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**EU-IOM**

Joint Initiative for  
Migrant Protection  
and Reintegration  
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# BI-ANNUAL REINTEGRATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2020



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# LIST OF BOXES AND TABLES

## 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)
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AFD	French Agency for Development
ANIES	Agence nationale d'inclusion économique et sociale (Guinea)
ANPE	Agence Nationale Pour l'Emploi (National Agency for Employment) (Burkina Faso)
APIL	Appui à la Promotion d'Initiatives Locales (Support for the Promotion of Local Initiatives) (Niger)
ARECC	Association des Rapatriés et de Lutte contre l'Emigration Clandestine du Cameroun (Association of Repatriates and Fight against Clandestine Emigration from Cameroon)
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BUNEC	Bureau National de l'Etat civil (National Registration Bureau) (Cameroon)
CADEL	Comité d'Appui au Développement Local (Local Development Support Committee) (Niger)
CB	Capacity Building
CBI	Cash-based Intervention
CBR	Community-Based Reintegration
CCI	Chambre de commerce et d'industrie (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) (Burkina Faso)
CID	Conseil Ingénierie et développement (Engineering and Development Consulting) (Cameroon)
CMPJ	Centres Multimétiers pour les jeunes (Multiservices youth center) (Cameroon)
CMR	Central Migration Route
CNDHL	Comité Nationale des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés (National Committee on Human Rights and Liberties) (Cameroon)
CONASUR	National Council of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Burkina Faso)
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale (International Cooperation, Italian NGO)
COPROSUR	Provincial Councils of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Burkina Faso)



CORESUR	Regional Councils of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (Burkina Faso)
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease – 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DGASE	General Directorate for the support of Senegalese abroad (Senegal)
DGME	Délégation Générale des Maliens de l'Extérieur (General Delegation of Malians Living Abroad) (Mali)
DGSE	Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (General Directorate for External Security) (Senegal)
DGSN	Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale (General Directorate for National Security) (Cameroon)
DNDS	Direction Nationale du Développement Sociale (National Directorate of Social Development) (Mali)
DNPC	Direction Nationale de la Protection Civile (National Directorate of Civil Protection) (Mali)
DSW	Department of Social Welfare (The Gambia)
DTM	Data Tracking Matrix
DUE	Delegation of the European Union
ECOCIG	ECOWAS Citizens in The Gambia (Association)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
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)
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GEDD Gao	Groupe Éducatif pour le Développement Durable (Educational Group for Sustainable Development) (Niger)
GERME	Gérer mieux votre entreprise (Manage your business better) (Cameroon)

GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Cooperation Agency)
GMT	Thematic Group on Migration (Guinea Bissau)
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
IM	Implementing Partners
IMAP	IOM Migrant Assistant Portal
IMVF	Instituto Marquês de Valle Flor
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Center
JI	Joint Initiative
KMC	Kanifing Municipality Council (The Gambia)
LGA	Local Government Area
LuxDev	Luxemburg Agency for Development Cooperation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies (Nigeria)
MEBF	Direction of the Burkina Faso Enterprise House (Burkina Faso)
MET	Monitoring and Evaluation Expert team
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MIC	Migrant Information Centers
MINADER	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) (Cameroon)
MINADT	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et Décentralisation (Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization) (Cameroon)
MINAS	Ministère des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Social Affairs) (Cameroon)
MINAT	Ministry of Territorial Administration (Cameroon)
MINEPIA	Ministère de L'élevage, des Pêches et Industries Animales (Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries) (Cameroon)
MINFOP	Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation (Ministry of Employment and Training) (Cameroon)
MINJEC	Ministère de la Jeunesse et de l'Education Civique (Ministry of Youth and Civic Education) (Cameroon)

MINJUSTICE	Ministère de la justice (Ministry of Justice) (Cameroon)
MINREX	Ministère des Relations Extérieures (Ministry of External Relations) (Cameroon)
MINSANTE	Ministère de la Santé Publique (Ministry of Public Health) (Cameroon)
MME	Ministère des Maliens de L'Extérieur (Ministry of Malians Living Abroad) (Cameroon)
MME&IA	Ministère des Maliens de l'Extérieur & Integration Africain (Ministry of Malians Abroad & African Integration) (Mali)
MoI	Ministry of Interior (The Gambia)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSLCP	Ministère de la Solidarité et de la Lutte contre la Pauvreté <i>Pauvreté</i> (Ministry of Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty) (Mali)
NAATIP	National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (The Gambia)
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)
ONES	Organisation Nigérienne pour le Développement, l'Environnement et la Santé (Nigerian Organization for Development, Environment and Health) (Niger)
ONFP	Office National de Formation Professionnelle (National Office for Professional Training) (Senegal)
OSC	Organizações da Sociedade Civil da Guiné-Bissau (Guinea-Bissau Civil Society Organizations)
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PBE	Ecole Polytechnique de Niamey
POE	Points of Entry
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PROTEJEM	Projet amélioration de la protection des Enfants et Jeunes en mobilité sur les principales routes migratoires en Afrique de l'Ouest (Improving the protection of children and young people on the move on the main migratory routes of West Africa) (Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Senegal, The Gambia)
PSC	Project Steering Committee

PSS	Psychosocial support
RCCE	Risk Communication and Communication Engagement (The Gambia)
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SWG	Sub-Working Group
TCC	Trauma Center Cameroon
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
URR	Upper River Division
USMC	Unaccompanied and Separated Migrant Children
VHR	Voluntary Humanitarian Return
VoTs	Victims of Trafficking
VP	Vice President
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WCA	West and Central Africa
WMR	Western Mediterranean Route



## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed a global challenge and demanded stronger coordination and governance among the international development organizations, governments, civil societies, and between stakeholders within the countries. The problem stipulates responses that go far beyond just the health and well-being of the population but swiftly became economic, social, political, ethnic, and gender issues. While most of the population has been vastly affected by the pandemic, not everyone exhibits the same resilience to the measures that have been implemented worldwide. Particularly, in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, the pandemic intensifies an already present fragility, most especially on the vulnerable migrants, one reason being most of their economic and social activities have been affected by the unprecedented mobility restrictions.

The target countries'<sup>1</sup> governments, like most in the world, have implemented border closures, lockdowns or curfews, and travel restrictions and bans, to curb the spread of the virus. These measures reshaped the mobility of the population and impacted the operations of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative with the respective partner institutions on the return and reintegration of migrants.

This fourth biannual reintegration report covering the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 July 2020 showcases the adaptation of the reintegration assistance in the Sahel and Lake Chad region amid the pandemic. The report highlights how the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has been a tool to mitigate the adverse effect of COVID-19 not just to the returnees but also to the community members. Updates on the reintegration activities reported in the previous reintegration report are also presented. Furthermore, the report details recommendations stemming from the regional reintegration evaluation conducted in January and February 2020, and finally, it reports on the monitoring and evaluation results as of 31 July 2020.

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<sup>1</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

27,056

migrants completed  
their reintegration  
assistance



The programme has already engaged **267** community-based reintegration projects in target countries with 5,436 beneficiaries comprising **2,491** returnees (46%) and **2,945** community members (54%). *More details in [Community-based reintegration assistance](#) page 30*

The Framework Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (Framework SOPs), regulating the reintegration assistance of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative have been **validated** for all 12 countries. *More details in [SOPs on assisted voluntary return and reintegration](#) page 19*



There have been **132** capacity-building activities conducted in 12 countries benefitting approximately **3,300** key partners in reintegration assistance including government, civil society organizations, and NGOs since the inception of the programme. Some of the capacity building activities have been adapted to the current situation such as psychosocial support trainings emphasizing anti-stigmatization and discrimination in relation to COVID-19. *More details in [Capacity-building for delivery of reintegration assistance](#) page 20*

A rapid needs assessment conducted by IOM in March and May showed that **85%** of **1,169** surveyed reintegration beneficiaries' financial status has gotten worse during the pandemic due to the unprecedented mobility restrictions. The uncertainties have also led **60%** of the beneficiaries to report that their overall well-being has deteriorated. Stemming from the rapid needs assessment, cash-based reintegration assistance has been rolled out in several countries to combat the negative effects of COVID-19 on returnees. *More details in [Adaptation of the provision of reintegration assistance in response to COVID-19](#) page 26*



Positive coping strategies in relation to COVID-19 pandemic have been integrated into the psychosocial support provided. Several country offices conducted psychosocial assistance via phone due to mobility restrictions. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative has continued to deliver social support to the returnees particularly on health, education, shelter, and more. *More details in [Psychosocial reintegration support](#) page 37*

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative has **continued** to strengthen synergies with State and non-State actors. Several beneficiaries have been successfully referred to partners to support them in their reintegration process. During the reporting period, coordination efforts focused on alleviating the adverse impact of the pandemic on returnees. *More details in [Governance and partnerships](#) page 11*



## I. 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') among others adheres to the Objective 21 of the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (GCM) which is '*Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration*'. As mentioned in the previous [reintegration reports](#), the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has been an instrument to enhance coordination and develop governance structures on migrant protection in the target countries since its roll-out in April 2017. This coordination and governance have been put to test by the COVID-19 pandemic which required quick decision making and rapid actions amidst increasingly restrictive measures of internal and external mobility.

Although due to the pandemic it has been challenging to organize reintegration working groups and or steering committee meetings in person, country offices and partners have quickly adapted to the situation to address issues in the implementation of reintegration activities brought about by the pandemic. While most of the coordination and meetings happened virtually, important decisions and actions have been successfully made, such as securing government buy-in on the cash-based reintegration assistance as well as valuable referrals to numerous partners and more.

#### PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC)

Five project steering committee meetings were scheduled for the first semester of 2020 in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal (see [Report #3](#)). However, due to the current pandemic, only the one for Senegal was pushed through and an ad hoc meeting in Cameroon was conducted.

The PSC meeting in Senegal on 16 June 2020 was set to discuss the progress and achievements of the Joint Initiative Programme as well as to solicit recommendations on programmatic adjustments to effectively respond to the needs of the returnees facing the challenges of COVID-19. The PSC was called by the General Directorate for the support of Senegalese abroad (DGASE) under the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, inviting representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Ministry of Justice, the Regional Development Agency, as well as international partners implementing the project, namely the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), and the French Agency for Development (AFD), the Delegation of the European Union (DUE) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The PSC meeting in Senegal provided recommendations which, once implemented, allowed the project to flexibly adjust to the emerging needs of the returnees during the pandemic. Specifically:

- The requested programmatic changes due to COVID-19 adaptations and restrictions should be reflected in a contract amendment of the IOM National Action.
- IOM shall explore options to channel some of its reintegration support through cash-based interventions (CBI) to mitigate the risks faced by vulnerable migrants in the face of the COVID-19.

- IOM should reinforce its sensitization activities to inform migrants of potential changes to its reintegration programme due to COVID-19.
- Cash support of 150,000 XOF (226 EUR) per migrants and a kit containing hygiene materials should be provided to migrants to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19.

In Cameroon, an ad hoc meeting and a working session were organized between IOM and the government of Cameroon, mainly with the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), the lead ministry on the Joint Initiative on 7 and 21 July 2020 respectively. These sessions have ensured the government buy-in and support on the reintegration support provided through cash-based assistance, an initiative that was proposed following the conduct of an assessment of returnees' needs in light of the pandemic.

## TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS (TWG)

During the reporting period, the technical working groups (TWG) focused mainly on alleviating the effects of the current pandemic on the reintegration efforts of each country. This was done primarily by delivering concrete solutions and coordinating actions that enhance synergies between various sectors. For instance in Guinea Bissau, the Thematic Group on Migration (GMT) decided to meet twice a month since the onset of the pandemic, to improve collaboration and coordinate actions and responses to combat the adverse effects of COVID-19 on migrant returnees. In addition, through the TWG, coordinated actions and defined roles have been established in Mali, particularly on the admission of the returnees from arriving at the airport to COVID-19 testing and guiding them to the quarantine facilities. The joint efforts of the Ministry of Malians Living Abroad (MME), DUE, and IOM facilitated the return of 179 Malians from Niger in full compliance with the new rules imposed due to COVID-19.

Two TWG meetings on reintegration were conducted in the Gambia in March 2020, at the Ministry of Interior (Mol). The first one gathered the Reintegration Sub-Working Group<sup>2</sup> (SWG) on 4 March 2020 to discuss IOM partnership with private sectors, NGOs, and CSOs, provide updates on activities in migrants' information centers, and community-based reintegration process. The Reintegration Sub-Working Group meeting led to a recommendation that economic reintegration assistance per returnee should be increased to at least 1,500 euros. However, this suggested amount was not raised to the Project Steering Committee and the average amount for reintegration assistance was not increased.

The other TWG was arranged with the Reception SWG<sup>3</sup> which was held on 11 March 2020 and addressed the issue of reintegration assistance for forced returns from Europe. The SWG designated the location and set up for reception assistance, including health screening, at the Banjul Airport. It also reviewed and validated the SOP for Complementary Reintegration Assistance for Migrants Returning Involuntarily from European Union Member States, Norway & Switzerland. Consequently, the Gambian government and the EU Member States agreed to coordinate the arrival of charter flights with a maximum of 20 returnees per flight.

Also in the Gambia, a national Return and Reintegration Thematic Working Group was launched under the auspices of the Mol. Its preliminary meeting took place on 21 July 2020 and built upon the work of

<sup>2</sup> The Reintegration Sub-Working Group meeting was attended by, inter alia, Ministry of Interior (Mol), Ministry of Higher education, Research, Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, National Youth Council, and Department of Community Development

<sup>3</sup> A total of 12 group members including Ministry of Health, Gambia Red Cross Society, Gambia Civil Aviation Authority, IOM, DUE, and Department of Social Welfare (DSW) were in attendance.

the Technical Working Groups under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative. The National Return and Reintegration Thematic Working Group aims to encourage coordination on return and reintegration at the national level. In Mali, the above-mentioned virtual TWG meeting was held on 21 May 2020 with the Ministry of Malians Living Abroad (MME), National Directorate of Social Development (DNDS), Ministry of Solidarity and the Fight against Poverty (MSLCP), National Directorate of Civil Protection (DNPC) and Delegation of the European Union to discuss the opportunity to provide cash support to returnees as part of their reintegration assistance and present the SOPs developed by IOM country office. More details on cash-based reintegration can be found in [Adaptation of the provision of reintegration assistance in response to COVID-19](#) section.

Furthermore, a follow-up TWG meeting (in person) with MME and the DUE took place on 8 June 2020 in the MME's office to discuss the building of the two Antennae offices for the Ministry of Malians Abroad & African Integration (MME&IA) in Kayes and Gao.

## B) PARTNERSHIPS AND REFERRALS

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative seeks to ensure effective partnerships in assisting returning migrants throughout their reintegration process. Partnerships and referrals have been a vital element of the success of the Joint Initiative in migrant protection in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. Vulnerable migrants, in this case, the returnees, have a broad set of needs that transcend various sectors. Depending on the situation of the returnees, assistance needed can include, among others, health and psychosocial support, education, economic and social support. Therefore, no single organization or government agency could likely address all the returnees' needs.

Successful and sustainable reintegration assistance requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to avoid the fragmentation of services provided most especially during the current pandemic. In response to COVID-19, several new partnerships, synergies, and referral mechanisms have been established.

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative recognizes the essence of visibility and engagement with the local stakeholders, to increase the transparency of the interventions as well as accountability towards and ownership by the local actors and communities, on the reintegration assistance provided. The national and local governments in target countries work side by side with IOM to deliver optimal reintegration assistance to returnees.

In Burkina Faso, IOM met with the Direction of the National Employment Agency (ANPE) and with the Direction of the Burkina Faso Enterprise House (MEBF) on respectively 5 and 10 March 2020 to reduce the costs linked to the development of reintegration plans. In coordination with these two agencies, the costs linked to the set-up of a business plan by the migrants were reduced from 70,000 XOF (about 107 EUR) in Ouagadougou and 75,000 XOF (about 115 EUR) in other regions to 20,000 XOF (about 30 EUR).

In Cameroon, synergies with key government agencies have continued to improve especially in combating economic pressures brought about by the pandemic. Particularly, the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education (MINJEC), Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), and Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries, and Animal Industries (MINEPIA) worked closely to assemble a

technical training in agriculture and livestock which benefitted nearly 200 returnees between April and June 2020. The training was meant to empower local actors and ensure the sustainability of the reintegration offered by IOM during the pandemic. Trainings were held in the MINJEC's Multifunctional Youth Career Centers (CMPJ) in Yaoundé and Douala. The training respected sanitary measures and allowed returnees to take advantage of the waiting period induced by the pandemic before receiving assistance to launch their microbusiness.

Likewise, the National Committee on Human Rights and Liberties (CNDHL) ensured support to provide legal assistance to returnees in conflict with the law, while the Ministry of Justice (MINJUSTICE) and the National Registration Bureau (BUNEC) will work on providing identity cards to the returnees in need.

In the Gambia, IOM finalized and signed an MoU with the Kanifing Municipality Council (KMC) in June 2020 to include returnees in their cash for work initiative. KMC will include returnees together with other community members – mainly youths – to participate in cleaning activities around the council, which is the largest urban area and most important business zone in the country. As part of the MoU, IOM procured assorted supplies and equipment and provides the payment (with the same rates and conditions as per KMC guidelines) to returnees. Supplies purchased include tricycles, wheelbarrows, hard brushes, gloves and masks, iron spades, locally produced rake spades, and brooms, as well as reflector vests. The KMC will provide training to the returnees and field team members on the activities, including occupational safety and health (OSH) and environmental safety and safeguards.

In response to COVID-19, IOM in the Gambia also participated in the Risk Communication and Communication Engagement (RCCE) and surveillance pillars of the National Health Emergency Committee and the production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) coveralls. These efforts were lauded by the Vice President (VP) in a courtesy call in April 2020 attended by IOM Chief-of-mission, which highlighted the innovative idea of engaging returnees in the COVID-19 response and creating livelihoods for the returnees in the production of PPE for government frontliners. The VP advised IOM to meet with the officials of the Gambia Standards Bureau to present the prototype PPE for conformity and quality assessment, before engaging in mass production. See [Mobilization of RA beneficiaries in COVID-19 response](#) for further details.

In Senegal, discussions on potential collaboration opportunities for income-generating activities, including job placement, internships, and on-the-job training are underway between IOM and the National Office for Professional Training (ONFP), prompted by an already signed MoU.

Finally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM in Guinea Conakry organized a discussion with the National Agency for Social and Economic Inclusion (ANIES). The discussions led ANIES to support the distribution of hygiene kits to vulnerable communities including returnees.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH EUTF PARTNERS

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative recognizes the importance of a holistic approach and the interdependence of activities on reintegration assistance in each target country. However, as described in reports [2](#) and [3](#), the programme is facing important challenges in the development and implementation of referral pathways to other EUTF-funded programmes.<sup>4</sup> Despite these challenges, the Joint Initiative continued to strive to foster

<sup>4</sup> E.g. mismatch of geographic locations or of beneficiaries' profiles, late starting date of several EUTF-funded programmes (as compared to the EU-IOM Joint Initiative), etc.



operational partnerships with other stakeholders funded by the EUTF, which targets similar beneficiaries.

In Senegal, IOM's partnership with the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel) was formalized during the reporting period through the signing of an MoU. This is to create a referral pathway for IOM beneficiaries who have received economic reintegration assistance in the fields of agriculture and food processing. The referred migrants will be enrolled in a coaching and mentoring programme of Enabel, and assist in networking and find new investments to grow their business.

Collaboration with Enabel and IOM in the Gambia has likewise continued to strengthen, as more returnees are being referred, especially those who have skills in plumbing or have experience as electricians.

In Niger, 35 migrant returnees were referred to Enabel to join income-generating activities and/or benefit from training on financial literacy in the region of Zinder. In addition, during the reporting period, 14 women migrants were referred to the Funds for the Support of Professional training and Apprenticeship (FAFPA) to benefit from training in Tahoua, as per the tripartite agreement between IOM, FAFPA, and the Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation (LuxDev), which is funding the training.

#### **BOX 2 : IOM Migrant Assistant Portal (IMAP)**

In May 2020, IOM launched the roll-out of the Migrant Assistant Portal (IMAP) (previously referred to as the online outward referral mechanism) through a kick-off meeting gathering all country offices of the Sahel and Lake Chad region.

On 1 July 2020, a demo session was organized with Enabel and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) in Niger. Enabel was then trained on the use of the platform on 9 July and was subsequently able to start using it during the reporting period. Discussions have also continued with SNV on a data sharing agreement with IOM, which would allow them to use the platform once signed. Another demo session was organized on 30 July 2020 for the Association of Repatriates and Fight against Clandestine Emigration from Cameroon (ARECC), Enabel in Guinea Conakry and Senegal, the Federal Medical Center in Nigeria, the International Trade Center (ITC) in Guinea Conakry, LuxDev in Niger, SNV in Mali and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Guinea Conakry. A training for ARECC in Cameroon, LuxDev in Niger and Enabel and UNDP in Guinea Conakry will take place during the next reporting period.

In the Gambia, where the IMAP was first piloted in 2019, the portal is being used by four partners, to whom IOM referred 50 returnees: 10 to Enabel, six to GIZ, seven to the Instituto Marques de Val Flor (IMVF) and 27 to ITC.

Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), an Italian NGO also providing support to returnees also signed a data sharing agreement with IOM in the Gambia, allowing them to use the platform.

During the reporting period, referral to EUTF funded programmes started in Guinea Conakry with a total of 109 referrals, wherein 74 (68%) received actual support from the partners. 22 were assisted by Enabel, 30 by ITC, and by 22 UNDP, while the other 35 finally declined the assistance offered by partners and preferred to receive assistance provided by IOM. See table 1 below for the complete list of referrals to EU funded programmes.

Country	Referrals to EUTF-funded programmes - reporting period (1/2/2020 – 31/7/2020)	Referrals to EUTF-funded programmes – cumulative (1/4/2017 – 31/7/2020)	Actual support confirmed - cumulative
Gambia	49	50	N/A
Guinea Conakry	109	109	74
Mali	0	249	12
Niger	49	153	15
Senegal	0	9	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>110</b>

*Table 1. Referrals to EUTF funded programmes*

Further collaboration was also sought with other EUTF-funded projects, such as ARCHIPELAGO (Innovative vocational training programme in the Sahel and Lake Chad). In March 2020, IOM Chad referred two returnees to the ARCHIPELAGO project implemented by the ACRA<sup>5</sup> Foundation, an Italian NGO. These returnees from Niger had received reintegration support through the Joint Initiative<sup>6</sup> and were referred to training on the use of ovens and solar drying. While the training was due to start in March, it was postponed due to COVID-19 and will resume during the next reporting period. Due to the geographic area covered by the activity and returnee's requested profile (i.e. women, while the majority of Chadian returnees assisted through the Joint Initiative are men), IOM in Chad was unable to refer more returnees to the program. However, the ACRA Foundation agreed to contact IOM again once they start implementing vocational training targeting men, during the next reporting period.

To facilitate these referrals, IOM took part in a webinar on 4 - 5 June 2020, during which IOM presented the pre-conditions to be met in order to enable referrals and discussed with ARCHIPELAGO partners the signing of data sharing agreements and the selection process for beneficiaries. Discussions also focused on how assistance would be organized between partners and IOM, to ensure beneficiaries receive the best support without duplicated assistance from partners.

Following this webinar, IOM participated in a series of meetings at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), for the launch of the ARCHIPELAGO project titled "Skills development project for better employability of young people and women in the mango sector" on 16 June, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Once operational, migrants wishing to work in the mango sector can be referred to this project. In Mali, IOM met members of the Chamber of Commerce in Bamako on 30 June to discuss their partnership, which will allow returnees to be referred to the ARCHIPELAGO training, expected to start in September 2020. Two conference calls were also organized in June 2020 between IOM, the EU Delegation in Senegal, and the Chamber of Trades and Crafts of Finistère (France), to discuss the development of the ARCHIPELAGO

<sup>5</sup> "Associazione di Cooperazione Rurale in Africa e America Latina" (Organization for Rural Cooperation in Africa and Latin America), mainly referred to as ACRA Foundation

<sup>6</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 these migrants returning from Niger was covered through the Joint Initiative in Niger.

project titled “Dual vocational and entrepreneurial training program for Senegal”. Activities of this project are planned to start in November and the meetings served to clarify the number of returnees to be referred in each targeted region, as well as begin the elaboration of an MoU and data sharing agreement.

On another note, in the Gambia, discussions have started with an EUTF-funded project managed by the Spanish Red Cross called “Assistance and protection of the most vulnerable migrants in West Africa”, and planned to target migrants in transit and host communities, in Kanifing Municipality, Upper River Region, and West Coast Region. Likewise, a dialogue ensued for a possible collaboration regarding the PROTEJEM project (“Improving the protection of children and young people on the move on the main migratory routes of West Africa”) managed by Save the Children and Terre des Hommes. These projects are still in their inception phases and possible synergies with the IOM project are being explored.

In Ghana, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), one of the organizations funded by the EUTF in the framework of the GrEEEn project (“*Boosting green employment and enterprise opportunities in Ghana*”) requested IOM to review the content of the flyers and distribute information to better reach returnees assisted under the EUTF.

Finally in Burkina Faso, IOM has been working with the Ethical Fashion Initiative implemented by the International Trade Center (ITC) since 2019, although a formal convention is still to be finalized. On 20 February 2020, the Ethical Fashion Initiative presented returnees with opportunities related to the processing of Burkinabe cotton as well as training of migrants in trades linked to the value chains of cotton processing.

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

In Burkina Faso, cooperation between the Joint Initiative and the Spanish Red Cross’ AMiRA project, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom (UK), has been strengthened as IOM continuously refer migrants to the actors of the AMiRA project for medical and psychosocial support (PSS), especially in the Centre-Est region.

In the Gambia, ten returnees who survived a shipwreck in Mauritania while trying to reach the Canary Islands have been referred to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). These returnees were provided with post-arrival assistance by IOM under the Joint Initiative, however, they are not eligible for economic reintegration assistance. IOM, therefore, collaborated with UNOPS, which is implementing an EU-funded project in road construction, to refer these returnees to their cash-for-work scheme.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 of the shipwreck survivors were also referred to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPF), to participate in a soap-making project (see [section 4.c](#)). The assisted returnees and other community members were trained on soap production by the country’s Department of Community Development.

The pandemic also led to the closing of the Gambian-Senegalese border, leaving migrants stranded in the Gambia and requiring urgent support. The joint efforts of IOM and an association “ECOWAS Citizens in The Gambia (ECOCIG)” led to the distribution of emergency food assistance to 21 stranded migrants. The group includes ten Guineans, four Nigerians, three Sierra Leonians, two Ghanaians, and two Malians, comprising of 12 male and 11 female. The vulnerability assessment conducted by IOM in July 2020 suggests

that migrants were generally in good mental and physical condition and continued to receive some support from their families in countries of origin. They were then assisted with voluntary return towards their country of origin through a regional emergency COVID-19 budget line under the Joint Initiative.

Furthermore, partnership agreements with three shelters (“Daughters of Abraham”, “Bhakita Villa”, and “SOS Villages”) and child protection networks in Nigeria are in the finalization stage. The partnership with the shelters will provide an option for short-term accommodation for vulnerable migrants while coordination with the child protection network will create linkages with state-based child protection structures. In this regard, a legal hub for victims of trafficking (VoTs) was established in Edo state through a UK-funded project and can offer pro bono legal services to returnees.

In Guinea Bissau, IOM requested assistance from its partner, the NGO Asas de Socorro, to establish a network of support and contacts with beneficiaries of different agricultural projects to transport their goods for sale in the capital, Bissau. These beneficiaries have been hardly hit by COVID-19 and the ensuing constraints of the declaration of a state of emergency and mobility restrictions in the country. This initiative allowed to organize nine trips from Mafanco and Sonaco in the region of Gabu to Bissau between March and June 2020, and to generate nine million West African CFA francs (approximately 13,600 Euros) worth of sales, which was a tremendous help for the beneficiaries.

IOM in Nigeria also continued its partnership with GIZ through a referral pathway created under the GIZ-funded project in January 2019. Through this initiative, beneficiaries including returnees who receive support under the Joint Initiative can register their businesses free of cost. Case managers are currently contacting beneficiaries to gauge their interest.

In Senegal, IOM signed an MoU and a Personal Data Sharing Agreement with the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ) to refer beneficiaries across the country. After the signature of the agreement, IOM Kolda sub-office provided agricultural equipment such as seeders, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, fertilizer sprayers as well as seeds to cultivate and fertilizers to 19 beneficiaries who were then referred to GIZ for complementary assistance. In total, IOM referred 118 returnees to GIZ wherein all of them received actual support.

## II. SOPS ON ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative programming observes the [Sustainable Development Goal's](#) (SDG) core agenda of “leave no one behind”. The Joint Initiative programme adopts an inclusive and rights-based approach while countering misinformation that could cause anti-migrant sentiment, xenophobia, and the stigma of failure especially for returnees who have left their countries for years. Inter alia, the Joint Initiative aims to counter the negative “push” factors that made the returnees leave their countries in the first place and foster a conducive environment for them to make migration a matter of choice rather than a necessity.

In this regard, a “Framework Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (Framework SOPs)” were carefully crafted through a consultative process while upholding the migrants’ rights, and adapted to each target country to provide comprehensive guidance, identify key actors, and their specific roles to ensure that EU-IOM Joint Initiative’s efforts on reintegration are well-managed (See [Report #1](#) for more details on Framework SOPs).

### **Box 3: Validation of SOP of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Protection and Assistance of Vulnerable Migrants in the Gambia**

On 6 February 2020, IOM in the Gambia with the auspices of the Joint Initiative has launched the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for stranded and vulnerable migrants. The NRM offers a detailed operational method on how the Government of the Gambia (GoTG) can effectively manage vulnerable migrants with special emphasis on returnees.

Following the launch of the NRM, and in preparation for the development of two new SOPs for stranded and vulnerable migrants, two technical workshops were held in February (first on 21-22 and second on 26-27) with 31 participants comprising of government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO) and civil society organizations (CSO). In addition to collecting inputs, the workshops also developed the ability of the participants to identify and refer victims of trafficking (VoTs) as well as improve their awareness of international, regional, and national legal instruments for the protection of vulnerable migrants including returnees as well as stranded migrants.

In June 2020, the two SOPs were ready and shared with the TWGs and subsequently validated by the end of the same month. The SOPs encompass management of i) Victims of Trafficking and ii) Stranded Vulnerable Migrants in which processes are led by the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) and Department of Social Welfare (DSW), respectively. These newly developed SOPs streamline the joint effort of IOM and the GoTG in addressing the needs of stranded and vulnerable migrants as well as returnees who were victims of trafficking.

The SOP in Ghana has been finalized during the reporting period after incorporating additional inputs from the Ghana Immigration Service. The launch has been postponed to September 2020 due to the pandemic. Therefore, by the end of July 2020, all SOP national adaptation processes for target countries have been validated. For a detailed breakdown of validation dates per country, see [Annex](#).

### III. CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR DELIVERY OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

In line with Objective 4 of the [AVRR Framework](#), 'Communities have the capacity to provide an enabling environment for reintegration', developing the capacity of relevant stakeholders is a crucial aspect in achieving a sustainable reintegration. When governance and coordination are enhanced, pertinent partnerships are established, and well-defined SOPs are presented, state and non-state actors in a country are then expected to perform their respective roles to warrant holistic and sustainable reintegration assistance. Furthermore, capacity development is vital in asserting strong ownership and certainly promoting a high level of investment by the local actors on the reintegration initiatives.

To ensure this, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad organizes capacity development which ranges from drafting and operationalization of SOPs, setting up an effective referral mechanism, ways of providing psychosocial assistance, evidence-based monitoring and evaluation and data management. Overall, since the commencement of the Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad region until the end of the reporting period, it has already conducted 132 capacity development activities benefitting approximately 3,300 stakeholders in all target countries.

Evidently, during the reporting period, the number of capacity development activities in the region has significantly decreased (11 from 22 last reporting period) due to the pandemic wherein non-essential activities, gatherings, and movements have been prohibited. Moreover, some capacity developments had to be adapted to the current situation, especially in times of uncertainty, misinformation could bring negative impacts on the longer-term reintegration of returnees. For instance, in Ghana, 72 government staffs working in quarantine facilities supported by the Joint Initiative were trained to provide psychosocial support while emphasizing anti-stigmatization and discrimination. The training was co-funded with GIZ, while the quarantine facility was supported with PPE and sanitary equipment through the Joint Initiative. An overview of the capacity development facilitated during the reporting period is presented in the table below.



Psychosocial first aid training delivered to quarantine facility staff in Ghana. © IOM 2020 / Juliane Reissig



	CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITY			PARTICIPANTS	
	TYPE	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
Burkina Faso	Workshop	Integrated assistance for returning migrants	<p>This workshop was organized for the benefit of the actors of the decentralized structures of the National Council of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CONASUR) with the aim of improving their knowledge of IOM missions and the main thrusts of the project “Joint Initiative EUTF-IOM for the protection and reintegration of migrants, Burkina Faso”, and to equip them for the reintegration of returned migrants, strengthen their knowledge on the national disaster and humanitarian crisis management system and improve their skills on migrant protection.</p> <p>13-15 July 2020 in Banfora, 22-24 July 2020 in Gaoua</p>	21	A total of 21 actors (including 6 women and 15 men), all members of the Regional/Provincial Councils of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CORESUR, COPROSUR), took part in the training held in the city of Banfora in the Cascades region. 13-15 July 2020
				24	A total of 24 actors (including 2 women and 22 men) members of the Regional and Provincial Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Councils (CORESUR, COPROCESSEUR) took part in the training held in the city of Gaoua in the Sud-Ouest region. 22-24 July 2020
Cameroon	Training	3rd session of strengthening the technical capacities of the actors mobilized in the process of reintegration of migrants: Sustainable reintegration	<p>This session aimed to present common signs of stress due to COVID-19 in the community including returnees and frontline workers, to know how to address common psychosocial issues, fight against stigma, and manage one's well-being.</p> <p>07 June 2020</p>	49	A total of 49 participants in Douala (25) and Yaoundé (24) from the administration and civil society took part in this session: BUNEC, MINAT, MINJUSTICE, MINAS, MINSANTE, TCC, MINFOP, MINJEC, DGSN, MINREX, CID, CNDHL, MINAD-ER, MINEPIA, MINADT
	Training	Objectives of the awareness campaign and the fight against stigma concerning the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>The training focused on how to identify the psychosocial needs of returned migrants and offer them psychological first aid.</p> <p>Co-funded by GIZ</p> <p>19 and 22 June 2020</p>	9	Three NGOs: ARECC, OEMIT, and SAHELI

Ghana	Training	Identifying Psychosocial needs	<p>The training focused on how to identify the psychosocial needs of returned migrants and offer them psychological first aid. Co-funded by GIZ</p> <p>19 and 22 June 2020</p>	72	Staff working in the Prampram Quarantine centre
Guinea Bissau	Training	Irregular migration, Human Rights, and Trafficking in Person.	<p>Training of civil society organizations in Boé. Attended by 18 persons on irregular migration, Human Rights, and Trafficking in Person.</p> <p>March 2020</p>	18	NGOs, OSC
Nigeria	Training	Reintegration & Data Management Training	<p>Case management &amp; data management training of state &amp; non-state actors in Lagos State to strengthen their capacity in providing sustainable reintegration support to IOM returnees. As a part of the training, Psychological First Aid training was also delivered to train the participants on how to provide support to returnees who have distress. Co-funded by GIZ and DFID</p> <p>10-11 February 2020</p>	30	Partners from seven State Agencies and 8 Non-State Actors attended.
Nigeria	Training	Reintegration & Data Management Training	<p>Case management reintegration and &amp; data management training of state and non-state actors in Delta State to strengthen their capacity in providing sustainable reintegration support to IOM returnees. As a part of the training, Psychological First Aid training was also delivered to train the participants on how to provide support to returnees who have distress. Co-funded by DFID</p> <p>17-19 February 2020</p>	27	Partners from three ministries, five State agencies, and three non-State actors attended.

Nigeria	Training	Community-Based Approach to Psychosocial Reintegration	<p>The purpose of this training was to enhance the knowledge and skills of partners on a Community-based Approach to psychosocial reintegration particularly in providing psychosocial activities for the returnees. Overall participants appreciated the training. Based on pre and post-evaluation, there was increased knowledge of MHPSS community-based approach from 64,2 per cent to 75,6 per cent.</p> <p>17-19 February 2020</p>	22	One participant was from a governmental agency, and 21 were from civil society organizations
	Training	Monitoring and Evaluation, Refresher Training	<p>Monitoring and Evaluation Refresher Training of state and non-state actors that are a member of the Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Team (MET) in Delta State, Nigeria to strengthen their capacity in monitoring and evaluation of migration management projects.</p> <p>3-5 March 2020</p>	82	Partners from 15 federal government Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs), two State government MDAs and six Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) attended the training
	Training	Community Dialogue Facilitator Training	<p>The primary objective of the facilitators' training is to build the capacity of community members and leaders on how to facilitate a community dialogue in their various communities using the developed Facilitator's Manual, also and to train them on how to provide Psychological First Aid to returnees.</p> <p>10-14 March 2020</p>	166	The participants comprised of opinion leaders and community heads from the following LGAs: Warri North, Warri South, Ughelli South, and Aniocha South

## IV. SUPPORTING RETURNED MIGRANTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

### A) OVERVIEW OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

During the reporting period, the Regional Coordination Unit based in the regional office in Dakar and IOM headquarters continued to support the transition to MiMOSA, IOM's corporate case management system, in all 12 country offices through coordination and capacity building. Following the finalization of cross-regional guidelines on the reintegration assistance process and case closure, a regional webinar was organized in March 2020 in French and English to further explain how to properly register the reintegration cases in MiMOSA. As a result of these efforts, monthly return and reintegration data are directly drawn from MiMOSA since April 2020 while historic data still relies on the result database. Since June 2020, the RCU has continuously coordinated with country offices to verify and clean the Joint Initiative historical data, to ensure that no mistakes were left in the process of transitioning from internal databases to MiMOSA. This thorough process will continue during the next reporting period. Most of the data presented in this section are extracted from MiMOSA.

As per the result database, 66,246<sup>7</sup> returning migrants started the reintegration assistance process between 1 April 2017 and the end of July 2020. Out of these, MiMOSA shows that 45,936 remained active at the end of the reporting period, the others had abandoned the reintegration assistance process at an early stage, without completing it. As part of the active caseload, 27,056 migrants completed the reintegration process (41% of the returnees who started the process and 59% of the active caseload).

The breakdown per country is represented in the below table.

As of end July 2020	Active caseload having started the assistance process	Assistance process completed
Burkina Faso	1,984 <sup>8</sup>	859
Cameroon	2,795	2,069
Côte d'Ivoire	3,265	2,226
Gambia	3,583	3,312
Ghana	939 <sup>9</sup>	393
Guinea	6,067	4,707
Guinea Bissau	694	286
Mali	11,111	4,803
Mauritania	17	14
Niger	785	240
Nigeria	11,474	6,741
Senegal	3,222	1,406
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45,936</b>	<b>27,056</b>

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

<sup>7</sup> During the reporting period, the result database continued to include monthly data extracted from local databases until March 2020, combined with monthly data extracted from MiMOSA after April 2020. It is foreseen that this data will be reviewed and corrected during the next reporting period.

<sup>8</sup> The difference with figure reported in S1 Y3 report of the National Action (2,239 having initiated the process) is due to the verification and correction of data that accompanied the MiMOSA transition and the consideration of cases who dropped out at an early stage in the S1 Y3 report.

<sup>9</sup> The difference with figure reported in Y3 report of the National Action (1,275 having initiated the process) is due to the verification and correction of data that accompanied the MiMOSA transition

The table below shows the number of migrants who have already received some form of reintegration assistance in the economic, social, and psychosocial fields. While the result database shared at the end of July 2020 indicated that 35,919 returnees received economic support, 11,947 social and 7,974 psychosocial support, the data verification organized as part of the MiMOSA transition showed that **40,954** returnees had received economic, **6,862** social, and **10,327** psychosocial support, as extracted from MiMOSA and detailed below.

As of end of July 2020	Economic support	Social support	Psychosocial support
Burkina Faso	1,583	360*	1,339
Cameroon	2,515	149	210
Côte d'Ivoire	2,760	1,185	1,109*
Gambia	3,435	668	653
Ghana	474	112	807
Guinea	5,180	762	1,074
Guinea Bissau	403	275	316
Mali	10,131	1,983	708
Mauritania	17	6	0
Niger	415	6	1
Nigeria	10,918	1,078*	1,295
Senegal	3,123	278	2,815
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,954</b>	<b>6,862<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>10,327</b>

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

As per MiMOSA, a total of **6,978** migrants, not including covid-induced returns, returned from host and transit countries covered by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Sahel and Lake Chad region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger) to countries of origin not covered by EU-IOM External Actions (such as Benin, Chad,<sup>11</sup> Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo, among others). This is slightly higher than the number indicated in the July result database (6,590) as the data was manually reported before April 2020 and led to underreporting identified through the MiMOSA transition. At least 2,094 of them had completed their reintegration assistance process by the end of July (1,387 returnees from Niger and 707 from Mali).

CoO \ Host country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Total
Benin	25	0	35	6	1,033	1,099
Central African Republic	5	0	18	5	187	215
Chad	1	0	2	0	204	207
Liberia	101	6	325	39	1,349	1,820
Sierra Leone	89	1	638	358	2,001	3,087
Togo	8	0	13	6	182	209
Other	5	26	23	34	253	341
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1,054</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>5,209</b>	<b>6,978</b>

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

<sup>10</sup> The figures provided in this table are extracted from MiMOSA and might therefore differ from the figures shared as part of the July 2020 monthly report. This is due to the cleaning of data that accompanied the transition from local databases to MiMOSA mentioned at the beginning of the section. Corrections to the figures shared through the monthly reports will take place during the next reporting period once the data verification and cleaning accompanying the transition is completed. The figures that were adjusted downwards compared to reintegration report 3 are identified through an asterisk.

<sup>11</sup> Chad has an AVR component but no reintegration assistance component under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

Apart from migrants stranded along their migratory journey in North and West and Central Africa, the Joint Initiative in Sahel and Lake Chad supports migrants returning from Switzerland and the European Economic Area. Since the beginning of the Joint Initiative, 3,238 migrants returned from this region to Sahel and Lake Chad, out of which 235 received assistance at arrival through the Joint Initiative. While IOM is not involved in the organization of forced returns, it can support countries of origin in providing post-arrival assistance to their nationals if they request it from IOM.

Countries	IOM AVRR <sup>12</sup>	Non-IOM facilitated returns	Forced return	TOTAL number of returns	Post-arrival assistance provided through the JI
Burkina Faso	83	1	0	84	2
Cameroon	128	53	0	181	12
Cote d'Ivoire	74	0	0	74	3
Gambia	290	0	215	505	116 forced returns
Ghana	413	0	0	413	93
Guinea Bissau	159	0	0	159	0
Guinea	22	0	0	22	0
Mali	62	0	0	62	1
Mauritania	10	1	1	12	0
Niger	50	0	0	50	0
Nigeria	1,306	0	0	1,306	7
Senegal	279	12	79	370	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,876</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>3,238</b>	<b>235</b>

Table 4: Returns from Europe Switzerland and Norway

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

Regional mobility in the West and Central Africa has been vastly affected by the unprecedented restrictions on travel, trade, and economic activity the governments implemented, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In particular, a 29 per cent decrease in movements was observed in the region from February to March 2020 (March being the start of restrictive measures in the region) as compared to the same period in 2019. At the height of the crisis and strict implementation of restrictions in the last week of March 2020, flow volume was 70 per cent lower than at the same time in 2019, which is the lowest recorded flow during the reporting period.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, country analysis between February and March suggests that the countries which experienced the largest reduction of flows in the region are Niger (decrease of 86%), followed by Guinea (70%) and Mali (63%).<sup>14</sup>

These mobility restrictions, as well as the closure of public utilities like schools, markets, and training centers, have taken a toll on vulnerable migrants specifically the returnees in the target countries. Many of the scheduled activities of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative on reintegration assistance have been affected, while economic conditions and the well-being of the returnees are deteriorating. Specifically:

<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that only part of AVRs from Europe rely on the Joint Initiative for post-arrival assistance

<sup>13</sup> Source : [The International Organization for Migration \[June, 2020\], Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> Source : [The International Organization for Migration \[March, 2020\], Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#)





**Border Closure** impacted the prices of goods and services in the region. Likewise, the returnees were not able to sell and deliver their goods to other places and seriously affected their economic standing.



**Closure of facilities like schools, markets, and training centers** negatively affected the reintegration assistance provided to the returnees in terms of schooling, provision of livelihood, and trainings. Particularly, school closure led to an increase in household expenditure as students cannot avail themselves of school feeding. Likewise, lack of childcare also prevented returnees or family members to go to work (for those whose jobs were continuous during the pandemic). Closure of markets also resulted in procurement delays of reintegration assistance for returnees' businesses. Vocational trainings for returnees were also postponed due to the closure of facilities.



**Restrictions of gatherings** have disrupted community-based projects, trainings, and delivery of goods and services.



**Curfew and movement restrictions** have led to limited or inability to conduct field missions and also affected returnees' businesses.

IOM acted immediately and conducted a rapid needs assessment in 11<sup>15</sup> of the 13 countries covered by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative to come up with urgent and effective relief for the returnees at the height of the pandemic. Overall, 1,169 returnees were surveyed on the phone, with at least 100 respondents in each country. The assessment showed that 85 per cent of the surveyed returnees reported that their financial situation is worse than it was pre-COVID-19, and 86 per cent state that basic items particularly food prices have increased during the pandemic. Even if few respondents reported that they were depending on remittances before COVID-19, they witnessed a sharp decrease in this support: 85 per cent of the respondents who depend on remittances from family members now receive less money or none at all, especially in Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Consequently, 60 per cent of the respondents reported that their well-being has deteriorated, mainly due to stress regarding their economic situation and anxieties that their reintegration efforts will not succeed. Lastly, ten per cent of the respondents reported that they have experienced discrimination due to perceptions that they were failing to provide for their families during the pandemic.

This needs assessment informed IOM's adaptation of reintegration assistance in the Sahel and Lake Chad region during the pandemic. Cash-based reintegration assistance was considered as a potential economic response in several countries, to help returnees who are in dire need of cash to keep their businesses afloat, to cope up with the loss of income and the rising prices of basic goods, and to mitigate the risks of delays on purchases of equipment needed for their micro-businesses. Lastly, as gatherings were restricted, cash-based reintegration assistance represents a safe alternative to provide relief and allow for remote delivery.

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<sup>15</sup> The needs assessment was conducted in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria and Guinea Bissau in March 2020 and in Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Niger in May 2020.

Two forms of cash assistance were implemented by IOM missions: one aimed at covering the needs of migrants as a 'one-off' support to mitigate the crisis consequences deeply affecting returnees and the other aiming to continue the reintegration process despite the sanitation and restriction measures. More detail on the implementation of this assistance can be found below, and an analysis of the initial monitoring of the assistance can be found in [section 5](#) of this report.

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



*Distribution of cash assistance to returnees in Mali*  
© IOM 2020/ Moussa Tall

During the reporting period, IOM in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal set-up an emergency multi-purpose cash grant aimed at covering returnees' various needs during the COVID-19 crisis, to address their loss of income and/or maintain their business afloat during the crisis. Coordinated with national authorities and adapted to the local context, this assistance is framed by dedicated SOPs. In Senegal, it targets all returnees, whether they completed the reintegration assistance process or not, while in Côte d'Ivoire it is aimed at particularly vulnerable returnees, and in Mali at all returnees waiting to start the reintegration

assistance process. As of 31 July 2020, 372 people benefited from this support in Côte d'Ivoire, including 222 returnees and 150 community members. 597 returnees received this support in Mali and 500 in Senegal. IOM in Guinea Bissau and Cameroon also developed SOPs in order to provide this type of assistance during the following reporting period.

## PROVISION OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE THROUGH CASH-TRANSFER

As prevention measures against COVID-19 impacted IOM's ability to safely deliver in-kind reintegration assistance, due to travel restrictions and delays in procurement, several IOM country offices coordinated with national authorities to deliver cash grants to unable returnees to directly purchase the items outlined in their reintegration plans, such as clothing and school material for children, including for the setup of income-generating activities. This allows limiting the movement of beneficiaries and items during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus limiting the risk of contamination.

During the reporting period, IOM in Côte d'Ivoire delivered reintegration assistance in cash to 156 beneficiaries, including 112 returnees and 44 community members. In the meantime, IOM in Cameroon and Guinea Conakry developed SOPs in order to provide such assistance in the next reporting period.

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



*Preparing beneficiaries to receive hygiene kits in the Gambia*  
© IOM 2020 / Alhagie Manka

As highlighted by the result of the needs assessments, the uncertainties brought about by the pandemic led most of the migrant returnees to experience aggravated economic pressures that then resulted in their overall wellbeing to deteriorate. Some of the returnees, however, were able to redirect their efforts to help mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic to something beneficial not just for them but also for their community.

In Guinea Conakry, the collective tailoring project “*Les jeunes teinturiers de LABE*” founded in February 2020 by two reintegration beneficiaries had already produced more than 100 traditional suits for sale in different regions. In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the group redirected its activities towards the manufacture of protective masks. Similarly, the “*Maurice Couture*” business set up by a Guinean returnee in the Kankan region produced more than 1,000 masks, allowing the returnee to purchase additional sewing equipment, generate savings, and contribute to its community’s fight against COVID-19 by offering 150 masks to the local high school students and supervisors. Likewise, a beneficiary in the Central Region of Ghana, who was supported by IOM to set-up activities in fashion and designing, is sewing re-usable face masks and reports that his community’s consideration for him increased by contributing to the prevention of the spread of Coronavirus.



*PPEs produced by the returnees were donated to the Gambian Ministry of Health by the European Union (EU) to be distribute to frontliners* © IOM 2020 / Alhagie Manka

In the Gambia, IOM launched a community-based reintegration project involving 20 returnees and 20 community members to produce soap for communities with limited access to hygiene products (see [section 4.c](#)). IOM in the Gambia also mobilized 20 returnees who were trained in tailoring and received sewing equipment to produce PPEs (protective suits and shoe covering) for government frontliners. The production of mask was organized as cash for work activity, meaning that returnees were paid a stipend to produce each suit and pair of shoe coverings. They were able to produce 2,000 PPEs for government frontliners including immigration officials, police

officers, Public Health Officers, and other groups at points of entry (POEs) interacting with migrants. The prototypes have been approved by the officials of the Gambia Standards Bureau. This initiative has also strengthened partnership with the Gambian government, with efforts lauded by the VP as mentioned in the [Partnerships with governments](#) section of the report.



*Returnees produce face masks for migrants stranded in Côte d'Ivoire*  
© IOM 2020/ Mohamed Diabate

IOM also mobilized returnees to support its COVID-19 response in Mali, where 20 returnees were engaged in cash for work activity to produce face masks. These returnees had previously been trained and/or provided with sewing machines as part of their reintegration assistance. They produced 1,000 face masks for migrants in transit, internally displaced persons, and border agents.

Likewise, five tailoring workshops were mobilized in Côte d'Ivoire with the aim to produce 1,000 face masks for migrants stranded due to COVID-19.

In Ghana, IOM also mobilized returnees who had launched tailoring businesses to produce masks and supported them to have their mask samples registered with the national Food and Drugs Authority. IOM also purchased part of the mask stocks produced by returnees to distribute them during its awareness-raising activities.

In Senegal, IOM distributed more than 3,700 hygiene kits (mask, hand sanitizers, soap, informative fliers) to returnees. The kits were sorted in bags that IOM purchased from returnees who had received tailoring equipment as their reintegration assistance.

Finally in Chad, IOM supported a returnee whose tailoring business – funded through the Niger Joint Initiative<sup>16</sup> – had been heavily affected by COVID-19 related restrictions. Support from IOM included an order of 1,850 masks from the tailor ahead of Eid celebrations.

## C) COMMUNITY-BASED REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

A successful and sustainable reintegration mainly depends on the conditions and environment in communities of return. However, drawing from IOM's past experiences, in most cases, communities do not have readily available resources that could accommodate both the returnees and the community members, and often also present a weak social network. The reintegration process in such a community situation could pose risks rather than relief to both returnees and community members. For instance, returnees could be or could be perceived as economic competitors for jobs, services, and infrastructures which then fosters negative feelings towards them by the community members. These challenges also hinder the diffusion to the community of tacit knowledge that returnees acquired from the country they have migrated to. On the contrary, the reintegration evaluation conducted in the region in January and February 2020 suggests that community-based reintegration promotes social cohesion and mitigates migration pull factors. The evaluation, therefore, recommends expanding community-based reintegration activities to avoid creating jealousy between the community members and returnees and for others to decide to migrate in order to receive assistance. This appears to be particularly the case for community-based vocational training and cash-for-work projects, which were well received by beneficiaries, and which do not bear the same risks as community microbusiness assistance projects, which rely more strongly on cooperation and trust between beneficiaries.

<sup>16</sup> The Joint Initiative in Chad does not include a reintegration component, but the reintegration of migrants returning through funding from the Joint Initiative is covered by the IOM office in the host or transit country.

From the inception of the programme, IOM engaged 267 community-based reintegration projects, with 5,436<sup>17</sup> beneficiaries, comprising of 2491 returnees (46%), and 2945 community members (54%).

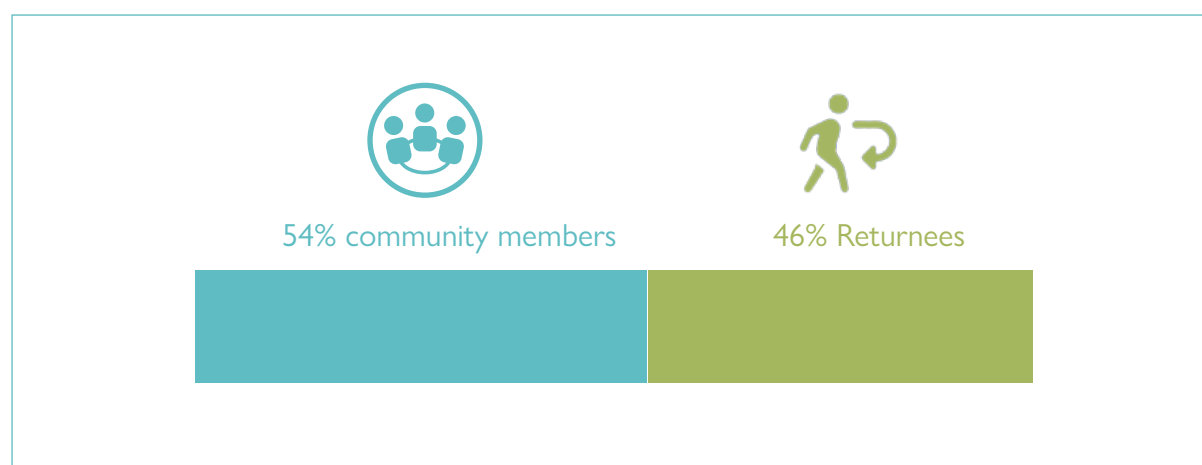
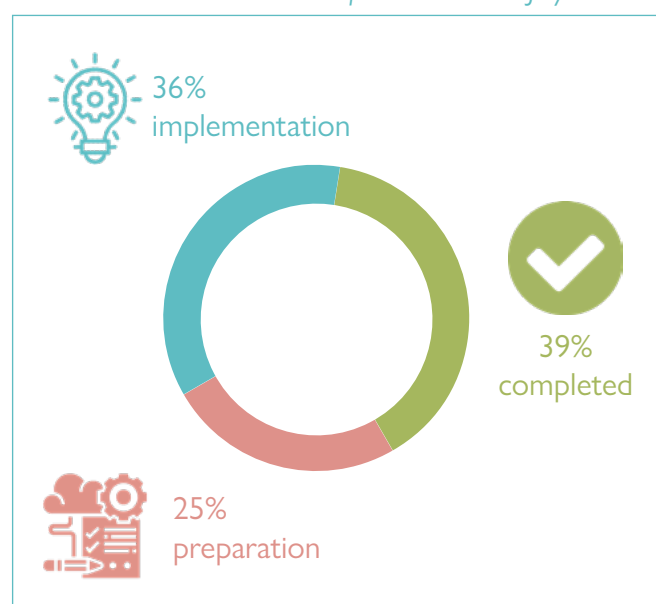


Figure 1: Status of the Community-Based Reintegration in the Sahel and Lake Chad 01 April 2017 to 31 July 2020

Among the 267 community-based reintegration projects, 104 (39%) have already been completed by 31 July 2020 (benefitting 1,122 returnees and 1,440 community members), while 97 (36%) are still in the implementation stage and 66 (25%) are in preparation. During this period, six projects which were in preparation during the last reporting period in Burkina Faso were canceled, particularly farming and breeding activities in Béguédo, Niagho, Bagré, Gon-Boussougou, Gogo, and Bindé as further feasibility assessment suggested cost inefficiency of the projects. An overview of the community-based reintegration projects per country is presented in Table 1 below.



<sup>17</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.



Countries	Status (as of 31 July 2020)	Number of Interventions	Number of Beneficiaries		
			Returnees	Community Members	TOTAL
Burkina Faso	Completed	2	375	450	825
	Preparation	2	100	100	200
Cameroon	Completed	3	4	26	30
Côte d'Ivoire	Completed	63	361	443	804
	Implementation	77	518	532	1,050
	Preparation	26	47	37	84
Gambia	Completed	8	15	44	59
	Implementation	2	3	3	6
	Preparation	24	105	54	159
Ghana	Completed	2	14	34	48
Guinea Bissau <sup>18</sup>	Completed	17	210	370	580
	Preparation	1	1	2	3
Guinea Conakry <sup>19</sup>	Completed	7	96	51	147
	Implementation	10	93	43	136
	Preparation	8	45	30	75
Mali	n/a				0
Mauritania	n/a				0
Niger <sup>20</sup>	Preparation	4	375	332	707
Nigeria <sup>21</sup>	Completed	2	47	22	69
	Implementation	3	49	37	86
	Preparation	1	14	6	20
Senegal	Implementation	5	19	329	348
TOTAL	Completed	104	1,122	1,440	2,562
	Implementation	97	682	944	1,626
	Preparation	66	687	561	1,248
Grand Total		267 projects	2,491 returnees	2,945 community members	5,436 direct beneficiaries

*Table 1 Overview of the community-based reintegration projects per country*

18 The past report mistakenly recorded 17 completed projects including 211 migrants and 372 community members. The number of projects and disgregation have been corrected in this report, as one project remains pending approval from the technical committee.

19 The decrease from the previous reintegration report is due to some community members dropping off from the projects, usually because of either misunderstanding with the beneficiaries and/or disinterest or involvement in other ventures.

20 The number of projects has decreased from five to four without a change in number of beneficiaries due to an error in reporting the number of projects in the previous report.

21 Decrease of the number of total beneficiaries from 180 which was reported from the previous report to 175 is due to relocation of five returnees.



## SENEGAL: GRAIN MILL PROJECT - GUIRÉ YÉRO BOCAR VILLAGE, KOLDA REGION



*Returnees and community members with their newly installed grain mill*

© IOM November 2019/ Sileymane Sow

During their counseling session, a group of four returnees in Guiré Yéro Bocar village identified that a grain mill would be beneficial for their whole community, especially women who usually travel great distances to process their cereals. Construction of the grain mill was completed during the last reporting period and it is now fully functional.

To sustain the mill, the returnees and community members developed a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). Through the VSLA, beneficiaries meet regularly to save income and avail small loans from those savings. The association's activities are carried out in one-year intervals, after which the accrued savings and loan profits are dispersed back to the members. The VSLA serves as a simplified savings and loan service that benefit the communities where formal financial structures are not easily accessible.

Beyond the returnees and the community members involved in the grain mill project, the VSLA once bigger and successful aims to accommodate the other members of the community to save up and borrow funds to finance their small income-generating activities or to address their basic needs (health, education and food expenses). The four returnees plan to use the cash support IOM provided them, of a cumulative amount of 600,000.00 XOF (about 915 EUR), to counter COVID-19 negative impact, to boost the income of the VSLA, and eventually make it attractive to more community members through lending with a reduced interest.

Following the construction of the grain-mill, three women (community members) set up a small canteen to sell food to community members using the grain-mill.

## THE GAMBIA: BRIKAMABA SESAME FARMING AND KUNDAM MAI FATTY CEREAL PROCESSING PROJECT



The sesame farming community-based reintegration project in Brikamaba village is run by an association consisting of 44 members (one returnee who had not received their reintegration assistance yet, 13 returnees who already received their reintegration assistance, and 30 community members) based in Upper Fulladou West, Central River Region. Phase I of the project (sesame plantation) was completed, but the six-hectare sesame farm only yielded 3.5 bags of 60 kilograms of sesame seeds. This low harvest adds to the challenge of limited participation of community members in the project, and consequently, in February 2020 the Brikamaba executive members decided to reduce the number of association members for phase II (rice cultivation) of the project to ensure active participation from all members. Phase II of the project will therefore be conducted by five returnees and 15 community members and is still in the planning stage. The land has already been acquired by the association.

*The sesame plantation in Brikamaba, the Gambia.  
© IOM 2020/ Etienne Micallef*



*Returnee and a community member, processing their newly harvested cereals in Kundam Mai Fatty, the Gambia © IOM 2020/ Allesandro Lira*



The second community-based reintegration project implemented in the Gambia is located in Kundam Mai Fatty, Upper River Region, and is a cereal processing project. The project is comprised of 11 members (three returnees and eight community members). Similar to the Brikamaba phase I project, in Kundam, it was also suggested to decrease the number of direct beneficiaries for efficiency. The Basse Sub-office staff took a lead in this process at the village level, to ensure reasonable and equal profit sharing among the beneficiaries. The selection is based on the commitment and participation the community members showed at the work. From eight community members, it has been reduced to five, while the three returnees remain.

## THE GAMBIA: SOAP PRODUCTION PROJECT



*Returnees and their family members in the Upper River Region participate in a pilot soapmaking initiative, aimed at enhancing the availability of soap in vulnerable communities.*

© IOM 2020 / Lamin Sanyang

In December 2019, a fatal shipwreck occurred off the coast of Mauritania, claiming the lives of approximately 62 Gambians, while 87 survived. Months after, with IOM's continuous efforts to assist the survivors to recover and rebuild their lives, a soapmaking project was launched in partnership with health authorities and community leaders. The project involves 20 survivors and 20 community members and aims at providing economic opportunities to the beneficiaries while responding to the high demand for hygiene products due to the pandemic. The participants are residents of Barra, Essau, and Medina Serigne Mass in the Gambia's North Bank Region, where it is estimated that 85 per cent of the survivors originated.

Approximately 3,000 bars of soap are expected to be produced and distributed by health authorities in communities along the Gambian-Senegalese border, with limited access to hygiene products.

## UPDATE ON CBR ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN THE PREVIOUS REPORT

### NIGERIA: PINEAPPLE AND CASSAVA PROCESSING FACTORIES



*Farmers, private sector and migrant returnees have joined forces to open a pineapple processing factory in Nigeria @IOM 2020 / Jorge Galindo*

In February 2020, IOM and the Nigerian government officially opened a pineapple processing factory in Iguobazuwa, Edo State. The factory is going to be operated by a business cooperative made up of returnees and unemployed youth, as well as private sector partners. These latter are supporting the oversight and management of the projects in their initial stage while strengthening the capacities of the returnees' cooperatives to manage the projects in the long-term. The new facility plans to employ 42 Nigerian returnees and local youth and will indirectly benefit farmer associations and Iguobazuwa communities. The factory has not yet been operational since its commissioning, as COVID-19 delayed the finalization of some minor structures needed to launch its operation, but it is planned to start operating during the next reporting period.



*Farmers, private sector and migrant returnees have joined forces to open a pineapple processing factory in Nigeria @IOM 2020 / Jorge Galindo*

In the same month, a cassava processing factory was launched in Ehor, Edo State, providing job opportunities for 25 returning migrants and youth. Due to COVID-19, activities at the factory were also delayed, but in July 2020, IOM, the government agency EdoJobs, and other relevant stakeholders carried out a successful test run at the cassava processing plant. IOM also followed up on finalizing the process of drilling a borehole at the facility, which will serve other establishments and community members. Beneficiaries were trained on skills needed to manage the factory, and they will start production activities in the next reporting period.

## GUINEA: TIMBI MADINA AND SAGARA AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

The project in Timbi Madina, now at its fourth harvest was launched with 33 beneficiaries but is now down to 26, despite the generation of substantial revenues. The decrease in the number of participants is due to the location of the farm in a very rural area, while some of the beneficiaries prefer to live in a more urban zone. To mitigate this, IOM set up small activities in the proximity of the farm and provided motorbikes to beneficiaries, nevertheless, some of the beneficiaries found other activities that can sustain them.

The sales of agricultural products were heavily affected by the pandemic. For instance, the price of a kilo of potatoes, which is the main harvest in this project, is down to 70 per cent of its price before restrictive measures were implemented around March 2020.

The Sagara community project implemented in the Labe region is composed mainly of tomato, potato, and cabbage farming. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it generated an average monthly turnover of 7,200,000 GNF (approximately 630 EUR) with a net profit of 4,800,000 GNF (approximately 420 EUR) after deducting expenses related to production. The profit does not generate sustainable income yet so the beneficiaries decided to reinvest it until sufficient profit is made for all participants. In the meantime, beneficiaries employ a rotation system per harvest. If it is not their turn, they usually have other occupations in between the harvest seasons. Like in Timbi Madina, the Sagara Community project has been challenged by the decrease in the products' prices as vendors could not transport their produce to other communities especially the ones experiencing an increase in commodity prices due to supply shortage.

To support these two community projects and face the challenges raised by COVID-19, IOM in Guinea provided supplementary assistance to these projects and helped them cover their operational expenses during the period.

## D) PSYCHOSOCIAL REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

The [regional reintegration evaluation](#) shows that success in achieving psychosocial and economic reintegration are closely linked. Economic distress and financial pressures (heightened by the restrictions on mobility and economic activities during the reporting period) are the main sources of stress for the beneficiaries. On a different note, unaddressed trauma experienced in the course of their migration journey could significantly impede successful economic reintegration.

With respect to COVID-19 safety measures, such as physical distancing and limited direct interventions with beneficiaries during the reporting period, IOM continued to provide MHPSS services with a shift in the previously used MHPSS service delivery modalities. In-person psychosocial counseling interviews have been kept to a minimum and IOM MHPSS staff in the JI countries start using mainly remote working modalities.



MHPSS is considered to be a key priority in crises to help promote mental health and social wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic has a profound impact on the psychological and social wellbeing of returnees. The IOM rapid needs assessment conducted in 11 out of 13 EU-IOM Joint Initiative countries in the SLC region between March and May 2020, with a region-wide sample of 1,169 reintegration beneficiaries, showed that 60 per cent of beneficiaries reported that their emotional wellbeing had been adversely affected by the crisis.

Although the rapid needs assessment did not reveal a noticeable trend of increased discriminatory behaviours and social stigma towards returnees during the COVID 19 pandemic, some returnees reported facing negative comments from community members. In Cameroon for instance, a returnee from Libya was told by his neighbors “it was you who were outside who brought COVID-19 to the country” . Therefore, MHPSS staff in the target countries address the potential impact of those negative perceptions towards returnees to prevent further psychosocial distress.

For instance, MHPSS staff in Cameroon conducted regular phone calls for counseling interviews with the most vulnerable returnees, raised awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures as well as assessed the impact of the crisis on their psychosocial wellbeing. The counseling sessions over the phone also aimed to normalize psychological reactions such as anxiety, depressive symptoms, fear of the future, or of being stigmatized and provided key messages and recommendations on how to cope with stress. This initiative led to updating returnees’ reintegration plans when necessary. A module on the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was also incorporated in the Peer Awareness Guide developed by the communication and awareness unit of IOM’s Cameroon.

Key messaging to address social stigma was included during the capacity-building activities. As part of the national COVID-19 response in Ghana, the government decided to evacuate hundreds of Ghanaians stranded in various countries across the globe including in West Africa. Evacuation centers were then established, as returnees were required to undertake a 14-day quarantine upon return. IOM Ghana conducted PSS training for the quarantine facilities staff to improve their understanding and skills to face the psychological impact of the pandemic. As part of Psychological first aid training, an emphasis was put on developing the capacity of the staff providing psychosocial support to returnees to pass key messages to overcome potential stigma and discrimination in the context of COVID-19.

IOM in the Gambia, as mentioned in the [Community-based reintegration assistance](#) section, launched a soap production project to assist shipwreck survivors and their communities. Some of the returnees, especially the men participating in the project, experienced some mockery from their community, firstly on the fact that they returned, and secondly because soap production is widely considered as a “woman’s job”. To address those attitudes which may undermine social cohesion and exacerbate previous mental health conditions, PSS was mainstreamed and integrated into their livelihood and in awareness-raising activities.

## UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE PREVIOUS REPORT

### THE GAMBIA: MHPSS TO SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS AND THE COMMUNITY

IOM conducted a rapid psychosocial needs assessment in January 2020 in the communities of origin of the survivors of the shipwreck namely Barra, Essau, and Medina Serign Mass in the Gambia. Following the needs assessment, a three-day initiative from 19-21 February 2020 was organized by IOM, notably psychosocial group sessions among survivors to facilitate experience-sharing and activation of peer-to-peer support mechanisms, small group discussions, and psychoeducation sessions with families and community members. Psychosocial activities were designed to involve survivors, families, community and religious leaders as well as health and social welfare authorities. The sessions aimed at creating a space for learning how best to respond to the psychosocial needs of survivors and their family members. Recreational activities such as football matches and psychodrama (Attaya) were used as a tool for communities to gain a clearer insight of their psychosocial well-being. These activities were facilitated by the Supportive Activist Foundation (SAF) drama team.

In order to promote sustainability, IOM trained some volunteers (MHPSS ambassadors) in each affected community educating them on how to support families and community members in identifying symptoms of distress, provide basic psychosocial support and recommend necessary referrals. Through this response IOM aimed at facilitating the healing process of individual and collective psychological invisible wounds and indirectly promote the reintegration process. MHPSS ambassadors supported sensitization activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Psychodrama was used as a tool to shed light on the mental health challenges faced by returnees in the Gambia.  
@ IOM 2020/ Asan Jobe*



## CAMEROON: GROUP PSYCHOEDUCATION SESSIONS

During the reporting period and before the government restrictions due to COVID-19, IOM in Cameroon supported 352 returnees with psychoeducation sessions, reaching a total of 1,151 beneficiaries (350 in Douala and 801 in Yaoundé) through 100 sessions since the launch of this activity in June 2019. The MINAS and MINJEC are continuously providing support to IOM through the integration of psychoeducation sessions within the vocational/technical training organized for returnees in Cameroon. Psychoeducation aims to help the returning migrants to understand the negative and at times overwhelming psychological reactions that may arise from the many stressors they face during the migration journey or upon return. Psychoeducation reassures them of the normality of many of these reactions and provides information on positive coping mechanisms. During the reporting period, psychoeducation sessions were replaced by MHPSS remote working modalities especially for those identified as most vulnerable. Face to face sessions will resume once the Cameroonian government lifts the restrictive measures.

## MALI: GROUP PSYCHOEDUCATION SESSIONS

During the reporting period particularly starting mid-March, restrictive measures were implemented in Mali, and returnees who arrived via charter planes entered a mandatory two-week quarantine. The most vulnerable returnees previously identified by IOM MHPSS staff in sending missions with specific psychosocial needs in the respect of COVID-19 recommendations benefitted from individual psychosocial counseling sessions or participated in smaller psychosocial group sessions. Severe cases were referred for psychiatric consultations. Recreational games such as checkerboard, card, and table football were introduced to reduce stress during the quarantine. By the end of the reporting period, there have been 422 migrants assisted.

## NIGERIA: GROUP PSYCHOEDUCATION SESSIONS

During the reporting period and before the mobility restrictions, psychoeducation sessions continued to be integrated into the business skills training and supported 266 (210 male and 56 female). The objectives of the psychoeducation sessions are to increase self-awareness of the psychological reaction induced by past experiences or returnees' current situation, as well as to promote positive coping skills to deal with adversities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Nigeria enforced a total lockdown in Lagos, Abuja, and Ogun State between March and May 2020, as well as movement restriction in some states, and restrictions on gatherings continued beyond the reporting period. As a consequence, psychoeducation sessions were postponed and are scheduled to resume during the next reporting period. As a response, virtual counseling on reintegration assistance was provided to returnees.

## GUINEA BISSAU: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN PSYCHOSOCIAL THERAPY

In the previous reporting period, all returnees in Guinea Bissau had access to a clinical psychologist for an individual clinical interview or therapeutic group sessions. Likewise, psychosocial assistance in Guinea Bissau highlighted the value of the involvement of family members in addressing the challenge of establishing trust in the therapeutic relationship. However, due to the pandemic and mobility and gathering restrictions during the reporting period, psychosocial support has been carried out virtually, mainly through phone calls, thus therapeutic group sessions with the returnees' family members were suspended.

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

### A) SUMMARY OF REGIONAL REINTEGRATION REPORT FINDINGS

The regional reintegration evaluation for the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Sahel and Lake Chad was completed during this reporting period, assessing programme outcomes on the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation found substantive evidence of positive outcomes for returnees in recovering their self-respect and re-establishing their livelihoods. The program's innovative 'integrated' approach shows strong results for the combination of economic and psychosocial assistance, however, limited budgets and timelines for medical, shelter, and education assistance were often insufficient in the face of large-scale needs.

The evaluation was built on the evidence base of more than 10,000 surveys conducted with reintegration beneficiaries in the Sahel and Lake Chad region by gathering qualitative data during field missions in January and February 2020. A team of 10 internal and external evaluators conducted more than 350 in-depth interviews in total with frontline IOM staff, government officials, and local NGO key informants and reintegration beneficiaries in Senegal, the Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Ghana, and Burkina Faso.

For individual reintegration projects, successful reintegration cases generally illustrated the importance of beneficiary skills and motivation combined with IOM training and ongoing case management support. The evaluation also sheds light on the outcomes of the newer collective and community assistance reintegration models. While vocational training and cash-for-work projects were generally well-received, a number of negative unintended outcomes were reported for collective microbusiness assistance projects, where risks often outweighed the benefits of combining returnees' funds and skillsets.

Data from government and civil society representatives suggest that one of the program's most significant achievements to date has been to put reintegration programming on the map for national partners. Through both formal and informal IOM capacity-building, partners have gained valuable experience in responding to the economic and psychosocial challenges facing returnees, who were previously underserved in the region.

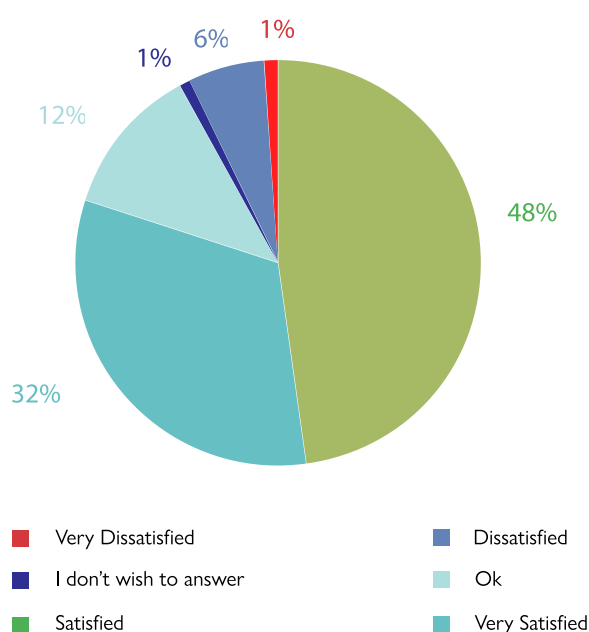
#### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Reduce assistance wait times for beneficiaries by enrolling them in cash for work and/or vocational training shortly after return or implementing other responses to immediate needs (such as cash-based assistance) for those whose microbusinesses may take time to generate income.
2. Handle collective microbusiness assistance with caution, reserving for cases where collective members have a successful track record of business cooperation or other relationship of trust (such as family members).
3. Continue to build on the psychosocial assistance component of the programme and ensure equal access for returnees to counselling services across missions.
4. Continue refining messaging to beneficiaries to manage expectations of the reintegration process in coordination missions in host/transit countries.
5. To donor: Mobilize additional funding for social reintegration and allow the provision of assistance addressing longer-term/more serious vulnerabilities.

The full regional reintegration evaluation report for Sahel and Lake Chad is available [here](#).

## B) M&E RESULTS: OVERALL BENEFICIARY SATISFACTION WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

By the end of the reporting period, a total of 4,711 Reintegration Satisfaction Surveys had been collected since the beginning of the project in the 13 Joint Initiative countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad region to measure the overall beneficiary satisfaction with the reintegration process. Overall, 80 per cent of beneficiaries were satisfied with their reintegration assistance, including 32 per cent who were 'very satisfied.' Compared to the regional reintegration evaluation qualitative analysis up until the end of February 2020, in these cumulative results up until July 2020, we see a slight downturn in overall satisfaction rates (from 84% to 80%) but an increase in beneficiaries reporting that they are 'very satisfied' (up to 32% from 17%).

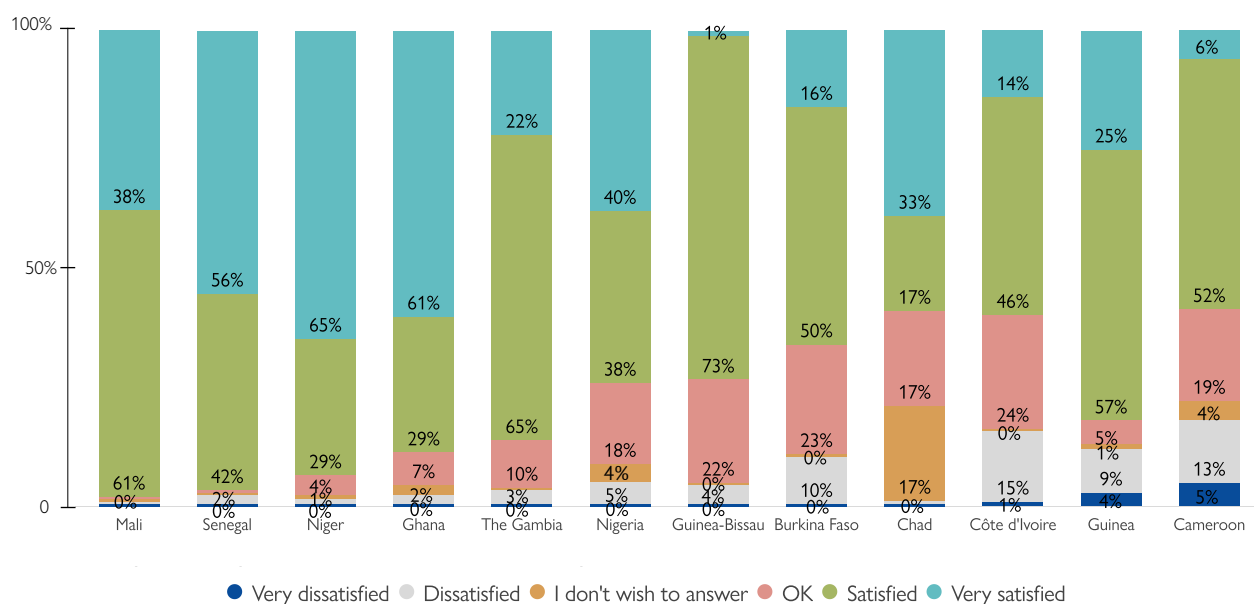


As 85 per cent of returnees indicated in the COVID-19 needs assessment that they are worse off financially since the pandemic hit, the increased proportion of returnees in the 'very satisfied' category in the Reintegration Satisfaction Survey demonstrates the importance of IOM reintegration assistance to their economic reinsertion in the country of origin during these tough times.

Looking at gender-disaggregated data, satisfaction rates for male returnees now stand at 81 per cent compared to 74 per cent for women. Female dissatisfaction was the highest in Cameroon, at 25 per cent compared to 15 per cent for men. Further data is needed to examine the source of this gender difference, although the reintegration evaluation found that distrust among returnees involved in collective microbusiness projects, and issues with the timeliness, quality, and quantity of microbusiness supplies were factors fueling overall dissatisfaction.

Looking at results disaggregated by country, satisfaction rates with IOM reintegration assistance were above 50 per cent in all countries. Results were unrealistically positive in Mali and Senegal, which enjoyed beneficiary satisfaction ratings of 99.6 and 98.1 per cent respectively. As 'demand bias' where reintegration staff was conducting feedback surveys has proven to be a challenge, two new M&E staff have been hired in both countries, and training was conducted to improve the quality and independence of data collection. In the remaining countries, most survey data was collected by dedicated M&E staff. Cultural factors also play a role in differences between countries, with the regional reintegration evaluation finding that beneficiary expectations tended to be higher in Cote d'Ivoire (one of the more economically developed countries in West Africa and the former regional hub until it was beset by post-election violence in 2010) while on the other hand in Niger the financial allocations for reintegration assistance went further due to lower living costs and beneficiary expectations were more modest.

## Reintegration satisfaction rates by country



In Mauritania, due to the lower returnee caseload inside the country, qualitative data on reintegration assistance was collected instead of surveys for a more in-depth assessment of programme outcomes. Nine reintegration beneficiaries were interviewed, all of them satisfied except for one who was still struggling to make ends meet with his IOM-supported business: “The taxi that I have, thanks to IOM, allows me to survive, but it’s not enough.” Eight out of the nine beneficiaries did not regret returning to Mauritania, including this migrant who said that national authorities in the host country had forced him to return: “Today I’m quite happy with what I’ve managed to achieve in my country, thanks in part to IOM. Even though I was deported, I don’t regret coming back.”

Likewise across the region, the vast majority (82%) of reintegration beneficiaries felt that their decision to return was a good decision. Less than 2 per cent reported that they were preparing to re-migrate.

## C) MONITORING OF FIRST CASH-BASED ASSISTANCE PILOT

As the Joint Initiative launched its first-ever cash-based assistance pilot to help returnees cope with the economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis, M&E staff closely followed the process with a regionally harmonized two-stage monitoring survey. By the end of the reporting period, early results were available for Cote d'Ivoire and Mali with a total of 319 responses collected for the first stage of the survey.

On average, beneficiary feedback was positive, with **85% stating that the cash assistance had met their needs** while another 14 per cent said their needs had been partly met. For the less than 2 per cent who reported the assistance had not met their needs at all, the reason was that the amount was not enough to meet major expenses such as rent. In both Cote d'Ivoire and Mali, the cash transfer was effected via a bank and went smoothly, with **97% of beneficiaries reporting that they experienced no difficulties in receiving their money** (of the remaining 3%, most complained of long wait times in between submitting documentation and receiving the cash transfer).

For Stage Two of the survey, designed to follow up three weeks after the cash assistance is given, a total of 112 responses were collected in Cote d'Ivoire and Mali. Asked how they felt about cash vs. in-kind

assistance, **female beneficiaries tended to have a stronger preference for cash assistance than males** (91% of women satisfied with the cash modality compared to 84% of men). While several beneficiaries expressed that they would be pleased to receive any kind of assistance from IOM, most preferred the flexibility and autonomy provided by cash. Those who were dissatisfied with the cash modality (1.5% of women and 5% of men) regarded in-kind assistance as more substantial as cash can evaporate quickly in the face of daily expenses. Based on the data, beneficiary expectations around the cash assistance pilot were effectively managed, with 95 per cent of beneficiaries reporting that the assistance fully corresponded to the information given by reintegration staff.

In both Part One and Part Two of the survey, **most beneficiaries commonly reported spending their emergency cash assistance on food and rent/bills**, with some also mentioning medical expenses, school fees, and repaying debts.

## VI. ANNEX

Country	Status of the SOPs national adaptation process (end of July 2020)
Burkina Faso	SOPs validated in March 2019 (workshop).
Cameroon	SOP validated in September 2017 (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
Ghana	SOP approved in March 2019 (PSC) and launched in September 2020
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)
Nigeria	SOPs validated in October 2019 (TWG)
Senegal	SOPs validated in December 2018

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