



Recent years have seen the rise of larger scale of irregular migratory flows as a result of continually limited regular migration channels, and unaddressed drivers of migration. The numbers of migrants returning to their countries of origin has increased too, as have the diversity of actors involved in migration management and the intricacy of challenges.

While some migrants return to welcoming contexts and reintegrate in a smooth manner, many face challenges they cannot overcome on their own, and need support in their reintegration. At the same time, communities, regions and countries to which migrants return may not have the capacities to provide an environment conducive to sustainable reintegration, due to a lack of local infrastructure and resources.

The notions of return and reintegration are intimately interlinked with that of sustainability. IOM asserts that “reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity”.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to approach migrant reintegration in a comprehensive manner, consider the factors that can affect reintegration and address them in a way to respond to the needs of the individual returnees as well as the communities to which they return in a mutually beneficial way, while addressing the structural factors at play.

IOM believes that migration which takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner is beneficial for migrants, governments and societies.

IOM’s Migrant Protection and Assistance Division (MPA) provides protection and assistance to migrants in need, including trafficked persons, smuggled migrants with protection needs, (rejected) asylum seekers, migrants in irregular situations, stranded migrants, unaccompanied and separated migrant children, and migrants subjected to violence, exploitation or abuse.

Together with its partners MPA has:

- Helped more than 1.5 million migrants return voluntarily to their countries since 1979.
- Supported returning migrants to reintegrate within their communities.
- Assisted close to 100,000 victims of human trafficking since 1994.
- Assisted more than 60,000 vulnerable migrants in 2017 alone.



AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REINTEGRATION

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Individual reintegration support usually allows a degree of flexibility and is tailored to the returnee's specific needs – taking into account migrants' individual characteristics, migratory experiences, vulnerability factors, acquired skills and the circumstances of return. Individual reintegration support is also the most direct form of assistance and can be administered within a short timeframe. Such personalized assistance empowers returnees and encourages them to take responsibility for the reintegration process.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

Community-based initiatives can address community level factors of reintegration and thus facilitate effective reintegration. Furthermore, they help address any feelings of resentment or hostility that a returning migrant may face from members of the community for receiving assistance or, on the contrary, for returning empty-handed. In implementing community-based interventions, it is important to identify the needs of the community itself and the impact of return migration on the community as a whole.

STRUCTURAL INTERVENTIONS

In countries of origin where capacities and infrastructure are not adequate to provide returnees (and local population alike) with an appropriate level of services, protection and assistance conducive to safe return and sustainable reintegration - policy; technical and material support to public institutions, the private sector and civil societies may be necessary. Furthermore, countries with a significant number of emigrants may also be in need of support to develop adequate policies and structures to address the specific needs of their nationals once they return.

A holistic, need-based approach to reintegration takes into consideration the various factors impacting an individual's reintegration, including economic, social, and psychosocial factors across individual, community, and structural dimensions.

OPERATIONALISING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REINTEGRATION (ORION)

As a way to operationalise an integrated approach to reintegration, IOM is currently implementing the ORION project, with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), as part of its "Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route" programme. The ORION project's overall objective is to contribute to sustainable reintegration of returning migrants by:

- 1) Developing a Reintegration Handbook and piloting a case management approach to promote sustainable reintegration across all dimensions (economic, social and psycho-social);
- 2) Reinforcing evidence-based programming with robust monitoring processes and data collection;
- 3) Strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders in countries of origin to support reintegration.

