

Research Study on Comparative Reintegration Outcomes in Forced and Voluntary Returns¹

commissioned by IOM under the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub

Research overview

Topic: Comparative Reintegration Outcomes in Forced and Voluntary Returns

Duration: 15 October 2020 – 14 April 2021 (6 months)

Target countries for additional data collection:

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, the Gambia, Somalia and El Salvador

Commissioned by: IOM under the KMH

Undertaken by: Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht University

Funded by: European Union

Background

The EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub (KMH) was established in September 2017 under the European Union-funded Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration. It aims at supporting the implementation of the EU-IOM Actions in support of migrant protection and reintegration² by strengthening information-sharing and harmonization of approaches, processes and tools relating to return and reintegration, and by centralizing and disseminating the

knowledge gained from these programmes and beyond.

In this framework, a limited **Research Fund** has been established as part of the Knowledge Management Hub, to contract studies in order to address knowledge gaps in the field of migrant return and reintegration. Three comprehensive topics looking at the reintegration outcomes through the prism of **forced return**, **child-sensitivity** and **gender** were identified by reintegration practitioners during the AU-EU-UN Workshop on Sustainable Reintegration in 2018 organised with the support of the KMH³, and have been commissioned by IOM.

Rationale

The return and reintegration of migrants unwilling or unable to remain in host or transit countries has gained renewed attention in the agenda of national and international policymakers around the world. Generally, returns can be categorized as forced (involuntary) or voluntary, and it is commonly thought that the voluntariness of return influences the reintegration process and its sustainability following the migrants' return. However, so far there has been no evidence on the comparative trends in overall reintegration sustainability between voluntary and forced returnees who have received the same support in terms of reintegration assistance and follow-up. This study therefore will focus on comparing the reintegration outcomes between forced and voluntary returnees who equally benefited from the reintegration support provided through the EU-IOM Actions and other programmes, to determine how the modality of return (forced versus voluntary) influences the reintegration sustainability outcomes.

¹ This research will be undertaken in conjunction with another study commissioned to Maastricht University/ UNU-MERIT on "Understanding and implementing gender-sensitive sustainable reintegration."

² In line with the EU external policy and migration priorities, IOM and the EU have jointly developed the following programmes focusing on migrant protection, dignified voluntary return and sustainable reintegration: Joint Initiative in Sahel and Lake Chad, North Africa and Horn of Africa; Pilot Action on Voluntary Return and Sustainable, Community-Based Reintegration; Improving Reintegration of Returnees in Afghanistan (RADA) and Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance (Prattasha).

³ The AU-EU-UN Workshop on Sustainable Reintegration took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27 and 28 November 2018. The press release is available [here](#) and the workshop's report can be accessed on the Return and Reintegration Platform under [this link](#).



Research Objective

The research objective for this study is to compare the differences in reintegration sustainability outcomes between forced and voluntary returnees and determine factors that affect these outcomes at the individual, community and structural level. This will be done through a comparative study analyzing quantitative data already collected through the Reintegration Sustainability Survey and other tools utilized by EU-IOM Actions as well as additional quantitative and qualitative data to be collected during field work. In addition to disaggregating the data by forced and voluntary returns, data and analysis will also consider variables such as age, sex, type of reintegration support measures received, level of reintegration activity (individual or community level), country from which the return took place, etc.

Research Data and Methods

- Desk review of existing analyses of forced and voluntary return reintegration outcomes as well as relevant topics from development and social science literature.
- Quantitative data already collected through the IOM's Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS) measurement tools available from IOM's information management system.
- Additional quantitative data collected during field work, when stock of monitoring data is not sufficient for the estimated sample.
- Complementary qualitative data collected during field work including potentially case studies, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, etc. Qualitative data will also look at whether and how interventions at the structural level (for instance capacity-building of governmental stakeholders and reintegration-related service providers) contribute to sustainable reintegration.

Outputs

- A detailed Research Plan including specific research lines of inquiry, research methodology, necessary inputs, updated timeline and roles and responsibilities of the research consultant and IOM. The Research Plan will be agreed between the research consultant, IOM and the Technical Review Panel (TRP).
- Data collection tools for all quantitative and qualitative data collection to be performed during field work in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, the Gambia, Somalia and El Salvador.
- A complete dataset of all quantitative data utilized in the study, including that already available and that collected through fieldwork.
- A summary of qualitative data collected, such as minutes of focus group discussions, key informant interviews, etc.
- A final Research Paper in English not exceeding 20 pages (excluding annexes), with a summary of the data analysis, main findings of the study according to the lines of inquiry in the Research Plan, good practices identified in the field of gender-sensitive reintegration programming, and actionable recommendations as to how these findings should influence the design and implementation of reintegration policy and programmes and suggestions for further research.
- A summary of the Research Paper, not exceeding 2 pages, with key findings and recommendations.