

Reintegration Assistance

Good, Promising and Innovative Practices

Practice #7

Pre-departure reintegration assistance in Morocco: orientation, counselling and training

Implementing entity: IOM

Project title: *FORAS - Reinforcement of Reintegration opportunities*

Donor: German Federal Foreign Office

Summary

FORAS, meaning “opportunities” in Arabic, is a project that aims at strengthening the sustainable reintegration of migrants returning from Morocco to eight target countries of origin (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Togo)* through enhanced pre-departure support in the framework of IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme in Morocco.

The main pre-departure activities include:

- Orientation and counselling sessions to provide AVRR beneficiaries with accurate and up-to-date information about opportunities and challenges associated with the reintegration process in the eight target countries of origin and the available pre-departure training opportunities in Morocco,
- Pre-departure trainings to strengthen AVRR beneficiaries’ technical and motivational skills in view of their sustainable reintegration upon return.

Between September 2017 and December 2019, FORAS enriched IOM’s AVRR programme in Morocco by equipping beneficiaries with knowledge, skills, confidence and motivation to plan for their sustainable reintegration, with the support from IOM offices in relevant countries of origin (CoO). 1,589 beneficiaries attended orientation and counselling sessions and 886 of these attended at least one pre-departure training before their return.

** At the beginning of the project, five countries of origin, namely Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, were identified. Given the success of the activities implemented in 2018 and following the demand of the steering committee organized in December 2018, the donor agreed to extend the programme to three new target countries (Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Togo).*

Operational details

► Description of the activity

Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and implemented by IOM over a period of 28 months (1 September 2017 – 31 December 2019), the FORAS project aimed at preparing the reintegration of potential returnees and enhancing its sustainability in the pre-departure phase. This was done by providing accurate information on reintegration challenges and opportunities in the potential returnees' countries of origin and on training opportunities in Morocco through available resources (both online and offline), as well as by delivering a comprehensive pre-departure training package to strengthen beneficiaries' technical and motivational skills. Key activities included the following:

- **Preparatory activities/ initial assessment**

A **mapping of socio-professional orientation and training opportunities in Morocco** was developed between December 2017 and May 2018. Within this mapping, IOM, in collaboration with a consultant, developed a **survey to identify the training preferences, competences and previous work experiences** of the target group (migrants returning from Morocco to the eight target CoOs). Based on the results of this survey, administered to 201 migrants, and on the recommendation of the technical workshop held in December 2017 to present the project and exchange recommendations to guide the project's implementation, the following training topics were identified: soft skills, life skills, entrepreneurship and commercialization. On the other hand, the mapping also provided information and **recommendations about the institutions that could potentially deliver these training sessions** in the three targeted cities of Casablanca, Rabat and Oujda.

Moreover, a **study** was developed to identify the main economic reintegration opportunities in the five initially targeted CoOs. The report provided detailed **data on the socio-economic situation in the five CoOs** and made a thorough analysis of the situation of **five previously identified growing economic sectors**: agriculture, sewing,

mechanics, tourism and the construction industry. The study, conducted by the think tank Samuel Hall in synergy with the [EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration](#) in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, was **used to inform the training courses content and the different information and awareness raising materials** developed on reintegration challenges and opportunities in the relevant CoOs.

- **Orientation and counselling sessions: improved information on reintegration challenges and opportunities**

One-hour "**orientation and counselling sessions** on reintegration challenges and opportunities in home countries and available opportunities in Morocco" were conducted with potential AVRR beneficiaries willing to participate in training courses and to receive further orientation towards the most suitable services and training available in Morocco under FORAS. They were also informed about the reintegration challenges and opportunities as well as about the reintegration assistance available in their countries of origin through the reintegration approach implemented by IOM and its partners in CoOs.

The orientation and counselling sessions were carried out by IOM staff and were country-specific (maximum two nationalities involved in the same session). **Up-to-date information** was provided based on the study on the main economic reintegration opportunities and on the regular updates and feedback received from selected IOM focal points in the eight target CoOs.

By the end of December 2019, 1,589 migrants (1,267 men, 286 women and 36 UMCs including 34 boys and two girls) from the eight target countries benefitted from this activity.

Moreover, IOM produced and disseminated several **information and awareness raising materials** such as country-specific brochures on available reintegration opportunities, informative videos on the reintegration process in CoOs and the available opportunities in Morocco, and a [website](#) to support pre-departure orientation and guidance in Morocco. These materials were distributed to

FORAS and AVRR beneficiaries at the time of registration, during orientation sessions or on the day of departure. In total, more than 3,500 brochures were distributed.

- ***Training courses: enhanced skills to better prepare migrants for their reintegration process***

The training courses initially included 4 core modules – **life skills, soft skills, entrepreneurship and commercialization** – defined during the project development phase, and aimed to address the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration. These four modules were delivered between August and December 2018.

In January 2019, IOM decided to merge the contents of the life skills and soft skills modules into a single five-day module ('personal development'), and the entrepreneurship and commercialization modules into a single nine-day module ('business').

Successively, based on the results of the preliminary study on the main economic reintegration opportunities in the countries of origin, and after intensive coordination with IOM missions in CoOs, two additional **technical modules on transformation and conservation of agricultural products and on handicraft** were designed to strengthen the returnees' technical skills. The modules, of a duration of 9 days, were designed so as to fit the diversity of the beneficiaries' profiles and of their reintegration contexts.

The course on **life and soft skills/ personal development** allowed beneficiaries to regain confidence and self-esteem and to make the most out of the support of their family, friends and community before the return. It aimed to develop beneficiaries' personal, social and self-management skills to succeed in their professional lives upon their return. The course on **business** taught beneficiaries the basics of the design and implementation of businesses, including conducting a market study, prospecting clients, basic accounting and good practices for the success of an entrepreneurial project. Beneficiaries of the **transformation and conservation of farm products** training acquired skills in the valorisation of agricultural

products, through the observation and practice of different conservation and processing techniques. For example, they learned how to make shampoo and other honey-based cosmetics, produce jams and dry fruits and vegetables. Beneficiaries of the course on **handicrafts** learned different modern and traditional decorations and painting techniques, the use and transformation of recycled products to produce small objects, and the creation of small furniture.



FORAS beneficiaries participating in the entrepreneurship and commercialization module © IOM Morocco/2019

The training courses were designed and delivered by an **implementing partner** (ASTICUDE), that formed a consortium with a training agency (CERF) and a migrant's association (CCSM). IOM ensured the referral of beneficiaries as well as the coordination, the overall supervision and the quality control of the activity.

Given the precarious situation of most migrants who register for AVRR in Morocco, ASTICUDE provided **support for food and transportation**, as well as for short-term **accommodation** in certain cases¹.

By the end of December 2019, 886 migrants (691 men, 137 women, 29 boys and two girls) benefitted from 141 training sessions in three cities.

Participation to the FORAS support activities was based on the migrants' willingness to attend the counselling and training sessions. 57% of migrants from the eight target countries who registered to the AVRR programme in one of the three Migrants Orientation Points established under the

¹ Accommodation was provided to migrants in particular situations of vulnerability for the duration of the training course, in accordance with the very limited available places.

project² chose to participate to the orientation and counselling sessions. 55% of those who participated, also chose to enrol in at least one of the pre-departure training courses.

Beneficiaries were able to attend several training modules and strengthen both their technical and motivational skills. 93% of the beneficiaries attended the personal development training module (life skills and soft skills) and 63% of the trainees attended the module on business (entrepreneurship and commercialization). The vocational modules were delivered to a selected group of beneficiaries, after completing the two other preparatory modules and according to their interest. 20% of the trainees attended the module on handicraft and 17% the one on agriculture. Overall, 78% of the beneficiaries attended at least two training courses.

► Approach/Rationale

The project sought to capitalize on the period between a migrant's registration to the AVRR programme and his/her actual return (i.e. the pre-departure phase), which according to IOM's experience with AVRR in Morocco lasts around 8 weeks, to better prepare future returnees to the challenges and opportunities associated with the reintegration process. This was done by increasing their awareness of the reintegration process and through the delivery of pre-departure training courses.

The training modules were based on the prevailing needs of returning migrants (assessed through the questionnaires administered at preparatory stage) and informed by the socio-economic profile of the five initial target CoOs in coordination with the IOM missions in these countries. They aimed to contribute to the development of personal and technical skills that beneficiaries would be able to use upon return to improve their reintegration and foster reintegration sustainability.

► Partnership/Synergy

FORAS' pre-departure reintegration assistance activities were implemented by a consortium selected following a call for proposals and composed of ASTICUDE as lead implementing partner, CERF and CCSM.³ ASTICUDE was responsible for coordinating the action with IOM as well as with the other partners. It ensured the correct functioning of all the trainings and supported the trainees in Oujda and Casablanca meeting their basic needs. CERF adapted the training modules to the specific needs of beneficiaries and delivered and monitored the four different training courses in the three cities targeted by the project. CCSM ensured the correct functioning of all the training activities and supported the trainees in Rabat meeting their basic needs.

A tripartite MoU to ensure pre-departure orientation and training in the framework of the AVRR programme was established between IOM, the Ministry of Interior (Mol) and the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development (that supervises the Entraide Nationale, a governmental institution for social assistance and vocational training). Within the MoU, Entraide Nationale was responsible for the referral of potential beneficiaries to IOM's AVRR programme and to the FORAS project. It also hosted within its premises two migrants' orientation points (MOPs) in Casablanca and Oujda to allow IOM to register migrants to the AVRR programme and provide orientation and counselling sessions. The Mol is responsible for supporting AVRR through facilitating immigration procedures and contributing to the provision of the return tickets for migrants under IOM's AVRR programme, including FORAS beneficiaries.

► Useful contacts and references

Information on the FORAS project are available on the dedicated website www.foras.ma. It includes the brochures, information material and videos mentioned above. Videos are also accessible on a [dedicated YouTube channel](#). The booklet '[FORAS: Voici mon histoire](#)' compiles

² Three Migrants Orientation Points (MOPs) were established under the project in Casablanca, Rabat and Oujda, the three target cities of the FORAS project. They were meant to improve migrants' access to information on FORAS and on AVRR in Morocco as well as to facilitate AVRR beneficiaries' registration and referral for assistance.

³ CERF, *Cabinet de Conseils, Études, Recrutements et Formations*, is a Moroccan training company. CCSM, *Collectifs de communautés Subsahariennes au Maroc*, is a migrant's association specialized in migrant protection and assistance.

testimonies of FORAS' beneficiaries explaining their reintegration experience and highlights the benefits of pre-departure training in Morocco.

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Evidence base

► Outcome and Evidence

- **Monitoring and evaluation exercises**

The FORAS team regularly monitors the activities and outputs achieved in Morocco through:

- Feedback forms completed by migrants at the end of each orientation and counselling session;
- Surveys completed by beneficiaries at the end of each training module;
- Visit of pre-departure training courses;
- Phone calls, e-mail exchanges and meetings with the lead implementing partner (ASTICUDE);
- Quarterly narrative and financial reports sent by ASTICUDE including sources of verification such as attendance records, trainers' reports, evaluation forms and pictures.

It also monitors the reintegration of the project beneficiaries after their return, including through IOM's institutional monitoring surveys administered by the IOM offices in the CoOs.

Two external evaluations of the project took place in 2018 (midterm evaluation) and 2019 (final evaluation) to assess the extent to which the project had achieved the set medium and long-term goals, and particularly analyze the project's contribution towards sustainable reintegration.

The mid-term evaluation guided the continuation of the project in 2019 and the final evaluation supported the development of a second phase of FORAS.

As of May 2020, 408 FORAS beneficiaries had returned to their CoOs. 218 returnees (54% of the total FORAS returnees) had contacted IOM reintegration staff in CoOs and at least 201 of them were developing or had implemented their individual, collective or community-based reintegration projects.⁴ Moreover, the most vulnerable migrants had been granted social assistance covering shelter, food items as well as medical and psychosocial assistance. Among the FORAS beneficiaries assisted in their reintegration in their CoOs, 22 were monitored. 68% of them have reached an overall composite reintegration score of 0.5 and above, the threshold to consider reintegration as sustainable according to IOM's definition and monitoring tools.⁵

- **Findings of the final evaluation**

The numerous interviews conducted in the framework of the final evaluation allow shedding some light on the benefits and challenges of the intervention described in this factsheet.

The evaluation found that the above-described activities “**addressed very important needs** [...]: better access to reliable information on AVRR, reinforcement of the skills and capacities of the migrants [...].”⁶

The **diversification of training modules** offered is positive, but the topics chosen appear as unequally relevant. The personal development and business-related modules – aimed at making individuals more autonomous - indeed appear as very relevant (and much appreciated by returnees), while those on agriculture and handicraft appear as less relevant, mainly as these modules are less adapted to the contexts of the CoOs and would thus gain to be organized in CoOs after the return.⁷

⁴ Reintegration assistance was provided in synergy with the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (with four returnees to the Democratic Republic of Congo assisted under the North Africa window and the others under the Sahel and Lake Chad window).

⁵ More information on the definition and tools is available in the [Reintegration Handbook](#) published by IOM in 2019.

⁶ Extracted from FORAS final evaluation, December 2019

⁷ This evaluation finding and recommendation has been taken into consideration for the next phase of FORAS: only the modules on personal development and business will be delivered.

99% of the beneficiaries surveyed after the induction sessions were **satisfied about the quality of the information** received, and 98% of the beneficiaries surveyed at the end of the training modules, were **satisfied about the training support received**.

The vast majority of the 71 beneficiaries interviewed during the final evaluation acknowledged the **positive contribution** of the project. 84% of them report that they were very satisfied (42 beneficiaries) or satisfied (18 beneficiaries) with the knowledge and skills they acquired through this project and that it would assist them in their reintegration.



FORAS beneficiaries participating in the handicraft module
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However, the extent to which returnees consider that the **skills gained through the pre-departure training are useful** for their reintegration, offers some insights into the potential impact and sustainability of the activities. 59% of the returnees who filled in the survey for the evaluation (71 respondents in total) consider that these skills are indeed useful, 25% that they are quite useful, 13% that they are somehow useful, and 1.5% that they are not useful at all (1.5% did not respond). Even if not directly useful in their job or microbusiness, some returnees highlight how training has **boosted their motivation**. For instance, a returnee interviewed during the evaluation indicated: “Thanks to the skills gained during the training sessions I was far more motivated.” The personal development training also helped migrants in their **psychosocial reintegration**, as suggested by another returnee interviewed: “[The personal development training] helped me managing people’s reactions about my return.”

In general, the FORAS focal points in the countries of origin assess that the beneficiaries of the FORAS project are usually **better prepared and equipped for their reintegration**, but in the absence of any quantitative data and comparative analysis, this remains a general impression. This impression is however confirmed by returnees who mentioned they felt better equipped for their reintegration after receiving the pre-departure support, as highlighted during an interview: “The trainings gave me ideas for a better reintegration once home.”

The final evaluation thus confirms the project’s good performance but also its limitations in terms of impact and sustainability. “It has not been demonstrated *at this stage* that pre-departure activities in Morocco have a substantial and sustainable impact in the context of their reintegration for a significant number of migrants after their return to their country.” Yet, the FORAS approach, consisting of improved migrants’ preparedness for their reintegration, appears to be very relevant. Limited availability of data on the beneficiaries’ reintegration outcomes prevents from assessing this practice as an evidence-based “good practice” *at this stage*, but it certainly consists of a promising practice to be further encouraged, implemented and improved.

IOM will actually implement a second phase of the project FORAS with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, between April 2020 and March 2022. IOM will reinforce its monitoring mechanisms to ensure the correct measurement of the progress of individuals’ reintegration and of the impact of the action on the sustainable reintegration of beneficiaries.

► Recommendations

- **Orientation and counselling sessions**

Information on CoO and on reintegration challenges and opportunities must be constantly updated. If not updated regularly, the information provided very quickly loses its relevance and accuracy and does not help the migrant’s decision to return, nor the preparation of his/her reintegration. On the contrary, inaccurate information risks hindering trust in IOM and the programme.

- ***Pre-departure training***

Training modules must meet the beneficiaries' needs and be adapted to the socio-economic contexts of the countries of origin. To do this:

- The training content should be flexible to adapt to beneficiaries' feedback or evolving needs.
- Actors both in the host country and in the countries of origin should be involved when designing the training curriculum.
- The training modules should capitalize on identified opportunities present in the countries of origin to address known reintegration challenges at the economic, social and psychosocial levels.⁸
- The acquired skills should be transferrable to different contexts (e.g. rural and urban).
- Some types of training courses (especially technical training) would benefit from being organized in the country of origin, to be more in line with the local context where the beneficiaries will carry out their reintegration project.
- Additional types of training courses relevant to enhance employability, could be envisaged. This potentially includes training on job hunting techniques, IT or language (although language skills require longer timeframe). Training courses should focus on empowering beneficiaries to achieve self-sufficiency in the country of origin and to become active subjects of their future reintegration.

Vulnerable beneficiaries or beneficiaries with specific economic, social or psychosocial needs must be supported with accommodation, transportation and food to ensure their participation in the training activities. If these aspects are not covered by the project, beneficiaries might not (be able to) attend the pre-departure activities. Moreover, equal opportunity of access to orientation sessions and pre-departure trainings for women and men should be ensured. IOM should encourage parents with children to attend

trainings regularly by creating dedicated spaces in the classrooms for children to play or by identifying other support measures.

Cooperation/ partnership should be fostered with governmental and non-governmental local partners that have a recognized expertise and qualified staff to design and deliver the training courses.

Training activities should not be organized in transit areas, as migrants may be less interested. Experience in Morocco shows that demand for training was lower in Oujda (close to the Spanish and Algerian borders), as migrants only transit there and are less interested in AVRR (as compared to main cities like Casablanca and Rabat where some migrants are more settled and potentially more prone to opt for AVRR and focus on pre-departure training). Information and counselling on AVRR as well as protection activities can and should still be implemented in transit areas, but pre-departure trainings are not cost-efficient in such context. Interested migrants in transit areas can be oriented to training in other areas.

When developing a project envisaging pre-departure reintegration assistance, the fact that only part of the migrants registering to AVRR will participate in the pre-departure support activities should be factored in. Under FORAS, 2,776 migrants from the eight target CoOs registered to the AVRR programme in one of the three MOPs, 1,589 of them attended an orientation and counselling session and 886 attended at least one pre-departure training module.

- ***Organization of return and link between pre-departure and post-arrival reintegration assistance***

The pre-departure training courses should remain short to ensure that participation does not negatively affect the migrants' return date.

Once beneficiaries have registered to a training course, though, the **pre-departure assistance and the organization of the return travel should be coordinated closely.** Beneficiaries who initiated a training module should be able

⁸ In this light, community mapping, labour market assessment, value chain assessment, analysis of past reintegration programmes, etc. are key. They must be conducted as soon as possible in the project, or ideally already exist and orient the project design.

to complete it before their departure. Their return should be scheduled accordingly.

Coherence between pre-departure support (i.e. what beneficiaries learned during the training) **and reintegration assistance after return must be encouraged.** For this, close coordination must be established between the implementing organisations at both ends of the return process. In any case, even when coherence between pre-departure and post-arrival reintegration assistance is ensured, beneficiaries' expectations over the reintegration assistance available in CoO must be managed as the impact of the assistance depends on a wide range of factors, including the context of return and the value of the assistance.

► Conditions for Replicability

The expertise, active participation and flexibility of IOM and its partners greatly contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency of the project, with a good division of roles and responsibilities and adequate coordination between actors involved.

This type of activity should build upon mappings or assessments of socio-economic opportunities and

challenges in the CoOs. Moreover, it requires regularly updated information on reintegration context and opportunities as well as extensive coordination and robust partnerships with CoOs. In this light, it should target a limited number of countries of origin.

The availability of time between a migrant's registration to the AVRR programme and the return travel is key to organize this type of pre-departure reintegration assistance. As such, it does not suit contexts such as transit places or migration hotspots where returns are usually organized very quickly.

Actors on both sides of the AVRR process should be committed to ensure coherence of the pre-departure – post-arrival continuum, while taking into consideration the contexts, challenges and opportunities at both ends. Innovative and complementary forms of support should be envisaged to increase the impact of the activity.

Knowledge Management Hub

Factsheet developed and published by the Knowledge Management Hub in May 2020

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets on good and promising practices in reintegration assistance. It aims at disseminating good and promising practices on reintegration assistance to reintegration practitioners worldwide.

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