



VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES (SUMMARY)



Funded by the European Union



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration
11 rue Aït Ourir, Pinède, Souissi
Rabat, Morocco
Tel.: +212 (0)5 37 65 28 81
Fax: +212 (0)5 37 75 85 40
Email: iomrabat@iom.int
Website: www.iom.int

© 2017 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES (SUMMARY)

Summary of the report prepared by Altai Consulting for IOM Morocco – August 2016



Funded by the European Union



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



INTRODUCTION

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTENT OF THE REPORT

The report initially provides a **background** on migration in Morocco, the AVRR programme, and the different types of voluntary return and reintegration assistance implemented by IOM around the world over the last 30 years (section 3).

This is followed by an analysis of the main needs in terms of assistance for voluntary return and reintegration as well as the limitations and challenges encountered with **the current AVRR approach** (section 4).

The study focuses on **community-based AVRR approaches**, highlighting first the solutions they can bring to the challenges currently faced, and also underscoring their limitations and the prerequisites for the successful implementation of the projects (section 5).

Section 6 focuses on the **implementation of community-based projects**: it includes a typology of possible assisted return and reintegration community-based projects and details on good practices identified during the research.

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

METHODOLOGY

The study, carried out between May and August 2016, is based on both **secondary research work and on field research (comprehensive interviews with 211 people)**⁴ in Guinea, Sri Lanka and Tunisia.

The field visit to **Guinea**, the main country of return from Morocco, was intended to analyse the specific challenges of the reintegration of returning migrants from Morocco, the profile and needs of migrants, and the possibility of implementing community-based initiatives in the country. Altai conducted on-site interviews with **61 respondents** with diverse profiles: migrants returning from Morocco; IOM representatives; IOM partners (government and civil society partners); and members of the local community. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in three main migrant return areas – Conakry, Kindia and Mamou.

In order to study reintegration projects with a community-based approach implemented by an AVRR unit,⁵ Altai then conducted a field visit to **Sri Lanka**. The research team met face-to-face **with 141 people** in 15 cities in five different districts: IOM members; other key actors in reintegration assistance; direct or indirect beneficiaries of assisted return and reintegration projects; and members of the local community.

In **Tunisia**, where assisted return and reintegration projects directly involving the local community were carried out by IOM until the end of 2015, Altai met with nine IOM members and partners.⁶ This work has provided the opportunity to explore initiatives that follow a different type of community-based approach and operate under different conditions.

Altai also conducted **33 interviews** (face-to-face interviews or via Skype) **with key experts and informants working in 23 different countries**.⁷ These interviews have led to the identification of relevant projects conducted by IOM in different countries, to the collection of lessons to be learned and to the understanding of the specific contexts of these countries, as well as to obtaining the opinion of key actors on community-based initiatives.

⁴ All interviews were qualitative and semi-structured by nature.

⁵ The interviews clarified the conditions for the implementation of the community-based AVRR projects, the nature and objectives of the assistance, the profiles and needs of migrants, success factors of the projects and what might be replicated elsewhere, especially in the key countries of return from Morocco.

⁶ Respondents were based in Tunis and Sfax.

⁷ These included staff of IOM mission offices, representatives of IOM regional offices and Headquarters, experts and relevant stakeholders. In addition, the research team also held discussions in a more informal way with several representatives of the authorities and civil society from the main countries of return of migrants during the training organized by IOM Morocco on 16–17 May 2016.

ASSISTANCE FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

RETURNEES' NEEDS IN TERMS OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

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

Migrants also have a constant need for information and advice. Before returning, they need to know the local economic, social, political and security conditions as well as their rights in the country of return.⁸ They also need clear and detailed information on the IOM AVRR programme and the assistance they will receive.⁹ At the design stage of their projects, they should be advised on the promising sectors, the developments of the market and the various possible investments in their regions. Finally, migrants need information on the different types of assistance made available to them in addition to the AVRR, whether it be psychosocial, financial, administrative support or training, for example.

The third major factor which is essential to the success of return and reintegration is that **migrants need to rebuild a social network and, if necessary, to benefit from psychosocial support**. The community's acceptance and family involvement are essential components of successful reintegration. Returning migrants find sometimes themselves in a psychological situation that requires support,¹⁰ without which it will be difficult for them to concentrate on the creation and management of a project. Some migrants may lack social capital upon their return, while others could be stigmatized. Moreover, many returnees experience a sense of failure, even stronger when the community gets into debt to contribute financially to the migration with the hope that the migrant will regularly send money after settling at the destination.

CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION MODEL

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

IOM faces difficulties in **obtaining adequate funding for reintegration assistance;**¹¹ **managing the requests of different donors in terms of procedures,** priorities, eligibility of beneficiaries or timetables; restricting the operating costs of individual assistance;¹² and encouraging the harmonization of the AVRR programmes.¹³ As a result, the amount of reintegration assistance that can be offered to returnees is often limited and may be insufficient to launch a sustainable activity.

⁸ While some migrants are in regular contact with their communities of origin, others, as in cases of long absence, lack knowledge about the developments in their countries.

⁹ In particular the types of possible uses of the assistance.

¹⁰ For instance, broken dreams, feelings of failure or trauma related to travel or living conditions in the host country.

¹¹ Because of the priorities of donors, it is easier to obtain funding for the "return" components of the AVRR programme than for the reintegration components.

¹² Implementation and monitoring of individual reintegration assistance are costly in terms of time and resources consumed. Monitoring of individual projects is one of the most financially burdensome aspects of the AVRR programme for IOM offices, with the beneficiaries being geographically dispersed and sometimes difficult to reach.

¹³ The AVRR programme is not established as part of a single general fund but of a multitude of projects financed by different donors. The amounts of grants awarded to returnees for their reintegration, the eligibility criteria to be met by beneficiaries and the implementation procedures vary according to donors and projects.

Prior to the return as well as after arrival in the country of origin, it is sometimes **difficult to prepare the reintegration projects of returnees as may be necessary**. It is not always appropriate to develop projects before returning, since returnees are sometimes disconnected from the contexts of their regions of origin. Moreover, the difficulties encountered by migrants in the host country actually do not ensure they are always in a psychosocial situation that is in favour of the preparation for their reintegration. Upon migrants' arrival in the country of origin, IOM sometimes lacks human and material resources to support migrants thoroughly in the identification of their projects. Some returnees may also encounter administrative and logistical difficulties in accessing reintegration assistance.¹⁴

Once the migrant has returned and the procedures to obtain assistance have been completed, then **implementation and monitoring challenges for individual AVRR projects** will emerge. It is delicate and time-consuming for IOM teams to maintain contact with migrants who often return to remote areas that are far from IOM offices and are not always reachable. In most cases, assistance to returnees is provided only in the short term, which in turn results in difficulties to maintain contact for long-term monitoring and assessment. Another difficulty is the need for IOM staff members in return countries to have the technical expertise to support projects in specific sectors. Partnerships with local actors sometimes represent a solution to the above-mentioned challenges but might not be generalized in all regions of return.¹⁵

Moreover, the individual AVRR approach does not always address the problems that originally drove migrants to leave their communities of origin,¹⁶ and **the sustainability of return could therefore sometimes be limited**.¹⁷ Support for individual projects of returnees may also sometimes generate a situation of resentment among the local community towards returnees.¹⁸ Finally, in view of the challenges mentioned above, it may be difficult to meet the needs of the most vulnerable migrants and to demonstrate flexibility in handling specific cases.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

Community-based approaches could provide solutions to various migrants' needs, as well as to some challenges of the current AVRR approach.¹⁹ However, given their limitations and the necessary conditions for their implementation, **community-based projects cannot fully substitute individual assistance, especially as regards the support of migrants in situations of extreme vulnerability**.

¹⁴ The main logistical and administrative difficulties include: distance between the beneficiaries' places of residence and the offices in the countries of return (e.g. in cases where IOM has only one office in the country and the beneficiary comes from such a remote area of the capital) and the fact of having to collect several offers from suppliers of goods and service providers to be submitted to IOM (which might be complicated in some countries where written estimates are uncommon, or in cases where there is only one local service provider, or when estimates from certain suppliers are deemed not to be compliant). These constraints, which are frequently combined with other urgent matters to be managed, discourage some returnees and force them to entirely give up seeking individual reintegration assistance.

¹⁵ IOM has not been able to build partnerships with local actors in all areas of return, either because of a lack of resources or because there are no adequate partners available in the regions concerned. In the case of returnees from Morocco, case management committees bringing together the main local actors of reintegration in the countries of origin are being set up as part of the project Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants, which is funded by the European Union and implemented by IOM.

¹⁶ These fundamental problems, such as the lack of economic opportunities or of basic infrastructure, are often frequently present at the moment of the return of migrants, who will face them again, especially as they return in difficult circumstances and with a less favourable situation than at the time of their departure.

¹⁷ It should be noted that this research is not an evaluation of the impact of reintegration assistance and that a comprehensive study of the issue would be necessary. Although the majority of key informants and migrants interviewed as part of this research have raised the limitations in terms of the sustainability of returns, it is currently impossible to demonstrate this finding in view of the difficulties related to the monitoring of projects and the traceability of returnees.

¹⁸ It may be due to the desire that members of the local community might experience when the returnees receive assistance that could also be needed by the rest of the community or, in the case of large-scale returns, to the negative impact of returns on the local community (an overuse of available resources and infrastructure, for example).

¹⁹ This section of the report remains conditional, as the exact impact of community-based AVRR projects cannot be demonstrated at this stage given that: few community-based AVRR projects have been implemented so far; most of these projects are either very recent or ongoing; and these projects have not been systematically assessed. Section 2.3 of the report, which presents the challenges and limitations of the research, provides more details on this point, while section 3.4 identifies the community-based AVRR projects conducted.

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

If successful, community-based projects should **contribute to the reintegration of returning migrants** by encouraging the creation of a social network, by reducing the potential resentment among the local community²⁰ and by upgrading the status of the returning migrants within the community.

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

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

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

However, the community-based approach can only be effective in certain situations. The following criteria provide a **favourable environment** for the implementation of community-based AVRR projects: **sufficient number of migrants returning to the same community; adequate profile** of migrants;²¹ **local community interest and motivation** of migrants; availability of basic **infrastructure** in the region; **stability, security and economic opportunities** in the return area; and **civil society** activism.

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

POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES

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

Community-based projects also have their **specific constraints**, such as the adaptation of available assistance to the **specific needs of migrants** (especially the most vulnerable), **the selection of projects and beneficiaries**, the **potential lack of income generation** for returnees as a first step to reintegration and the management of **human relations within the group**.

²⁰ Resentment from the local community can be reduced since community-based projects directly benefit members of the community (see section on resentment that may appear towards migrants).

²¹ It will be important that the returnees show interest in teamwork and that they speak a common language (in some return areas, several languages are spoken). It will also be preferable if they have similar profiles, particularly in terms of age, community of origin, time spent abroad, family situation, qualification level, work experience, areas of interest and life plans.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

TYPES OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS

There is no single solution that can fit all types of situations for AVRR. The most relevant community-based approach model depends on the local context, community needs and the profiles of migrants. Therefore, in this study, Altai proposes different scenarios, their advantages and disadvantages, illustrated by real examples.

Community-based projects can be classified into three categories:

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Community-based projects that start from already existing projects and seek to include returnees to facilitate their reintegration.

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

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

However, the integration of returnees into an existing project requires several prerequisites for implementation, on the basis of which this mechanism is likely to remain rarely adopted.

COMBINED APPROACHES

On the basis of the research work, **Altai recommends combining the individual and community-based AVRR approaches:** by cumulating both offers or by adopting complementarity.²² It is also possible to associate different types of community-based projects to best meet the variety of needs (depending on the local contexts and the individual situations of the returnees).

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

BEST PRACTICES

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

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

- Organize consultations during the development of community-based projects, involving as much as possible all the segments of the local community (e.g. through steering committees). Holding such consultations makes it possible to take into account the perspectives and the needs of the local actors, to enhance the sustainability of the projects, to raise the awareness of communities and to support the development of local governance.
- Conduct an in-depth study of local needs and the operating environment to ensure the viability of the community-based project type being considered in the selected area, and ensure that it is also consistent with the available budget and resources and is compatible with the country's regulatory framework.
- Prioritize the types of activities and sectors that are favourable to community-based projects. Since resources are pooled for community-based projects, these projects are useful for activities that require a significant initial investment (as in the case of fisheries) and large working capital (e.g. seasonal agriculture).
- Favour specific technical training relevant to the selected sector for each project rather than general training common to all returnees, and integrate a personalized coaching time when finalizing the business plan.
- Study the economic and financial profitability of the projects in relation to the investment cost and within the local context to ensure that they will generate sufficient revenue for all members, and involve, if possible, industry experts in these preliminary studies.
- Prepare and place at the disposal of AVRR beneficiaries business plan models for the most common types of activities in the country which they can build upon.

²² In the case of the complementarity scenario, returning migrants who can be brought together in community-based projects are grouped (and do not receive individual assistance), while specific cases (vulnerable migrants with special needs or migrants returning to remote areas) receive individual assistance.

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

- Ensure (and communicate about) the transparency of the selection criteria and process;
- Take into account the motivation, the entrepreneurial spirit and the skills that the beneficiary can bring to the project (as well as, in the case of beneficiaries who are members of the community, the proximity and affinities with the returnees);
- Select community beneficiaries on the basis of clearly defined vulnerability criteria rather than leaving the choice entirely to the returnees and collaborate with local authorities to identify vulnerable individuals within the community;
- Including women²³ makes it possible in particular to sustain the projects and to raise awareness among the community about the risks of irregular migration;
- Without making their participation a criterion, integrate if possible returnees who have not benefited from the AVRR programmes (many in the main countries of origin of migrants returning from Morocco).

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

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

Best practices for **project monitoring** are as follows:

- Establish a logical framework and indicators for monitoring, especially if monitoring is carried out by local NGOs;
- Include the resources required for thorough and sustainable monitoring in the budget;
- Where possible, use the expertise of former beneficiaries who have succeeded in the same region and in a similar sector to coach new project members.²⁴ This will further support former successful project beneficiaries, and provide new ones with personalized, relevant and sustainable tutoring.

²³ It is recommended that women be included as beneficiaries of the community in contexts where women represent only a small percentage of returnees. In the countries of return from Morocco, women seem, based on the interviews conducted for this study, to be motivated to participate in community-based projects.

²⁴ It will only be possible to replicate this best practice if IOM has remained in touch with former beneficiaries and if a sufficient number of projects have taken place in the same region and sector.

Following are best practices related to the IOM role concerning **counselling and information** for migrants:

- Sensitize and inform migrants during the pre-departure phase about the importance of remaining reachable;
- Devote resources to orientation (facilitating returnees' access to various forms of assistance available to them) and counselling of migrants is not particularly expensive, and has a strong positive impact on returnees. This requires that AVRR advisers (e.g. NGOs, international organizations, and local and provincial authorities) stay informed and participate in key stakeholders meetings in the country;
- Raise awareness and inform families of returnees and communities about regular migration through campaigns (media campaigns or on-site campaigns in communities). The integration of testimonies and the participation of celebrities would increase the impact.

Other **general best practices for IOM** emerge from the research:

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

CONCLUSION

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

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

Further reintegration support could also be explored for migrants returning from Morocco, such as: (1) **encouraging returnees to establish collective projects** when they wish to create one, for example by informing migrants from Morocco that this is a possible option, letting them know about the potential benefits of pooling of resources and facilitating the administrative procedures; (2) and **encouraging migrants to involve members of the local community in their individual AVRR projects**, for example by providing additional grants in the event of the creation of sustainable employment for a community member.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IOM

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

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

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

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

- Conduct theoretical work for the determination of the community-based AVRR approaches.
- Develop methodological procedures and guidelines for these projects.
- Involve the local community in project design, prior analysis of the needs and selection of beneficiaries.²⁵
- Avoid seeking to implement community-based projects when the available budget is not sufficient to ensure the basic requirements for success, such as an adequate number of human resources near the projects. In the case of a very limited AVRR budget, Altai suggests focusing on individual assistance (by seeking to meet the identified challenges of the model) while taking a coordinating and reorienting role (by promoting especially the integration of returnees into the projects of other stakeholders).

²⁵ Devote special attention to the inclusion of all segments of the community, including women and the most vulnerable members, as well as to the transparency of processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DONORS

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

Annex 1: Assisted return and reintegration approaches



Annex 2: Possible approaches to community-based assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects

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

