in MiMOSA

<sup>13</sup> This increase is due to the fact that participants to psychoeducation sessions held in Nigeria since the beginning of the project were only updated in MiMOSA during the reporting period

As of end of January 2021	Economic support	Social support	Psychosocial support
Burkina Faso	1,648	608	1,335
Cameroon	3,075	555	749
Côte d'Ivoire	3,458	1,967	1,430
The Gambia	3,604	683	756
Ghana	550	106	11
Guinea	6,105	1,034	1,268
Guinea Bissau	460	543	317
Mali	11,804	2,366	884
Mauritania	18	8	0
Niger	1,323	144	1
Nigeria	10,877	1,329	10,258
Senegal	3,805	2,634	3,044
Total	46,727	11,977	19,736

*Table 2: Number of returnees assisted in the economic, social, and psychosocial dimension of reintegration*

On the returns to non-EUTF countries of origin, during the reporting period, there has been a total of 7,617 migrants returned from host countries covered by the Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad window (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) to countries of origin not covered by the Joint Initiative External Actions (inter alia Benin, Chad,<sup>14</sup> Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo). This shows a nine per cent increase (639 migrants) in six months (1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021), as compared to the last reporting period with 6,978 migrants. See table number 3 below for per country overview.

Host country CoO	Burkina Faso	Chad	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Total
Benin	28	0	35	6	1,086	1,155
Central African Republic	5	0	18	5	187	215
Chad	1	0	3	1	218	223
Liberia	111	6	331	76	1,392	1,916
Sierra Leone	100	2	669	479	2,262	3,512
Togo	8	8	16	8	190	230
Other	6	26	28	38	268	366
Total	259	42	1,100	613	5,603	7,617

*Table 3: Returns to non-EUTF countries of origin*

On top of the assistance being provided to the migrants stranded along their migratory journey in North and West and Central Africa, the Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad window also gives assistance to the migrants returning from Switzerland and the European Economic Area. In total there have been 3883 migrants who returned from Europe, Switzerland, and Norway since the rollout of the Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad. This indicates an increase of approximately 20 per cent (645 migrants) who returned from Europe, Switzerland, and Norway as compared to the previous reporting period with 3,238.

<sup>14</sup> Chad has an AVR component but no reintegration assistance component under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

Countries	IOM AVRR <sup>15</sup>	Non-IOM facilitated returns	Forced return	TOTAL number of returns	Post-arrival assistance provided through the JI
Burkina Faso	96	10	0	106	9
Cameroon	169	7	0	176	18
Cote d'Ivoire	81	15	0	96	3
Gambia	326	71	227	624	186
Ghana	488	21	0	509	93
Guinea Bissau	180	40	0	220	4
Guinea	24	28	0	52	0
Mali	73	16	0	89	1
Mauritania	14	2	0	16	1
Niger	53	2	0	55	0
Nigeria	1,468	76	0	1,544	7
Senegal	299	18	79	396	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,271</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>3,883</b>	<b>324</b>

*Table 4: Returns from Europe Switzerland and Norway*

## b) PRE-DEPARTURE COUNSELLING

The Joint Initiative takes into account the fact that the reintegration process already starts before the actual return. Upholding the third objective of the [Global Compact for Migration](#) (GCM), 'Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration', the Joint Initiative advocates providing reliable information to the potential returnees on the situation in both the host country and the countries of origin at the pre-departure phase, to ensure dignified return.

Pre-departure planning and counselling reinforce the sustainability of the reintegration assistance, by allowing migrants to prepare for their return. Pre-departure counselling can consist of information on the assistance they can receive once they decide to return as well as providing information on the process and conditions of voluntary return and reintegration. At the pre-departure stage, potential returnees may need to contact their families and communities which can play a significant role in whether the migrants decide to return or not. In addition, in most cases, pre-departure counselling is integrated with necessary assessments of whether the migrant could make an informed decision and express its desire to return. Pre-departure counselling is a crucial aspect in ensuring Objective 1 of IOM's [AVRR Framework](#), 'Migrants can make an informed decision and take ownership of the voluntary return process'.

In the pre-departure phase, it is critical to assess the situation of potential returnees on an individual level, in order to enhance their preparedness and enable IOM case managers to prepare a customized and optimal reintegration plan. Pre-departure counselling starts with interviewing the migrants while providing them with timely information about reception and reintegration assistance in their country of origin. Country-specific information includes but is not limited to the security situation in their country of origin, COVID-19 situation, and economic profile such as type of employment and economic activities available. The migrants are informed that they can withdraw their request to return at any moment during the process. The migrants are then invited to read and sign a consent form with information related to data sharing and the Joint Initiative programme.

During pre-departure counselling returnees are informed that reintegration is not standardized and may vary depending on the returnees' needs and the activities and services available in their country of origin and that reintegration modalities are defined by the returnees foremost, as well as IOM and partners in countries of origin. Returnees are also informed of any eligibility criteria that may apply to receive reintegration assistance (for instance in some countries not covered by the Joint Initiative). To strengthen pre-departure counselling, countries implement different activities: pre-departure focus group discussions done in Burkina Faso serve as a venue to share goals, ambitions, skills, and ideas for the migrants' reintegration. In Niger, to learn from and discuss other returnees'

<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that only part of AVRs from Europe rely on the Joint Initiative for post-arrival assistance

experiences, a presentation is conducted by IOM staff, including videos of returnees who completed their reintegration with the Joint Initiative, and followed by a question and answer session for beneficiaries to ask questions they have on post-arrival assistance and reintegration in particular. In addition, with individual micro-businesses remaining the main choice of reintegration assistance in the Sahel and Lake Chad (See [Reintegration Evaluation](#)), pre-departure training on business management was provided to potential returnees under the Joint Initiative, through the United Kingdom's (UK) Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) project in Niger. During the reporting period, 1,146 migrants completed this training.



*Pre-departure business management training for the potential returnees in Niger @IOM/Abdoul Rachid Mamadou Adji Kollo*

Moreover, potential health risks and information on how to prevent it are also shared with the potential returnees in the pre-departure counselling. For instance in Mauritania, migrants who decide to return receive pre-departure group sessions the day before their departure which includes, since 2019, information on HIV and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

### c) ADAPTATION OF THE PROVISION OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic worsens the already fragile economic and developmental situation of many countries in West and Central Africa. While the virus appears to be spreading in the region at a slower pace as compared to other parts of the world, it is important to note that the tests carried out are also very low.<sup>16</sup> During the reporting period, the West and Central Africa region like most in the world has been confronted with the second wave of the pandemic starting November 2020. More than 150,000 additional cases have been recorded from mid-November 2020 to the end of January 2021, which is almost half of the cases reported between March and October 2020.<sup>17</sup> Despite the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the region, the governments have started to gradually lift the restrictions established at the onset of the pandemic in order to alleviate the socio-economic shock due to the unprecedented restrictive measures. This has then significantly affected mobility in the region. In September 2020 for instance, there

<sup>16</sup> <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-testing>

<sup>17</sup> [West and Central Africa Region – COVID-19 Situation Report No. 11, UNFPA](#)



has been an increase of 25 per cent in the volume of flows in the region as compared to that of August 2020<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, September 2020 flows reported an increase of seven per cent as compared to the same month last 2019. Despite this, various activities of the Joint Initiative have to continuously adapt to the evolving changes in the restrictive measures in the target countries.

As detailed in the [previous report](#), the reintegration assistance process, in particular, had to be adapted in several countries. During the reporting period, these adaptations continued, while additional countries also started adjusting their assistance.

### *PROVISION OF CASH SUPPORT TO COVER RETURNEES' INCREASED NEEDS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS*

Returnees' socio-economic activities have been adversely affected by the unprecedented restrictive measures governments implemented to curb the spread of the virus. The rapid needs assessment conducted in the previous reporting period revealed that the provision of unconditional one-off cash assistance would be an adequate response to ease returnees' socio-economic difficulties brought by the pandemic-related restrictions.

In October 2020, Cameroun started to provide an emergency multi-purpose cash grant, guided by a local SOP, while Guinea also did so as of January 2021. By the end of January, IOM provided this type of assistance to seven vulnerable migrants in Cameroun and 10 in Guinea. In the meantime, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal continued providing this assistance, respectively reaching 410, 3,045, and 3,420 beneficiaries at the end of January 2021.

As mentioned in the previous report, IOM in Guinea Bissau had developed an SOP to provide cash assistance to returnees, following the impact assessment of COVID-19 they had carried in March 2020. However, during the reporting period, this support could not be implemented due to the unavailability of funds.

### *PROVISION OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE THROUGH CASH-TRANSFER*

Due to the second wave of the pandemic, restrictive measures remained although slightly lifted in some target countries. In this regard, the provision of in-kind reintegration assistance continued to be challenging if not impossible in some areas. In Côte d'Ivoire, IOM continued to implement a mixed approach, depending on the type of activity returnees wish to implement: for activities and/or regions for which IOM has readily available contracted vendors, reintegration assistance is provided partly in-kind and partly in cash, while for those for which no such vendors are available, the whole assistance is provided in cash.

Following the validation of their SOP on the provision of cash assistance, Cameroun started provided reintegration assistance through two cash installments in October 2020, while IOM in Guinea did so in January 2021.

At the end of January 2021, 856 beneficiaries received reintegration assistance through a cash modality in Cameroun, 1,350 in Côte d'Ivoire, and 1,240 in Guinea Conakry.

### *MOBILIZATION OF REINTEGRATION BENEFICIARIES IN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE*

As discussed in the previous report, beyond the direct assistance that the Joint Initiative provides to assist the target countries' governments in their national COVID-19 response, reintegration beneficiaries also directly contributed to the response. While some of the individual and community reintegration initiatives have been affected by the pandemic, some beneficiaries were able to deviate their activities to earn income and help their community fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In the Gambia, as part of IOM's support to the Government for their COVID-19 response, 32 male returnees were engaged in the production of 50,000 cloth masks for students, at the request of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE). These returnees had been previously trained in tailoring and received sewing equipment as part of their reintegration assistance. Following the quality assessment and approval given by The Gambia Standards Bureau,

<sup>18</sup> This study focuses on Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria data, as these are the only countries with active FMPs throughout the March to September 2020. [COVID-19 Flow Monitoring Registry, Mobility Trends, January-September 2020](#)

during the reporting period, 35,000 facemasks were delivered through two batches to MoBSE. The returnees who engage in the scheme are trained on facemask production by Mbolo Association, as detailed in Section [Partnerships with other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector](#).

In addition, IOM also continued to mobilize returnees to produce personal protective equipment (PPE). During the reporting period, 1,065 PPE and shoe covers – 346 in August and 719 in December 2020 were handed over to the Gambian Ministry of Interior (MOI). This brings the total PPEs produced and delivered to MOI to 2,000, marking the end of completion as promised by IOM.



*Gambian returnee participates in an initiative among Gambian returnees to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline border officials. © IOM 2020/ State of Mic*

In Ghana, eight returnees produced 4,000 pieces of protective face masks for distribution to vulnerable community members. This initiative was organized by IOM in close collaboration with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the European Union Delegation to Ghana as well Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in migration-prone communities in six regions (Western, Bono, Bono East, Ashanti, Ahafo, Northern regions). Prior to COVID-19, the eight returnees were set to embark on several micro-businesses which were challenged by the restrictive measures imposed in the country. IOM then assisted the returnees to revamp their business ideas and venture into another source of income such as fabricating produce to curb the spread of the COVID-19. This was particularly timely as the government of Ghana made wearing protective face masks mandatory in public places in April 2020.



*Distribution of protective face masks in Ghana @IOM 2020 / Juliane Reissig*

#### d) COMMUNITY-BASED REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

Beyond the potential social and psychosocial vulnerability, following the return, returnees usually face economic insecurity, with no savings and more often than not in debt. In the recent [study](#) conducted in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, 68 per cent of the returnees are affected by indebtedness, which hampers their reintegration efforts. Generally, community and family members are the ones who fund the migration endeavor of the returnees which in return intensifies the feeling of shame and stigmatization towards the returnees upon return. Furthermore, communities of origin in the Sahel and Lake Chad region often lack resources and basic infrastructures to support both the returnees and the community members. In communities that receive a large number of returns, tensions between returnees and community members could arise. Therefore, one of the important factors for the success and sustainability of the reintegration is the acceptance and involvement of the community.

In this regard, community-based initiatives have been a vital aspect in reinforcing the capacity of the community on accommodating the returnees while mitigating stigmatization. Community-based reintegration projects under the Joint Initiative have been effective in providing the returnees and the community members a reliable source of income, as presented in the [reintegration evaluation](#) conducted in January and February 2020 in the region. Not only it secures the welfare of the beneficiaries, but it also benefits the entire community altogether with additional infrastructures and services such as plastic waste processors, machinery to mill grains, cassava processing units, construction services, and more.

The Joint Initiative has so far successfully engaged 382 community-based reintegration (CBR) projects, which shows an increase of 115 projects<sup>19</sup> as compared to the previous reporting period. Overall beneficiaries engaged are 5,490<sup>20</sup> comprised of 2,378 (43%) returnees and 3,112 (57%) community members.

<sup>19</sup> This large increase is partly due to the way these projects were counted in Niger: four regions were targeted in the preparation phase, leading to the implementation of 90 community projects in these four regions, leading to an increase of 86 projects compared to the previous reporting period.

<sup>20</sup> Numbers of beneficiaries are indicative and might vary depending on return flows to communities and the different phases of the project preparation, implementation and completed.

	Status (as of 31 January 2021)	Number of interventions	Number of beneficiaries *		
			Returnees	Community members	TOTAL
Burkina Faso	Completed	2	300	300	600
	Preparation	2	84	96	180
Cameroon	Completed	3	4	26	30
Côte d'Ivoire	Completed	127	450	526	976
	Implementation	67	504	521	1025
	Preparation	8	9	10	19
The Gambia <sup>21</sup>	Completed	17	20	23	43
	Implementation	1	1	1	2
	Preparation	8	8	13	21
Ghana	Completed	2	14	34	48
Guinea	Completed	17	210	370	580
	Completed	22	187	114	301
	Implementation	3	33	17	50
Guinea Bissau	Preparation	7	34	24	58
Mali	Implementation	2	30	41	71
	Preparation	5	35	92	127
Mauritania	n/a				0
Niger	Implementation	90	321	358	679
Nigeria	Completed	3	56	53	109
	Implementation	3	38	25	63
Senegal	Implementation	8	40	468	508
TOTAL	Completed	176	1,241	1,446	2,687
	Implementation	174	967	1,431	2,398
	Preparation	32	176	235	405
GRAND TOTAL		382	2,378	3,112	5,490

Table 5: Overview of the community-based reintegration projects per country

## BURKINA FASO: PLASTIC WASTE COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN TENKODOGO

A plastic waste collection and management project has been initially planned to be set up in the municipality of Garango, in Burkina Faso. However, further analysis of the feasibility of the project revealed that connecting the identified site to the electricity grid would have been very costly. Therefore, in partnership with the authorities and the Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change (MEEVCC), IOM decided to relocate the project to Tenkodogo, on an existing but non-functional site belongs to MEEVCC. This site already has a plastic shredder and an electric press of plastic bags, and in January 2021, IOM donated additional operating equipment to the plastic waste

<sup>21</sup> The decrease of projects from the previous report from 34 (123 returnees and 101 community members) to 25 projects is due to the cancelation of three projects and errors in reporting. The number of projects with the disaggregation of beneficiaries has been corrected in this report.



recovery unit. IOM will further assist to set up additional facilities and assist the authorities in setting up the site and launching it.

A meeting was also held on 1 and 3 December 2020 in Tenkodogo with two associations with experience in collecting plastic waste and transforming it into decorative objects, to define their role in the plastic waste collection chain. These associations will be used to revitalize the plastic waste collection and transformation sector and to guide the project's beneficiaries in the plastic recovery process. This project will benefit 26 returnees who will join the members of the aforementioned two associations.

## NIGER: AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS IN TILLABERY REGION



*Agricultural training for the beneficiaries in Tahoua led by GEDD GAO @IOM 2020/ CADEL*

In the region of Tillabery, IOM's implementing partner, *Groupe Éducatif pour le Développement Durable* (GEDD GAO), set up four agricultural community-based projects in the villages of Filingue, Bonkougou, Chikal et Tounfaliss, targeting 100 beneficiaries (34 migrants and 66 community-based members). The training modules provided included agricultural techniques, asset management and para-veterinary techniques. Beneficiaries were given cattle for their cattle-breeding activities, and seeds and equipment for horticulture. In addition, four plots of land (ranges from one to six hectares) were made available for the project by the town administrations, and beneficiaries in two out of the four projects have started to grow their crops during the reporting period (in the localities where the construction of wells and installation of solar panels have been completed).





*Equipment distributed to beneficiaries for horticulture activities. @IOM 2021 / GEDD GAO*

## GHANA: GARR<sup>22</sup> PROCESSING FACTORY AND CASHEW SEEDLINGS NURSERY IN PRAPRABAABIDA



*Ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Gari factory and seedling nursery with the EU delegation in Praprabaabida, Ghana @IOM 2020 / Julianne Reissig*

On 16 November 2020, IOM established a new garri processing factory and a cashew seedlings nursery in Praprabaabida and handed them over to the Dormaa East District Assembly in the Bono region of Ghana. Since 2017, Bono region has recorded the highest number of returns stranded in Libya.<sup>23</sup> These projects were designed to build local structures' capacity to support the reintegration of returnees, including district authorities and a local returnee association. Returnees supported with reintegration by IOM and local farmers are able to access the factory to transform and add value to their agricultural products. The project has been highly appreciated by the community,

<sup>22</sup> Garri is a granular cassava flour

<sup>23</sup> <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/iom-partners-dormaa-east-district-assembly-support-returnees-and-build-resilience-communities>

with the authorities reiterating that the factory is timely and a great strategy for community development as cassava cultivation presents a huge potential that has not been fully explored yet.

To complement these initiatives, trainings on organic production of plant protection as well as biological pest control were provided to the returnees. IOM has already successfully implemented community-based projects in the region under GLZ funding, such as two garri factories, a block-making factory, and a soap resources centre, in collaboration with a civil society organization, BOK Africa Concern. The Prapraababida projects, therefore, build on the successes and lessons learned on these previous projects in the region.

### UPDATES FROM THE PREVIOUS REPORT:

#### CÔTE D'IVOIRE: CONSTRUCTION ENTERPRISE<sup>24</sup>

Two construction projects (one in Abidjan the neighborhood of Youpgon and one in Bouaké) were finalized during the reporting period in coordination with the NGO “Action Entreprises”. Each project consisted of 80 individuals (while it varies in each project, the disaggregation between returnees and community members is around 50-50) consisting of both returning migrants and community youth, who were selected by local authorities, and subsequently trained in construction. In addition to classroom training, medical visits were provided, vaccinations were given as needed; along with transportation money, uniforms, and construction tools. Practical training was then carried out through the rehabilitation of three dilapidated primary schools. Following the completion of the training, each project created another eight, leading to a total of 16 collective construction enterprises which were then assisted by Action Entreprises to find their first construction contracts.



*Eight presidents of eight enterprises in Bouaké while receiving their Kits and certificates. @IOM 2020/ Mohamed Diabate*

#### NIGERIA: PINEAPPLE AND CASSAVA PROCESSING FACTORIES

The pineapple juice factory owned by cooperative members (returnees and unemployed youth) was officially opened in February 2020 in Iguobazuwa, Edo State. However, the operationalization of the project only started in December due to COVID-19 restrictions. The factory is currently operated by a private sector (Efedosa Ltd) for the benefit of

<sup>24</sup> <https://fb.watch/5EXGoif81s/>

the business cooperative made up of returnees and unemployed youth. The factory employed 42 returnees and members of the cooperative society. Currently, the interval of production is twice a week and the management of the factory is planning to upscale production in the coming months.

The fabrication of the two Automated Mobile Cassava Processing Units (AMCPU) has been finalized and trucks delivered to Edo state for implementation. The beneficiaries of the project include 24 returnees and 19 community members. The Technical Working Group comprising state and non-state actors such as the Federal Institute of Industrial Research Oshodi, Lagos (government), and Elephant group (private sector) visited the site in Lagos on 24 November 2020. The test run of the processing units was a success and trucks for the AMCPU have been delivered to Benin City.

## GAMBIA: KUNDAM MAI FATTY CEREAL PROCESSING PROJECT

The Kundam Mai Fatty cereal processing project reported in the previous reintegration report continued to reflect a positive re-investment in the local communities. The project benefits eight beneficiaries with five community members and three returnees. During the reporting period, the village development committee (VDC) decided to extend the water pipeline for the use of the community using the profit they earned from the project. This has significantly freed up time and labour from women in the village who traditionally fetched water from remote locations. In addition, the project plans to purchase a cereal processing unit and support the current engine as it is overloaded and provide better milling service to the community. The project also resulted in the reduction in manual labor for women within these communities, since this was previously a traditional and labor-intensive role done by women only.

The project also provided needed services not only to their immediate community but also to surrounding communities, including that of the bordering country Senegal. For instance, the easier access to cereal processing and bread has not only supported these communities but also those in neighboring cross-border communities in Senegal.

## BOX 2 : SETTING UP VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS ASSOCIATIONS (VSLA) TO COMPLEMENT THE CBR ASSISTANCE IN SENEGAL

IOM supports the returnees in setting up Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) to complement the economic reintegration assistance that they receive. VSLAs promote economic and financial empowerment to returnees while offering them access to small solidarity credits with minimal interest.

In January 2021, IOM monitored the three VSLAs set up in Saré Yoba, Diamanouta, and Walicounda, Senegal. In Saré Yoba, five returnees who received different individual reintegration assistance (tailoring, hairdressing, bakery, and two small grocery shops) established a VSLA. The five returnees are now working on the formalization of the VSLA. Returnees have also opened an account with a microfinance institution to save and, if necessary, to be able to benefit from loans to set up larger-scale activities. In Diamanouta, eight returnees engaged in a collective reintegration project in animal husbandry (cattle and sheep) have also created a VSLA. The eight returnees have already accrued earnings from their contribution and were even able to set aside an amount for emergencies. Finally, the VSLA in Walicounda was initiated by the beneficiaries of an agricultural project of ten hectares (cereals, vegetables, and fruits plantation) with five returnees and approximately a hundred community members. The VSLA was able to mobilize funds to purchase farming equipment for the beneficiaries to other geographical areas to identify more opportunities and focus interventions available for returned migrants to consider for reintegration activities.

## e) PSYCHOSOCIAL REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

The adversities inherent to the COVID-19 pandemic encompassing uncertainties about the future, fear of death or losing loved ones, isolation, economic turmoil, and stigma have vastly affected the well-being of many people around the world. These challenges exacerbate the potential underlying psychosocial concerns and vulnerabilities the returnees



are confronted with. As reported in the previous report, 60 per cent of the surveyed beneficiaries in the region through the rapid needs assessment, stated that their well-being has been negatively affected by the pandemic.

Despite the lack of existing services and infrastructures magnified by the restrictive measures imposed by the government of the target countries due to COVID-19, Joint Initiative ensured continuity of care, including psychosocial assistance for the returnees. The programme recognizes the need to identify innovative responses to enhance Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) now more than ever. During the reporting period, and depending on the restrictions implemented at the country level IOM has provided remote and in-person psychosocial assistance. Furthermore, as discussed in the previous sections of the report, IOM has continued to forge new partnerships and conducted various capacity-building activities dedicated to strengthening psychosocial assistance in the reporting period.

In Côte d'Ivoire, although group activities have been interrupted since March 2020 due to the pandemic, the assistance continued, particularly through individual psychological support and monitoring by phone, video conferencing, and home visits. Starting from December 2020, in addition to remote support, monthly psychosocial support activities resumed in smaller groups (as compared to pre-COVID-19) to limit the propagation of the virus. These psychosocial group activities were provided to vulnerable returnees, including groups for vulnerable women who experienced or witnessed violence and abuse during their migratory journeys or who had faced psychosocial challenges upon return. Psychoeducation sessions were also held for unaccompanied minors to support them in recognizing signs of psychosocial distress as well as to positively cope with adjustment challenges. Collective drawing sessions were organized for young children returnees, allowing them to express their emotions through creative activities. These activities aim to strengthen returnees' resilience.

In Nigeria, a virtual meeting with the Federal Ministry of Health was held on 26 August 2020 to revise the workplan for the implementation of the Mental Gap Action Programme (MhGAP) training. This Joint Initiative-funded pilot project aims at strengthening the mental health system in Edo state and increasing the availability of mental health care for migrants and the community at the primary health care level.

Stemming from the revised workplan initiated in the abovementioned meeting in August 2020, a series of capacity development activities were provided to a group of 14 returnees engaged as Psychosocial Volunteers Mentors (PSSVM) in November and December 2020 (See Capacity-Building section). This intervention is under the Joint Initiative's pilot project "Facilitating a Mentoring System among returnees through a community-based approach to psychosocial reintegration". After having completed the training, the 14 returnees PSSVM conducted three psychosocial group activities held in Benin City from 19-21 January 2021. The group sessions target vulnerable returnees including victims of trafficking (VoT), survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) as well as child returnees and families and caregivers of returnees with mental health needs.



*A psychosocial mentor facilitates activity on self-care for female returnees in Nigeria @IOM 2021/ Narulita Ayu*



*A psychosocial mentor leads activity for children in Nigeria @IOM 2021/ Narulita Ayu*

Group sessions were organized as follows: On the first day, 20 female returnees participated in bead-making group activities. The second day was dedicated to coloring activities for a group of 20 children returnees aged from two to six years old, aimed at providing a vehicle for self-expression and the opportunity of sharing feelings and experiences in a safe space. On the third day, 13 participants joined a peer-to-peer psychosocial group session for family members and caregivers of returnees experiencing severe mental health conditions to connect, share experiences, and draw support from each other. During the activities, information on COVID-19

safety measures was also provided. The objectives of the activities are to (re)-establish social support networks, facilitate the activation of peer-to-peer support mechanisms among returnees, families, and community members, sharing their experiences and the challenges of their return and reintegration process, and promote a sense of belonging and psychosocial wellbeing.

On a different note, IOM in Ghana tested the psychological assessment and screening tools developed by IOM in Nigeria for the charter flight that arrived from Libya in November 2020. Following the assessment, seven returnees were provided psychosocial therapy by the Joint Initiatives MHPSS officer while four of them were referred for specialized care in hospitals. These sessions helped the returnees deal with the negative impacts of the migration experience on their lives such as anxiety, depression, and trauma.

In Guinea, with an objective to identify a national actor to undertake the psychosocial support, IOM and the 'Association guineenne de psychologues cliniciens' (AGPC) are discussing the signature of partnership and data sharing agreements. AGPC is one of the unique actors in psychosocial and psychiatric support in Guinea. Through this partnership, migrants who are deemed vulnerable will be referred to AGPC for a close follow-up, wherein individual and group counselling will be conducted.

On a different note, a joint activity with UNFPA in Guinea on 11 December 2020 allowed ensuring both a psychosocial follow-up and sensitization on gender-based violence (GBV) and human trafficking for 48 returnees comprising of three men and 45 women. UNFPA facilitated sensitization on gender-based violence (GBV) and oriented the participants to the existing mechanism to report such kind of abuse whenever they experience it themselves or other individuals. In addition, IOM discussed human trafficking as well as how to identify potential victims. This activity was also a venue for IOM to conduct psychosocial follow-ups with all the participants.

Finally in Guinea, 31 medical staff including a Psychiatric Unit Doctor from Donka Hospital (the only hospital in Guinea with psychiatric services) were trained on the proper provision of mental health and psychosocial support in Kankan, Guinea, an area which is the point of entry for all IOM returns by land. The training reinforced the capacities of the medical staff to provide psychosocial support to the returnees.



*UPDATES FROM THE PREVIOUS REPORT:***CAMEROON: GROUP PSYCHOEDUCATION SESSIONS**

While face-to-face sessions were limited during the period, IOM in Cameroon continued the group psychoeducation sessions, organizing 23 sessions with a total of 190 beneficiaries supported. These psychoeducation sessions continued to provide key messages on positive coping mechanisms to help the returnees understand the psychological reactions they are manifesting or may arise, drawing from their experiences in their migration journey and upon return. Whenever face to face psychoeducation session is not possible, IOM in Cameroon conducts follow-up telephone calls to check up on the psychological states of the returnees. During the reporting period, 616 returnees were reached through telephone calls to support them with their psychosocial needs. Furthermore, 27 returnees were visited in their homes to receive psychosocial support. COVID-19 safety measures were mainstreamed in all these activities.

**MALI: GROUP PSYCHOEDUCATION SESSIONS**

Group psychoeducation sessions were continued in Mali during the reporting period. Returnees evaluated as having psychosocial support needs, particularly migrants manifesting feelings of shame, low self-esteem, psychosomatic symptoms, anxiety, and stress were provided with MHPSS. Moreover, after an in-depth clinical interview, returnees expressing an intense feeling of shame and rejection by their families were assisted through family mediation and group psychoeducation sessions including their close relatives. In these sessions, the support of their close relatives for the psychosocial wellbeing of the returnees was emphasized.

In addition, psychoeducation sessions were also included in the returnees' socio-professional training conducted at *'Ecole Centrale pour l'Industrie le Commerce et l'Administration'* (ECICA). 53 returnees benefitted from this vocational training and psychoeducation session in December 2020. The objective of the psychoeducation session was to enable the returnees to develop individual skills to deal with the difficulties they encounter in their daily lives. To facilitate the evacuation of stress following the difficulties encountered in their migratory journey as well as to detect the cases requiring special attention.

**f) SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

IOM believes that for reintegration to be sustainable, returnees should have “reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than a necessity”.<sup>25</sup>

In parallel with the economic and psychosocial support, the Joint Initiative also provides social assistance to the returnees which, depending on the needs of the returnee, can cover education, health, and housing support. To this aim, returnees are referred to partners and government-led services whenever possible, although in many instances these national services and infrastructures are lacking or have limited resources. While IOM support often aims at addressing immediate, pressing social needs, prolonged assistance, including for migrants with chronic and/or severe ailments, goes beyond the scope of resources available as part of the reintegration assistance programme. This was flagged in the regional reintegration evaluation, which highlighted the need for donors to increase resources available for longer-term assistance and serious medical needs, and advocacy to the government to reinforce medical structures and access to social services in the Sahel and Lake Chad region for returnees and host community members alike.

Several updates on the processes and specific examples of the social assistance provided by the Joint Initiative are presented below.

<sup>25</sup> IOM, [Towards an integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return](#), 2017

## MEDICAL SUPPORT

Upon assessment of the returnees, medical assistance is provided depending on the needs. Since the beginning of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, 5,624 migrants have benefited from medical assistance.

In Côte d'Ivoire for instance, IOM offers free medical assistance to migrants in need within a month after their return by providing medical consultations, examinations, treatments, and medicines, directly or through its partner clinic (Clinique Sacre Coeur) and pharmacy (Grande Pharmacie des deux plateaux). Beyond the one-month window, IOM in Côte d'Ivoire could still assist the returnees depending on their situation with a stricter assessment and authorization by the Joint Initiative's protection officer. For the most vulnerable returnees and those with serious medical needs or conditions, this assistance is extended until they can take care of themselves autonomously or are referred to national health institutions. During the reporting period, more than 180 migrants benefitted from this kind of in-depth medical assistance. The medical partnerships established in Abidjan also enabled IOM to ensure continuous and rapid assistance throughout the year as migrants in need continued to be referred for care and medication. For medical cases outside of Abidjan, specific financial assistance was provided to help them cover their needs.

As seen through this example, partnerships are key in providing medical care to returnees and have been established in the Sahel and Lake Chad with private (such as the Esther Clinique in Mali, and various hospitals in Nigeria) and public health institutions (such as in Cameroun), or NGOs. For instance, the Burkinabe Red Cross in Burkina Faso in partnership with IOM has been providing medical care, medium-term medical support, medical escorts, and psychosocial care for returning migrants.

Through its flexible, needs-based approach, IOM has been able to provide in-depth support to address severe medical conditions. In March 2020, a migrant who returned to Niger from Libya and suffered the consequences of an accident was provided a kinesiotherapy treatment as part of his reintegration assistance, after consultation with the IOM Medical Unit. Assistance also included the payment of a transportation allowance to the medical facility for his therapy. In Cameroon, beyond the usual medical assistance to those who are in need upon arrival, IOM also shoulders medical expenses of returnees ailing a physical trauma (e.g. returnees who acquired fractures, sometimes requiring prostheses). In Ghana, one of the cases during the reporting period was a returnee who returned with multiple fracture injuries to his limbs. He was then referred to the Greater Accra Regional Hospital for medical assistance. IOM worked with a team of orthopedic surgeons to provide multiple surgeries to the beneficiary, allowing this person to keep a functioning left hand. The beneficiary was hospitalized for over four weeks, also receiving treatment for his leg injuries. For case in a point in Mali, a widow who returned from Libya with her children arrived in Bamako with eye problems which resulted in temporary blindness. Her four-year-old daughter also could no longer walk due to neurological disease. IOM then referred the mother and her daughter to Amademe center to be treated.

Finally, IOM seeks to ensure returnees are integrated and have access to local medical services and schemes. In Mali, IOM refers returnees who have chronic health conditions to the National Direction for Social Development of the Ministry of Social Affairs, to be included in the national Medical Assistance Plan ("Régime d'assistance médicale") through which they gain access to free health care in all public health centres in Mali for two years. This support addresses one of the major stress factors of returnees in Mali: the high cost of medical care, allowing the reintegration programme to focus on the returnees' other needs. In Nigeria, IOM and the Ministry of Health have developed an agreement for returnees to be included in the Public Health Insurance scheme, which is expected to be finalized in the upcoming reporting periods.

## EDUCATION SUPPORT

As outlined in [module 6 of the Reintegration handbook](#) on "a child rights approach to the sustainable reintegration of children and families", developed by IOM in collaboration with UNICEF and released in December 2020, ensuring children have access to educational opportunities is key when seeking to address their immediate and long-term needs through reintegration support. Such needs include nurturing relationships as well as social, emotional, and life skills, to which access to education can strongly contribute.

For this reason, IOM offices in the Sahel and Lake Chad region strive to ensure access to education for all returning children through referral to schools, payment of tuition fees, and school material and uniforms. To cope with limited resources for reintegration support, IOM usually provides such assistance to accompanied, unaccompanied, and separated migrant children supported by IOM in their return. So far, 1,524 migrant children have benefitted from such support in the Sahel and Lake Chad region.

However, some IOM offices with smaller caseloads are also able to broaden the scope of such assistance. For instance, IOM in Ghana also provides education support for returnees' dependents in the form of tuition, feeding, transportation, and books for the academic period. In Guinea Bissau, IOM covers the reintegration support for up to four dependant children per returned migrant and supports their parents with the obtention of identity documents (e.g. birth certificate) needed for their registration in school. IOM in Guinea Bissau supported 520 non-migrant children through such assistance.



*A beneficiary from Ghana is very happy and thankful for IOM support of his study. @IOM/ Juliane Reissig*

Moreover, education support is also provided to youth and adults wishing to resume their studies. This kind of support is however rare, as returning migrants assisted through Voluntary Return and Reintegration in the region usually have a low education background. Yet, so far IOM has assisted 397 adults to resume their education.

Examples of such assistance include a Nigerien migrant returning from Algeria who was assisted with the payment of his tuition fees for his second year of Master's degree in Information Technology (IT) at the Niamey Polytechnic school. In Ghana, migrant studying journalism received support to cover his tuition fees for an extra year. He plans to focus on Public Relations and one day in his own word 'be a Ghanaian Ambassador'.

### HOUSING SUPPORT

Access to adequate housing is a basic human right that is vital in jump-starting the reintegration journey of the returnees. In various circumstances, returnees, when they return to their countries of origin, face difficulties in finding lodging because they cannot afford the rent, or their immediate family is not able to accommodate them. In some countries, such as Ghana, the minimum duration for a rental agreement is two years, with landlords requiring that payment of the two-year rent is paid upfront, thus hindering returnees' access to housing. In this regard, the Joint Initiative assists the returnees through the payment of rental fees, the renovation of an existing house to fit their needs,

or the construction of a new house, depending on their needs. So far, 797 migrants, including 325 children benefitted from such support.

In Cameroon, assistance to access lodging has benefited returnees coming from the Far North, South-West, and North-West regions, which are impacted by a volatile security situation. In fact, migrants originating from these areas often prefer not to return there and request support to find accommodation in other areas, such as the cities of Douala and Yaoundé.

## ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION

Identity documents facilitate reintegration. Returnees' documents and proof of identity are of paramount importance in ensuring the protection of migrants' and their access to public services and social protection schemes, especially in health and education. Documentation is also important for returnees to be able to circulate freely within their country of origin and seek formal employment.

To facilitate returnees (re)acquiring documentation, and within the capacity of national administrations, IOM partnered with national authorities issuing such documents and proof of identity. For instance, in Burkina Faso, IOM assisted returnees in acquiring their birth certificates or the Burkinabè national identity card through partnerships with the respective municipalities and the national police.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE REINTEGRATION COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Monitoring and evaluation tools were adapted in the previous reporting period to reflect the rapidly shifting context amid the pandemic. Following a COVID-19 needs assessment for returnees conducted in April-May 2020, a COVID-adapted economic reintegration survey was designed to get more detailed feedback on the most common types of in-kind assistance used in the Sahel and Lake Chad: microbusiness, cash-for-work, job placement, and vocational training. The same question on overall beneficiary satisfaction used in the previous M&E survey was inserted into the COVID-adapted survey to allow consistent reporting on this main indicator, bringing the total number of migrants consulted about their levels of satisfaction with IOM reintegration programming to more than 4,000. The below figure captures beneficiary feedback from the start of the programme until the end of the reporting period.

### BENEFICIARY SATISFACTION WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

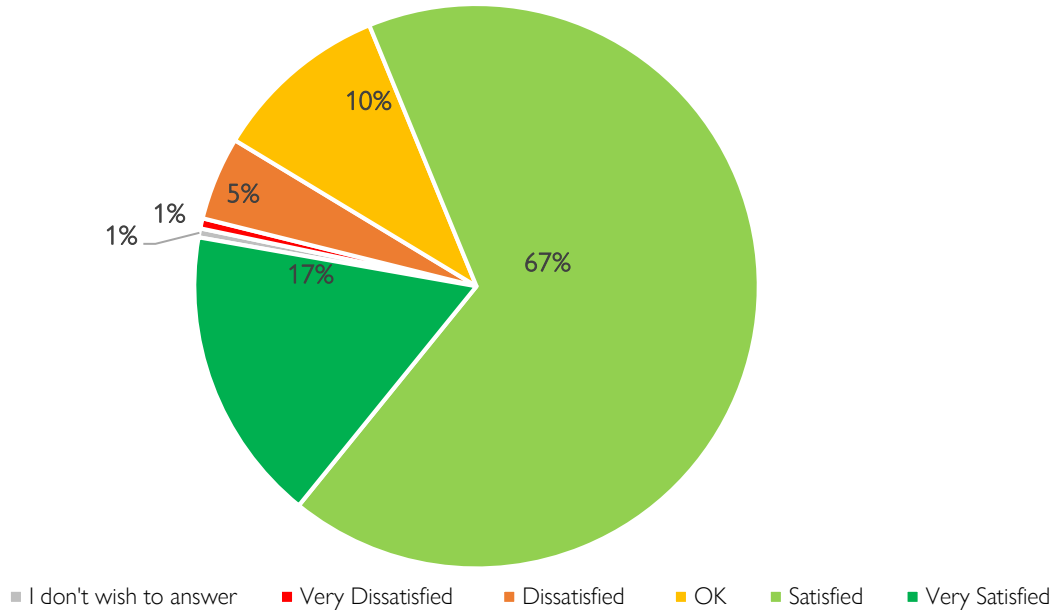
Specific Objective # 2	Indicators	Target	Achieved
To improve the reintegration of returning migrants and to strengthen national structures and capacities to manage reintegration in a dignified and sustainable manner	% of beneficiaries who report they are satisfied with the reintegration assistance received from IOM	70%	83%

### BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

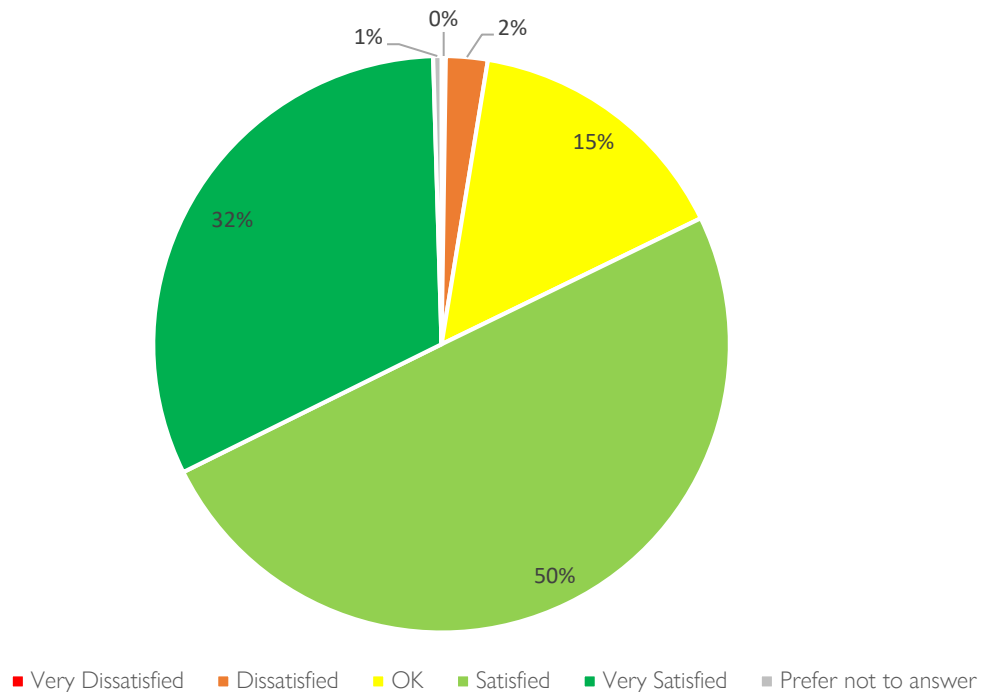
Looking at the period from the beginning of the programme until the end of February 2020, the programme's reintegration assistance was judged to be effective by the majority of returnees, with 84% satisfied (including 17% who reported they were 'very satisfied'). Of the remaining number, 10 per cent described their assistance as 'OK' while 6

per cent were dissatisfied. Some differences were observed when breaking down results by sex, with more women giving feedback that they were very satisfied (37%) compared to 14 per cent of men.

PRE-COVID-19: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE? (N=3,900)



DURING THE COVID-19: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE? (N=427)



Drivers of dissatisfaction with economic reintegration assistance included continued financial struggles, often related to debts from the migration journey and family expenses outweighing microbusiness profits. A female beneficiary who had opened a grocery store in The Gambia complained, *“Not happy, I have trouble paying bills...[I] Owe the landlord three months...and owe the woman who sponsored me out to Libya, and the business man who supplied me with materials for my business.”* Delays in receiving assistance are another factor fueling dissatisfaction.

Many returning migrants were satisfied due to their financial independence being restored with the programme's microbusiness support. Two women running a thriving business together in Cote d'Ivoire said, *“Thanks to God, because the money I paid to migrate, now, after one year and four months, I've earned double the amount.”*

Even without paid employment, for some, undertaking a vocational training activity boosted their optimism and social credibility. “Since we started this training, our parents are proud of us,” said one Guinean migrant. Others were satisfied due to psychosocial support provided, such as this Gambian returnee: *“When I arrived, I had difficulties because I was living with regrets. Before I left, I had a shop. When I went there [Libya] I spent 150,000 Gambian Dalasi [approx. 2,500 EUR] that I lost and that's why I was disturbed. With the help of IOM, I have been able to stabilize my mind and focus on something different.”*

According to the Reintegration Programme Monitoring Survey, 80 per cent of beneficiaries surveyed in the region ( $n=3,373$ ) state that they do not regret their decision to return. Only two per cent say that they are taking concrete steps to re-migrate, such as saving money.

## DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

According to the COVID-adapted economic reintegration survey, the regional satisfaction rating for reintegration assistance has decreased slightly amid the economic and health crisis, from 84% to 82%. However, a higher proportion of beneficiaries report that they are ‘very satisfied’ with IOM assistance (32% of beneficiaries now state that they are ‘very satisfied’ compared to 17% before the crisis.) Overall, 59% of beneficiaries report that their economic situation has deteriorated compared to before the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 – however, 84% of beneficiaries say if IOM had not assisted them, their situation today would be worse. Below are some of the other key results from the survey:

- Reintegration counselling: 79% of beneficiaries confirmed that the form of reintegration assistance they were given matched their first choice
- Microbusiness: 71% of migrants state that they earn enough profit from their microbusinesses to fully or partially meet their family's needs, a strong result in a challenging economic context. 63% say that the COVID-19 crisis has negatively affected their business. One-quarter of returnee microbusinesses employ staff.
- Vocational training: 95% of returnees say that vocational training helped them to gain new skills, and 60% report finding a job due to the training.
- Cash-for-work: Respondents had participated in activities such as beach and neighbourhood cleaning campaigns and tree-planting initiatives. Overall, all returnees were satisfied with the organization of the activity and 91% reported that participating in these activities enhanced their relationships with the host community. The cash-for-work stipend allowed participants to meet their needs during the activity, but almost two-thirds struggled to find another job afterwards.





# EU-IOM

Joint Initiative for  
Migrant Protection  
and Reintegration



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Photo : Mohamed Diabaté/IOM Côte d'Ivoire