



# Manual for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrant Workers in South Asia



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# Manual for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrant Workers in South Asia



# Foreword

International labour migration has been a major driver of economic development of South Asia; it has become even more important after the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crises. An unprecedented number of migrant workers, with diverse experiences and needs, had to return to their home countries under tremendous pressure unexpectedly. Reintegration is, therefore, a critical aspect of labour migration. It is a multidimensional process that requires coordination and collaboration of many stakeholders, including but not limited to government and non-governmental actors. This process must occur across different levels, to develop and implement gender-responsive and inclusive reintegration policies and procedures and allocate adequate financial resources and know-how to address vulnerability factors, as well as social, psychosocial and economic opportunities and challenges for returning migrant workers to (re)secure their lives in their countries of origin successfully.

Returning migrant workers can play an important role in socioeconomic development in origin countries as they bring back knowledge, skills and experiences that can be beneficial to their countries. While some migrant workers return to welcoming contexts and reintegrate in a smooth manner, many often face challenges reintegrating into their home communities and the labour market. For South Asian women migrant workers, despite their significant contributions to the economies of their home countries, when returning home, they could again face social and economic development challenges or gender-based violence and discrimination, which they had sought to escape. In many cases, returning women migrant workers are found to have experienced psychological trauma from the precarious employment and living conditions and violence in the country where they had gone for work, and upon return they have experienced stigmatization associated with their migration experience by their families and their communities. Therefore, it is important for governments in the region to ground their policies in a gender-responsive manner and ensure that family members of returnees are included in the reintegration support and services.

In response to the changing realities of labour migration in South Asia and in line with Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration – IOM and UN Women are proud to present this manual. It provides a glimpse into promising practices to support the adoption of the commitments of South Asian Colombo Process Member States to ensure the effectiveness of the reintegration process for their migrant workers. We hope that the proposed guidelines and actions in the manual may be adapted for operationalization at the national/local level by governments, employers, workers and their organizations, and civil society, enabling all migrant workers and their families to make use of the benefits of return migration sustainably.



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# Preface

Labour migration in the South Asian region is a key characteristic prompting the largest inflow of remittances globally. The region is the origin for a large proportion of migrants in the world especially to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with India topping the list followed by Bangladesh (IOM, 2021a). Return migration thus affects millions of people in the region regularly. Returning migrant workers, irrespective of status, immensely contribute to national development of their countries of origin by bringing in enhanced skill sets, experience, knowledge and capital. While stakeholders have focused on the earlier stages of the migration cycle, such as the development of effective migration laws and policies, pre-departure training and research on working conditions when abroad, far less attention is focused on the return and reintegration of migrant workers. Reintegration programmes should be focused comprehensively on the before, during and after migration needs.

The diverse needs of returning migrant workers requires gender-responsive and comprehensive services focusing on economic, social and psychosocial needs. Returning migrants may have a wide variety of needs, requiring programmes that address those seeking assistance for employment, savings, business development, job-matching, or for dealing with psychosocial trauma or difficulties in reintegrating into their communities of origin. Integrated and targeted programmes could assist migrant workers return to their local communities as well as optimize their contribution to their communities and labour markets.

The **Colombo Process** is a regional consultative process of 12 Asian countries focusing on all-round protection and provision of services to migrant workers and their families. Working towards that vision, the **Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia (GOALS) Programme** aims to ensure that labour migration is safe, orderly and regular for all men and women from the South Asian Colombo Process Member States, namely Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, through strengthened collaboration and effective labour migration governance. Supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, GOALS is a three-year (August 2020–January 2024) joint regional programme between the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. As part of the Programme, the partners have developed a gender-responsive regional reintegration model for returning migrant workers in South Asia. The model covers interventions for economic, social, and psychosocial reintegration at structural, individual and community levels. These will complement existing migrant reintegration initiatives of the respective countries. This manual aims to provide practical guidance to policymakers, practitioners, and service providers on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance for returning migrants to their countries of origin.



# Acknowledgements

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The manual was developed as a tool for the practical use of the regional reintegration model for South Asia, which was jointly commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) under the auspices of the Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia (GOALS) Programme. The GOALS Programme is a regional joint United Nations programme implemented by IOM, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Technical inputs and guidance were provided by the joint technical review panel of the participating United Nations organizations, comprising of: Nansiri Iamsuk, Programme Specialist, Migration, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP); Katja Freiwald, Regional Lead on Women's Economic Empowerment, Migration, UN Women ROAP; Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq, Senior Regional Migration Protection and Assistance Specialist, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Andrew Gray, Deputy Chief of Mission, IOM Sri Lanka; and Asanga Ranasinghe, Programme Officer for Regional Labour Migration, IOM Sri Lanka; Dino Corell, Labour Migration Specialist for South Asia, ILO; Natalia Popova, Labour Economist, Labour Migration Branch, ILO; and Amish Karki, Technical Officer for the GOALS Programme, ILO. We are also grateful for the extensive support from UN Women, ILO and IOM country offices for providing country-level inputs, as well as identifying relevant stakeholders at the national level for the consultations.

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AVRR	assisted voluntary return and reintegration (IOM)
CBO	community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPMS	Colombo Process Member State
CBO	community-based organization
CSO	civil society organization
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment (Philippines)
GBV	gender-based violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IEC	information, education and communication
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPV	intimate partner violence
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFI	microfinance institution
MHPSS	mental health and psychosocial support services
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MRC	migrant resource centre
OFW	overseas Filipino worker (Philippines)
PES	public employment service
RPL	recognition of prior learning
SHG	self-help group
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRO	women's rights organization



# Definitions

## 1. **Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR)**

“Assisted return” refers to when migrants are provided some assistance in return and reintegration. IOM has been operating AVRR programmes for over 40 years now, mainly for rejected asylum-seekers and those in irregular status. IOM defines AVRR programmes as “administrative, logistical and financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host or transit country and who decide to return to their country of origin” (IOM, 2019a:12–13). In the context of AVRR, voluntariness is assumed to exist if two conditions apply: (a) freedom of choice, which is defined as the absence of physical or psychological pressure to enrol in an AVRR programme; and (b) an informed decision, which requires the availability of timely, unbiased and reliable information upon which to base the decision. In some cases, an assessment may be needed by qualified professionals to determine the extent to which a person is capable to take such a free and informed decision, and who, should the person lack such a capacity, could legally take the decision on their behalf.

## 2. **Circular migration**

This refers to temporary movements of a repetitive character – either formally or informally – across borders, usually for work, involving the same migrants (Wickramasekara, 2012). By definition, all circular migration is temporary migration. Circular migration thus means repeat migration, and it overlaps also with the concept of return migration, as return is part of the circular movement. Circular migration is common within internal migration in ASEAN countries, where people migrate for seasonal agricultural employment.

## 3. **Community-level support**

Community-level support is the support that is delivered through the communities that migrants belong to, in order to promote their networks and general belonging in these communities. Such support would also address tensions between returnees and their communities and respond to the needs of migrants’ families and communities. (IOM, 2019b)

## 4. **Economic and labour market reintegration support**

Economic and labour market reintegration support measures are necessary to ensure that returnees are independent and self-sufficient once they return to their home countries. To this end, economic and labour market reintegration support is considered to be initiatives and programmes that provide returnees with the resources and skills that can help them earn sustainable incomes. Thus, economic and labour market reintegration encompasses the ability for migrants to rejoin the workforce.

## 5. **Forced return**

The act of returning an individual, against his or her will, to the country of origin, transit or to a third country that agrees to receive the person, generally carried out on the basis of an administrative or judicial act or decision (European Migration Network, 2018). Destination countries often remove rejected workers in irregular status when they do not return voluntarily.

## 6. Gender

Gender can be defined as the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being men or women in a particular point in time. It also refers to the socially constructed relationship between women and men and the attributes, behaviour and activities to which each is expected to adhere. Gender differences are determined and reinforced by cultural, historical, ethnic, religious and economic factors. Gender roles differ over time and between cultures but may be changed. Gender is often wrongly conflated with “sex”, which refers to biological differences. (ILO, 2020:9)

## 7. Gender responsiveness

Gender responsiveness can be defined as the consistent and systematic attention given to the gendered differences among individuals in society with a view to addressing status quo and structural constraints to gender equality. (ILO, 2020:10)

## 8. Gender sensitivity

It takes into account particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men with an aim to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality, including an equal distribution of resources. (Ibid.)

## 9. Individual-level support

Individual-level support refers to support that is targeted specifically, and directly at migrants, to aid them and improve their well-being. (IOM, 2019b)

## 10. Psychosocial reintegration support

Psychosocial reintegration support refers to programmes and mechanisms that can assist returnees to deal with any emotional difficulties, traumas or other problems that they face because of the migration experience, or even their subsequent reintegration. (Ibid.)

## 11. Reintegration

Reintegration is a process that enables individuals to reestablish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood, and dignity and inclusion in civic life. The various components of reintegration include social reintegration, psychological reintegration, and economic and labour market reintegration.

## 12. Return migration

Return migration is an umbrella term to refer to the various forms, methods and processes by which migrants return or are compelled to return to their countries of origin or habitual residences, or to third countries. This includes, inter alia, independent departure; assisted, voluntary or spontaneous return; deportation; expulsion; removal; extradition; pushback; handover; transfer; or any other return arrangement. The use of the term “return” provides no determination as to the degree of voluntariness or compulsion in the decision to return, nor of the lawfulness or arbitrariness of the return.

## 13. Social reintegration support

Social reintegration support refers to the provision of and access to things, such as housing, education, health services and legal support, which improve migrants’ overall quality of life. (Ibid.)

#### 14. Sustainable reintegration

This is a process that enables individuals to secure and sustain the political, economic, social and psychosocial conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity in the country and community they return or are returned to, in full respect of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. This should include targeted measures that enable returning migrants to have access to justice, social protection, financial services, health care, education, family life, an adequate standard of living, decent work, and protection against discrimination, stigma, arbitrary detention and all forms of violence, and that allows returnees to consider that they are in an environment of personal safety, economic empowerment, inclusion and social cohesion upon return. (United Nations Network on Migration, 2021)

#### 15. Structural-level support

Structural-level support refers to support beyond the institutional level. While the institutional level of reintegration support particularly looks at how institutions govern the sectors under their responsibility through rules, regulations, policies and specific measures, the structural level of reintegration includes institutional-level support but is broader, also encompassing cultural preferences, historical factors and other elements that influence policymaking (IOM, 2019b). In this context, structural-level support refers to the services provided or designed by government, both local and national, as well as through regional organizations and MoUs and government-to-government agreements. (Ibid.)

#### 16. Violence against women

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (United Nations, 1993)

#### 17. Violence and harassment in the world of work

It refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment. (ILO, 2019)

#### 18. Voluntary return

Voluntary return literally means making the decision to return according to one's own free will or independently. It can be described as freely chosen return. (European Migration Network, 2018)





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## Overview of the manual

Cross-border migration has significantly increased over the years. Critical factors influencing this movement include search for better opportunities, natural and human-made crises, environmental degradation and the increased circulation of information because of better technology. Higher flows of migration have also been accompanied by higher volumes of migrant workers returning to their countries of origin. Return is often followed by a process of reintegration of returning migrant workers into their society. This process is usually referred to as “reintegration”.

**Reintegration is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon**, influenced closely by the country’s legal and administrative systems and processes, peer influence including family and community support, and individual desire or circumstances. Patterns of return and needs during the reintegration process is among the least enumerated and researched areas, further making it difficult to target assistance programmes.

*The Manual for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrant Workers in South Asia* is designed to provide a guiding framework to policymakers, practitioners and service providers in prioritizing and planning targeted reintegration assistance.



# Scope of the manual

This manual provides practical guidance for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating reintegration assistance programmes for returning migrant workers in South Asia, which may be applicable to other contexts of reintegration. The target audience for this manual are primarily policymakers, practitioners and service providers who can advocate for and support a government and society-wide approach through the adoption of coordinated policies and practices at the international, regional, national and local levels. The manual is designed keeping in consideration the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders involved in providing reintegration-related support at different levels and stages of the migrant life cycle.

Understanding the needs of migrant workers across their labour migration life cycle is a key focus of the Model for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrant Workers in South Asia. The Model adopts a people-centred approach that recognizes that unique psychosocial, social and economic needs of each returnee, irrespective of migration status, owing to general characteristics, such as sex, gender, age, ability and ethnicity for planning assistance. Three key areas are proposed by the Model to support reintegration: (1) assistance towards economic and labour market reintegration; (2) assistance towards social reintegration; and (3) assistance towards psychosocial reintegration. Accordingly, this manual is detailed into six modules:

- Module 1: Setting the context
- Module 2: The reintegration model
- Module 3: Assistance and planning towards economic and labour market reintegration
- Module 4: Assistance and planning towards social reintegration
- Module 5: Assistance and planning towards psychosocial reintegration
- Module 6: Monitoring and evaluation

The manual ends with a short section on the key ideas presented and considerations for governments to establish systems and protocols if emergencies were to occur. This is a forward-looking document aiming to assist the South Asian CPMSs in supporting the reintegration process and outcomes through proactive planning and implementation of reintegration support policies.

The intent of the Model is to enable sustainable reintegration of returning migrant workers through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The Model proposes the importance of effective coordination and collaboration among relevant government and non-governmental actors.

The Model takes cognizance that reintegration programmes can vary greatly in scope, resources, local context, priorities of stakeholders, returning migrant workers' profile and needs, and the number of returnees in a given time. It is therefore **not the purpose of this document to define standard operating procedures applicable to all contexts.**

Alternatively, **this Model is designed to be comprehensive guiding framework** to be used based on the specific implementation conditions and context.





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# Module 1: Setting the context



# Patterns of migration in South Asia

Migration has been recognized as a core element in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A prominent livelihood strategy, particularly in the South Asian region, migration is viewed as an instrument for social mobility and poverty alleviation. It is pertinent to note that over the last three decades, estimations of international migrants have significantly increased, reaching nearly 281 million worldwide (DESA, Population Division, 2020). Countries in the Asia-Pacific region comprise nearly 30 per cent of international migrants, with the **biggest outmigration (of men and women) occurring from countries including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal** (IOM, 2021b).

**Women constitute nearly half of the migrants in the region.** This is a conservative estimate considering the prevalent regional pattern of undocumented migration through irregular channels that do not reflect in the official statistics (Deligiorgis, 2022). It is estimated that more than 2.5 million migrants were working in an irregular status in various countries (not including India, which is the primary destination on account of its porous border and proximity) (UNODC, 2018). Of the total women migrants in Asia-Pacific, 79.9 per cent were working in the service sector, **mostly as domestic care workers.** Many lack agency with regard to the decision to migrate; this is to say that the decision and choice to migrate is not that of the women solely but influenced or pressurized by the family or the husband.

In South Asia, remittances are the dominant source of foreign exchange for the region, with receipts more than twice as large as foreign direct investment in 2021. Remittances to South Asia likely grew around 8 per cent to USD 159 billion in 2021 as per a World Bank press release (November 2021). They play an instrumental role in improving household consumption, macroeconomic stability and growth. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, along with the GCC countries, constitute the major receiving countries of labour migration. **South Asia is the origin for 10 of the 20 major migration corridors in Asia, with four comprising intraregional flows and five directed towards GCC countries.**

## Characteristics of return migration

While there are no universally agreed classifications of return, there are different factors that help understand the phenomenon. These include, among others, time of stay in host countries, pattern of return, intended duration of return and assistance level received in the return process. Based on time patterns, return, in the context of labour migration, can be classified as: (1) occasional returns; (2) seasonal returns; (3) return of temporary workers at the end of their work contracts; and (4) return of permanent residents who were settled in other countries. This characterization supports understanding the challenges and opportunities of return migration. For instance, if a migrant worker returns after spending a brief time abroad, they may not have adequate qualifications, skills, resources, experience and social capital to substantially contribute to the country of origin; they may need additional handholding towards economic participation and financial management. Contrarily, a migrant who has accumulated social, human and financial capital abroad may contribute more to the economy but may need higher focus towards rebuilding social networks and psychological support.

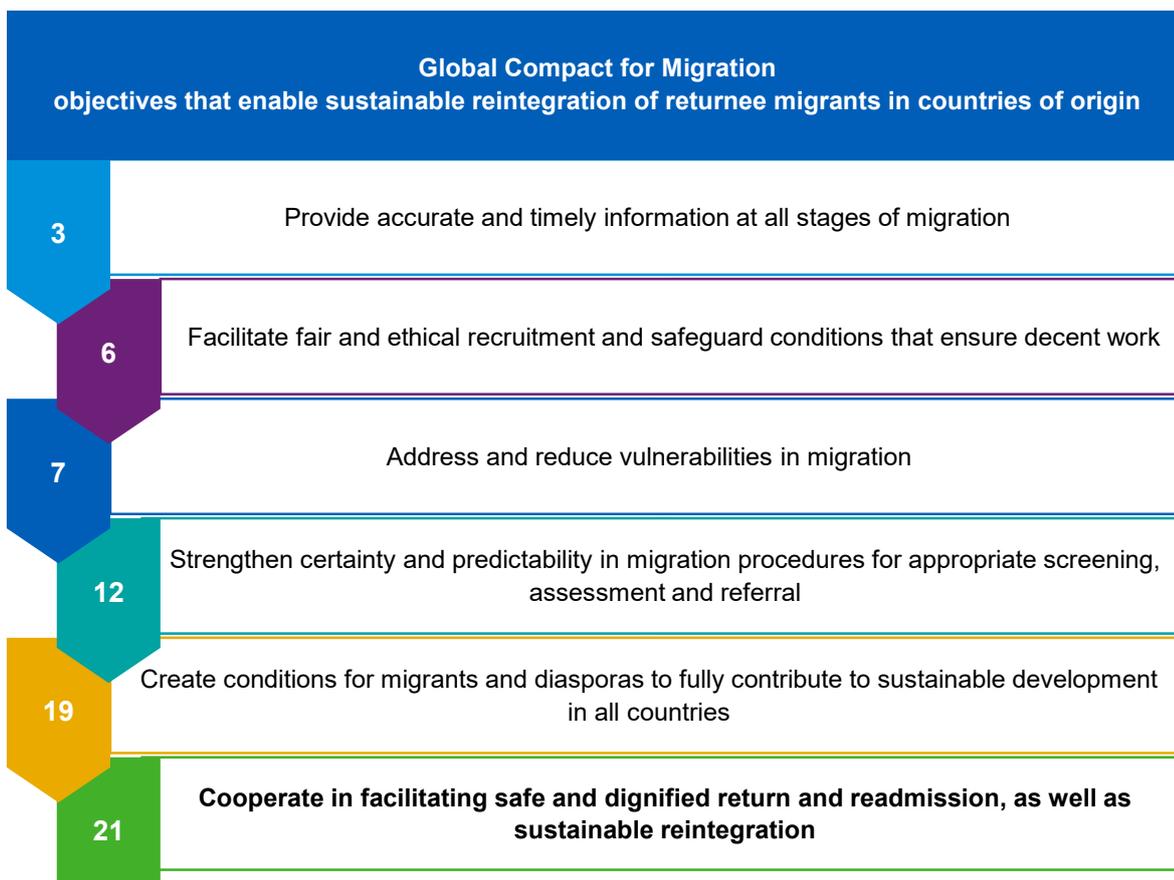
It is also important to understand the motives of return to gauge vulnerabilities. IOM identifies two main types of return migration, namely voluntary and forced. The nature of return defines the type of support needed from the country of origin such that the dignity and safety of the migrant is maintained. However, it must be ensured that reintegration support is provided irrespective of

status of migration. Understanding of the nature of return, pathway of passage and duration of stay would support improved profiling of the migrant and thereby strengthen the policy focus areas.

The modalities of return come with its own set of vulnerabilities, which are further enhanced due to socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges. While migration presents new opportunities for women and may be a means for their economic empowerment through wider participation, it may also place their human rights and security at risk. Reportedly, migrant women and girls are at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence and GBV and harassment across the migrant life cycle. This violence could come from intimate partners, family members, employers and service providers (both government and non-governmental), among several others. The abuse can be verbal, psychological, physical and sexual, as well as labour related such as non-payment of wages or inhumane living and working conditions. Migrant women and girls are susceptible to sexual exploitation in their migration journey especially if they take up irregular channels. This accounts for the higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases among migrants than in the general population. These at-risk patterns are also observed in the reproductive rights of migrant women (Chen, 2022).

Women have been affected not only as migrants but also as partners/spouses of migrants. Those in the latter category, who had stayed back home in their countries of origin to manage the home and provide care to the children, the elderly and other family members with the financial support received from their migrated partners, suffered due to reduced or no financial support during the pandemic. These lead to several negative implications, such as poor mental health, substance abuse, social detachment or lack of capacity to do their jobs (UN Women and ILO, 2019; ILO and UN Women, 2020). **General Recommendation No. 26** of the **CEDAW** stipulates that all women migrant workers are entitled to protection of their human rights and that States are to take all appropriate measures without delay to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure that they will be able to exercise and enjoy their rights on an equal basis with men in all fields.

The right of citizens to return to their home countries is a human right recognized in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and reaffirmed in other international instruments, including the **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families**. Yet, return migration is among the least enumerated and researched areas. Additionally, “return” and “reintegration” into the country and community of origin are two different areas of focus. In recent years there has been greater recognition of the challenges to returning migrant workers’ reintegration within the countries of origin. While return and reintegration can happen spontaneously, without the assistance of external actors, humanitarian and development stakeholders increasingly recognize that reintegration is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that requires a holistic response. The importance of safe and responsible migration through focused policymaking has been highlighted in the SDGs (e.g. SDG target 10.7) as well as **Objective 21** of the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**, which emphasizes the criticality of ensuring and facilitating “safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration”. The infographic that follows exhibits the key objectives of the Global Compact for Migration.



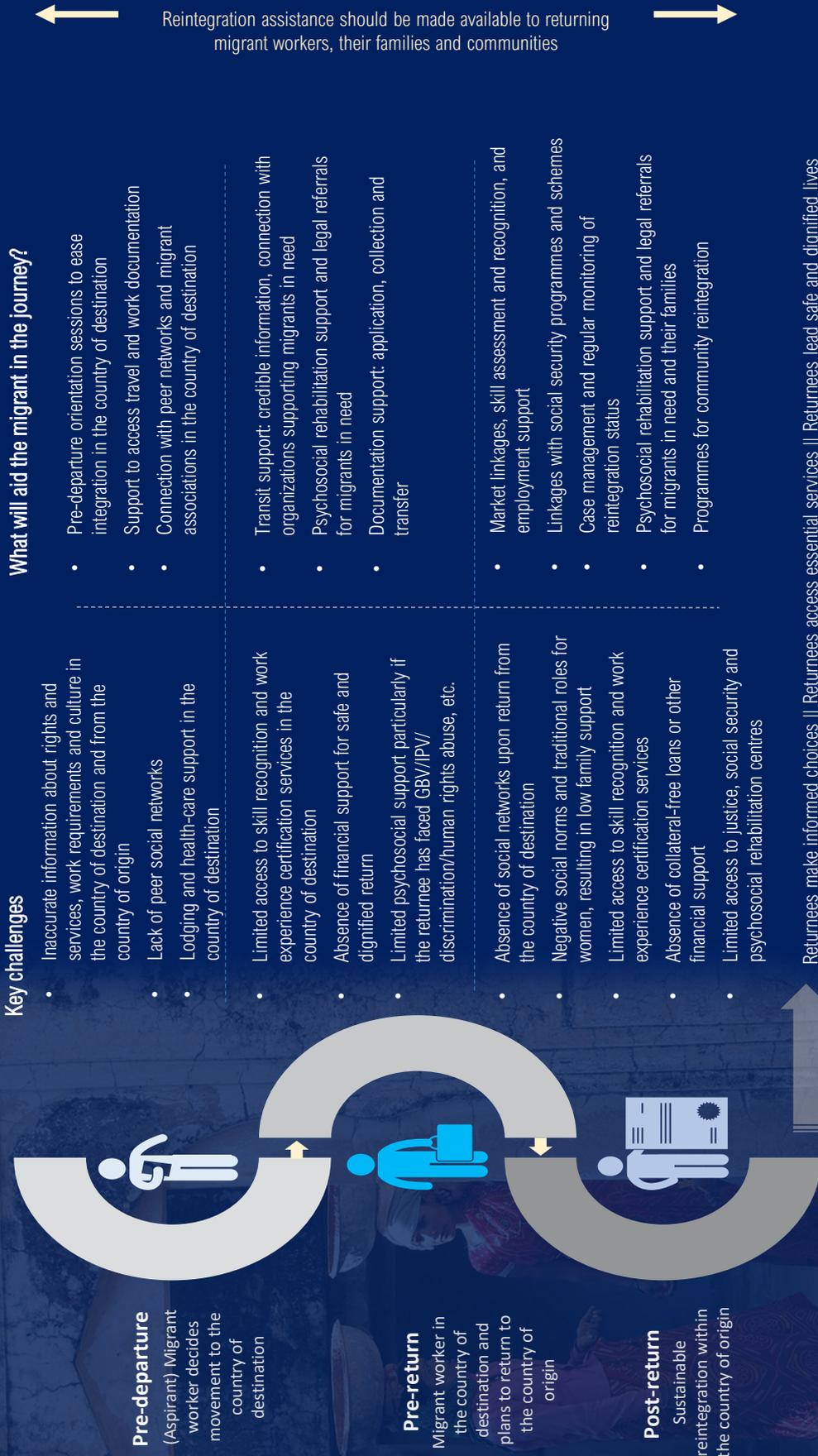
The Global Compact for Migration builds on 10 guiding principles:

- People centricity
- International cooperation
- National sovereignty
- Rule of law and due process
- Sustainable development
- Human rights
- Gender responsiveness
- Child sensitivity
- Whole-of-government approach
- Whole-of-society approach

Further, there are several **ILO** and other international instruments that facilitate safe and dignified migration pathways. They are:

ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	Aims to protect migrant workers specifically, guaranteeing basic rights such as access to health care and the right to nondiscrimination
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	Aims to protect migrant workers from working in abusive conditions and seeks to promote equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers
ILO Migration for Employment Recommendation, 1949 (R086)	Recommends acceleration and simplification of administrative formalities relating to departure, travel, entry, residence and settlement of migrants
ILO Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (R151)	Recommends the development of measures to ensure the equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers and their families, and the formulation of social policies appropriate to national conditions and migrant needs
ILO Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205) – Sections X and XI	Aims to protect migrant workers made vulnerable by crisis, as well as refugees, through appropriate regulations and socioeconomic interventions
ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, 2006 – Principle 12	Aims to enable orderly, equitable and gender-sensitive labour migration policies and processes in the country of origin and the country of destination; outlines protection for domestic workers and assistance to victims of abuse and malpractices
ILO Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised) 1949 (No. 86), Model Agreement – Annex to R86, Articles 25 and 26	Outlines guidelines and recommendations around compulsory return, and modalities and protection of the migrant worker in the return journey
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families – Article 67	Enforces measures regarding the orderly return of migrant workers and members of their families to the country of origin when they decide to return, authorization of residence or employment expires, or in an irregular situation
United Nations CEDAW – General Recommendation No. 26	Recommends that State should design or oversee comprehensive socioeconomic, psychological and legal services to facilitate the reintegration of returning women migrant workers

# Key needs of migrant workers across the migrant life cycle



Returning men and women migrant workers face unique challenges when reintegrating into their communities. A gender-responsive approach has to be applied when developing and implementing reintegration policies and gender-specific challenges have to be addressed in a targeted manner.

# Understanding the needs of the South Asian returning migrant worker across the migrant life cycle

International migration is perceived as an instrument for social mobility and lifestyle appraisal. However, the cost of migration may vary across individuals and includes monetary, social, and psychological costs. A study on debt and migration experience in South-East Asia highlights that the use of debt and wage deductions to finance migration is widespread and that indebted returnees are significantly more likely to report having faced most of the social and financial challenges (IOM, 2019c). Further, select circumstances that may impact migrant workers' ability to meet their expectations and migration goals, such as sending remittances home and improving their financial conditions in the origin country, affect their psychosocial and mental well-being. Lack of savings and inadequate family support hamper their ability to productively restart their life when returning home. Hence, dedicated support is required in enabling the returning migrant workers to reintegrate into their community of origin sustainably.

Migration is a gendered process and impacts women and men differently. In South Asia, gender inequality is a pervasive problem in many countries. Women's migration for work abroad disrupts notions of traditional gender roles of women in the subregion where there is low acceptance of women working outside the household and living by themselves. In the context of reintegration, primarily, returning women migrant workers may face disapproval among families owing to concerns of trespassing strict gender norms in terms of attire, food and social interactions that may have been imposed in the country of destination. Additionally, the blame for the unaddressed care work at home is shifted towards them and their choice to migrate. They face immense stigma in communities of return as they are suspected of having engaged in immoral activities and flouted normative sexual norms. Returning without receiving wages or involuntary return could further exacerbates this stigmatization. Returning women migrant workers may also face the brunt of structural inequalities in terms of accessing social and economic reintegration services. Currently, there are very limited gender-responsive reintegration assistance across the subregion, which makes returning women migrant workers face more challenges in having sustainable reintegration. In these cases, some may be pushed to remigrate.



Rukun and her daughter and grandchildren in front of their makeshift shelter in Poipet, Cambodia. © IOM 2016/Muse MOHAMMED

# Areas of contribution of returning migrant workers in the country of origin

- Research in OECD countries indicates that **returning migrant workers are more likely to engage in businesses (self-employed or otherwise), real estate and/or agricultural activities and own agricultural assets** than non-migrant households owing to higher savings and human capital resources (OECD, 2017).
- The strongest evidence of human capital accumulation is the link between migration and education (ibid.). Studies show that the prospect of migration can increase the expected return on investment in human capital, which, in turn, **increases the expected school life in the origin countries** (Rasamoelison et al., 2021).
- Cross-country research finds that the emigration rate of highly skilled workers can induce a **5 per cent increase in human capital formation in the native country** (Beine et al., 2008).
- Returning migrant workers who belong to white-collar jobs with skills and competencies gained in areas where the origin countries have not fully developed can also **facilitate transfer of knowledge and creation of new enterprises in the country of origin**.
- With technological advances, diaspora organizations are making use of online portals to enable exchange of ideas to **pursue sustainable development in the home country**, alleviating the absence of training in particular in subspecialty subjects in the home country.
- **Women migrant workers are identified as the subgroup which tops in terms of social remittances**, wherein the experiences of women can inform and transform social, cultural and political norms across households in origin and destination countries (Hennebry et al., 2017). However, social remittances are harder to measure and be accounted for vis-à-vis economic remittances. As an individual, it also increases the decision-making power of the women in the family and society drawn from their economic independence and the status as a worker.

Despite the magnitude of return migration from overseas to South Asia, the labour market outcomes of returning migrant workers to this region have been understudied. As per a study published by the World Bank Group in 2022, returning migrant workers in the region are somewhat less likely to be employed than non-migrants, which is mainly driven by returnees who returned at an older age. Returning migrant workers in Bangladesh and Pakistan are more likely to become entrepreneurs compared with non-migrants. Self-employed returnees are also more likely to hire paid employees and to be engaged in non-farm activities, compared with non-migrant entrepreneurs. Returning migrant workers who become employees earn a small wage premium relative to non-migrants, compared with contexts where temporary migrants are higher-skilled. The returnees' wage premium, however, is larger in the construction sector where most temporary migrants were employed overseas.

# The need for developing a regional reintegration model for returning migrant workers in South Asia

**Creation of a conducive migration-positive ecosystem:** A migration-positive ecosystem includes an aware governance and community network that understands the nature of migration and serves the varying needs of its people. Effective reintegration assistance services pre-necessitate a strong guiding institutional and policy framework across local and national levels. Presently, despite reintegration services being available at some levels, intercountry coordination mechanisms that facilitate scaling up of and access to these services are absent. Further, the sustainability of these services needs to be strengthened through adequate involvement of government and non-governmental stakeholders, civil society organizations and unions, and the private sector.

**Support across various categories of reintegration:** Currently, available reintegration services along with the policy focus are skewed towards economic and labour market reintegration. Sustainable reintegration for an individual requires support at the social and psychosocial levels to enable them to productively integrate into the labour market. High stressors and inadequate service access at the social and psychosocial dimensions act as inhibitors to reintegration in countries of origin. This is crucial for women returning migrant workers who may have faced multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence during their migration.

**Need for strong enablers:** Enablers refer to system-level needs for the efficient operationalization and implementation of reintegration assistance. The mapping of services across the South Asian CPMSs highlights the following gaps among enablers:

- Limited use of technology and digital services in the provision and delivery of reintegration support, and limited digital literacy of returning migrant workers;
- Limited data on returnees, which affects the targeting and customization of reintegration support and further leads to the inability of monitoring the impact of return and reintegration services to communities;
- Limited focus on reintegration in most of the MoUs, government-to-government or customer-to-customer agreements with the countries of destination;
- Limited outreach and awareness about existing services at the local and national levels.

**Returning migrant workers-focused programming:** State policies and programmes do not identify returning migrant workers as a distinct group with specific needs. This is further true for women returning migrant workers who face a unique set of challenges with respect to GBV, stigmatization and active loss of agency upon return to the country of origin. For reintegration assistance to positively impact individuals and the community, it is crucial that assistance and programme linkages can be tailored to meet individual needs. Currently, there are not many projects or interventions that specifically focus on reintegration of returning migrant workers. While there are some isolated projects, there is a need for making support services more coherent and better coordinated among stakeholders.

**Weak MHPSS systems:** Returnee migrants face high psychosocial stress due to events associated with return, experiences of abuse and rights violation in the country of destination. The status of MHPSS systems is insufficient to meet these requirements. For example, Bangladesh has a psychiatrist–population ratio of 0.13:100,000 individuals and ranks the lowest among South Asian countries. This is in contrast to the ratio in Europe of 1:10,000.



Kazi Sabuj, originally from Comilla, Bangladesh, left his hometown at a very young age of 13 to work in India. The following years he journeyed from one country to another in Asia until he decided to go to Germany, via Türkiye and Greece, but through irregular means.

He was forcibly returned to Bangladesh due to his irregular status in Germany. Under the Prottasha project, IOM supported Kazi Sabuj through a tailored reintegration plan, which includes psychosocial counselling, financial training and in-kind assistance. Together with his brother, he now runs a pigeon breeding business. © IOM/Beyond Borders Media 2022

## Module 2: The reintegration model

The reintegration model aims to provide a guiding framework to policymakers and practitioners involved in reintegration assistance provision. This framework may be contextualized to the needs of the countries.

#### Guiding values:

Help stakeholders develop policies and programmes for integrated and gender-responsive reintegration of aspirant and returning migrant workers so that they are able to:

- Make informed decisions at each of the migration stages;
- Adopt regularized channels for migration with ease;
- Effectively cope with the migration drivers;
- View reintegration in the country of origin as aspirational and desirable.

#### Key highlights of the model

Reintegration is very much linked to the local socioeconomic and labour market contexts.

It takes into cognizance the existing national-level migrant reintegration policies and programmes.

Contextualization is key: strategies have been proposed considering global best practices and regional context and requirements.

Targeted gender-responsive strategies have been proposed across the verticals of reintegration support.

Built in close consultations with key stakeholders including government representatives, academicians, development agencies and migrant associations.

## How the model intends to be gender responsive

Gender responsiveness refers to the recognition of gender inequality in the implementation and results of policies, schemes and programmes. A gender-responsive model is cognizant that the experiences one has along the labour migration cycle and the implications of policies are reliant on the societal characteristics of the region and that patriarchal norms, prejudices and stereotypes severely affect the effectiveness of any intervention for socioeconomic growth.

In South Asia, the brunt of gender inequality is skewed towards women and gender minorities. They lack economic and social agency within their households and society and are also at a higher risk of sexual violence and GBV. Labour migration among these groups often emerges from financial needs and/or the aspiration for freedom from violence and discrimination in their home societies. However, upon return they face higher scrutiny from family and the community, making their reintegration much more difficult. This gender-responsive model incorporates strategies for addressing these challenges and needs along the migrant life cycle through tailored services, sensitization and training of functionaries. It engages actors representing returning women migrant workers in design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of reintegration interventions. The model considers these intersections of gender with other areas of discrimination and exclusion, including but not limited to race, class, caste, ethnicity, disability and immigration status, among others.

Policymakers and practitioners who see the model as a guide are requested to adhere to these and apply them in policy development and implementation. All reintegration interventions should apply gender-responsive analytical approaches, which include identifying gender-based barriers faced by returning migrant workers, and that there are gender-specific interventions to ensure the specific needs and vulnerabilities of returning migrant workers, especially women, and promote equal opportunities for them.

### Key considerations to ensure gender-responsive reintegration



Recognize specific challenges faced by women and men migrant workers when reintegrating into their communities.



Involve women returning migrant workers in decision-making processes related to reintegration in order to ensure that policies and programmes respond to their needs.



Include measures to prevent and address GBV and discrimination (in reintegration interventions) and ensure adequate support services and protection to address these matters.



Ensure access to gender-sensitive essential services including health care, social services, access to justice and economic support. Women returning migrant workers may require access to reproductive health services or childcare support to reintegrate successfully.



Enhance coordination and build the capacity of stakeholders across levels to provide gender-sensitive services and support, including training in gender issues and support for the development of gender-responsive policies and programmes.

# Approach in developing the model

## Needs analysis vis-à-vis the stages of the migrant life cycle



These stages are: (1) **pre-departure**, wherein an aspirant individual plans and prepares to migrate for work; (2) **pre-return**, wherein a migrant worker either plans to or has been asked to return to their country of origin, as well as the time during employment in the country of destination; and (3) **post-return**, wherein the migrant worker has returned to and is reintegrating within their country of origin. To support reintegration, initiatives in the pre-departure and pre-return stages aid building trust as well as track and profile the migrant workers.

## Focus on levels of reintegration

Reintegration assistance should aim to address the individual, community and structural levels simultaneously and take into account how each level can affect the others. Further, the acceptance has to be top-down, making it visible in the leadership's intent.



## Streamlined reintegration interventions in different dimensions across levels



Reintegration assistance is envisioned to be provided across three key categories, namely **labour market and economic support**, **social support** and **psychosocial support**, with an integrated gender-responsive lens to address the difference in labour migration experiences.

# Overview of the model

Reintegration aspects to be considered across all stages of migration	
<p><b>Economic and labour market</b></p> <p><b>Key objective:</b> Assist returning migrant workers and leverage their knowledge, skills, and experience towards establishing economic self-sufficiency in their countries of origin</p>	<p> Focus on the individual's skill and experience assessment, mapping and cross-border acceptability/portability; training programmes to build individual capacity for skill- or experience-linked job placement and/or self-employment; remittance management and household economics; and support for returning migrant workers to understand their labour rights</p>
	<p> Focus on peer-based and community-led support groups for information-sharing; fund management; setting up committees of peer migrants for resource mobilization for the purpose of gathering required support for entrepreneurship ventures through material and peer support</p>
	<p> Partnerships with the private sector on developing entrepreneurship programmes, establishing skill recognition systems, building the capacities of officials across levels, and establishing coordination with workers' and employers' organizations in supporting returnees with employment and self-employment and financial management</p>
<p><b>Social</b></p> <p><b>Key objective:</b> Assist returning migrant workers in achieving a safe and dignified return and reintegration through access to essential services, safety and protection</p>	<p> Support to returning migrant workers in understanding their rights and accessing support services; assistance in completing documentation requirements in the countries of origin and destination for easy reintegration; extension of need-based support for completing documentation, portability of savings and benefits, accessing support if faced with violence, including GBV, discrimination, or hostility when returning to the country of origin</p>
	<p> Focus on peer support in the country of origin to ease migrant workers' reintegration; development of community-led vigilance groups to track and refer returnees to services and support or MRCs; development of community-based channels for information-sharing</p>
	<p> Policy convergence and facilitation of access to available programme support; development of referral networks; and building the capacities of frontline community workers to provide reintegration support</p>
<p><b>Psychosocial</b></p> <p><b>Key objective:</b> Assist returning migrant workers in successfully establish their psychosocial well-being within their family and community networks</p>	<p> Provide mental health and psychosocial support through counselling to individuals and families, and referrals may be considered in some cases; psychosocial counselling can be arranged even though returning migrant workers do not have clinical needs to enhance positive reestablishment of psychosocial links with their families and communities</p>
	<p> Behaviour change communication campaigns at national, local and community levels, to create a positive and accepting profile of returning migrant workers within the communities of origin and in host countries; support groups for returning migrant workers; vigilance groups to report and take action against abuse/violence against returnees and their families</p>
	<p> Policy integration and promotion of mental health well-being, focusing on building linkages with referral networks and professional establishments of primary and secondary mental health support; building the capacities of service providers, including community workers, in supporting returning migrant workers</p>
Reintegration aspects to be considered across all stages of migration	



Interventions targeted to **individuals**



Interventions targeted to **communities**



Interventions targeted to **structural strengthening**

# Key enablers to enhance inclusive and sustainable reintegration

Although reintegration assistance services may appear all-encompassing and in need of granular attention, an effective set-up of key enablers eases the process of operationalizing the aforementioned policy areas. **These enablers aid across levels and facilitate a multi-stakeholder engagement across the migrant life cycle.** The seven enablers listed for supporting the operationalization of this model are provided in the following infographics. The influence and importance of the enablers to the specific stakeholder categories are highlighted below:

- For **policymakers**, these enablers emerge at the forefront of the reintegration model to ease operationalization through improved resource planning and establishing efficient mechanisms/procedures, including internal and external communication, making collective efforts and building sustainability through partnerships (accountability-sharing).
- For **practitioners**, especially programme designers and implementers, the enablers are those that focus on systems, processes and guidelines for planning, rollout and monitoring of the reintegration programmes. These include ease of data management, analysis and reporting through technology-enabled solutions, building the capacity of officers and field implementers in planning and engaging with the beneficiaries. The practitioners include but are not limited to government officials, civil society actors, and workers' and employers' organizations.
- At the community and individual levels, these enablers facilitate the **availability of reintegration assistance**.

## Enablers that facilitate the implementation and uptake of the reintegration model

### Private sector partnership



This involves convergence with the private sector actor, including employers' organizations (across economic, social and psychosocial dimensions), ensures sustainability of the model, as it aids employability, resource augmentation and absorption of the skilled human resources. It creates an enabling business ecosystem and helps strengthen the implementation policies on safe work environment and dignified work sought for the migrant workers.

### Communication and coordination



This entails setting up structured mechanisms to facilitate dialogue and ensure commitment towards an effective implementation of reintegration services among policymakers, practitioners and service providers at three levels:

- Regional level – thematic action groups on return and reintegration;
- National level – interministerial committees and working groups;
- Local level – referral networks of service providers, CSOs and workers' organizations.

### Evidence-based planning



This requires designing the model based on evidence from entry/exit points and third-party surveys supported by MRCs and disaggregating the data based on movement and socioeconomic profile (gender, age, occupation, skill, experience, etc.), helping practitioners understand trends and needs for building programmes and interventions.

## Enablers that facilitate the implementation and uptake of the reintegration model

### Technology-enabled solutions



Given the magnitude of migrant worker movement, technology-linked solutions need to be incorporated across processes and information dissemination channels. This will support streamlined migration management, data processing and service provision. Some solutions include an integrated migrant assistance portal for registration, service eligibility identification, case monitoring, interlinked national and international data-sharing platform and community-based knowledge-sharing forum.

### One-stop service delivery (MRCs)



Studies suggest that migrants face many challenges in accessing information, seeking assistance or redressing grievances. Great emphasis should be laid on providing handholding services (offline and online) by creating one-stop support centres/MRCs either by leveraging existing structures or building new ones. These centres may also function as coordinating agencies among CSOs, service providers and nodal government bodies. For example, MRCs established in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan can establish a unit for reintegration assistance to provide a range of information and services related to reintegration.

### Community involvement in service provision



The community needs to be an integral part of any reintegration services being designed. It is crucial to ensure that the community does not feel a threat due to specialized services being provided to returnee migrants. Further, it is pivotal that the community be included in the services, from the design to the implementation stage, to facilitate social and community reintegration of returnees.

### Monitoring and evaluation



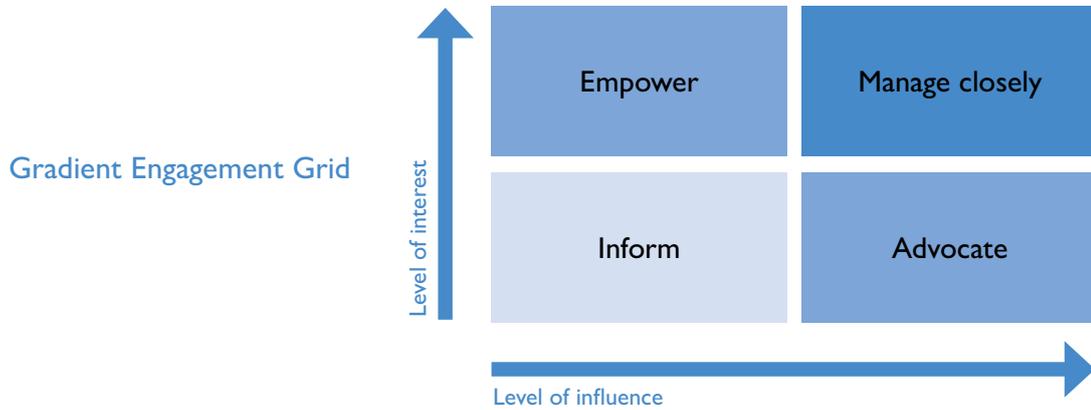
A periodic monitoring system must be set up to assess the operationalization and impact of reintegration services. The assessment must feed into the functioning of the reintegration model through continuous evaluation and service improvement strategies. Communities have a strong role in influencing decision-making, particularly in the rural areas. Given the growing population, they become key assets in vigilance. It is important to peer collectives to help sensitize the broader community, which then can work as a check for any unethical migration practices and rights violations.

## Key stakeholders enabling operations

Reintegration of returning migrant workers with thorough attention across economic, social and psychosocial dimensions requires the participation of a gamut of actors at the institutional and structural, community and individual levels. It is crucial that these stakeholders be engaged strategically in order to enhance the effectiveness of interventions, attract community participation and build ownership towards sustainability of reintegration assistance. These strategies need to adapt to the stakeholder's profile and reach in the region, and responsibilities need to be assigned accordingly. Stakeholders must be involved in the planning and implementation stages in their assessed capacities. A helpful model is the [Gradient Engagement Grid](#).

- **Inform:** Stakeholders at the lower scale of interest and influence may only be interested in obtaining information about the interventions. The lead organization handling reintegration must provide periodic information about the interventions and its objectives, such as through publications or reports. An example of such a stakeholder would be the media.

- **Empower/Advocate:** Stakeholders with a higher level of interest or a higher level of influence are assigned responsibilities with targeted involvement in reintegration activities. Examples of such stakeholders are some CSOs, including women’s rights organizations or private agencies which can provide specific reintegration services.
- **Manage closely:** Stakeholders with high influence as well as high interest in reintegration activities work closely to implement reintegration services through MoUs or comprehensive projects. This group of stakeholders includes government departments and organizations, private service providers, as well as select CSOs and research institutes.



The stakeholders are further mapped across two parameters:

- Their responsibility as a **lead agency**: The lead agency would be the nodal organization/ stakeholder responsible for the overall management, planning, coordination and reporting on the proposed areas of focus. The lead agency would be responsible to map, identify and converge/partner with one or multiple supporting agencies for the operationalization of the specific sections allocated.
- The lead agency’s function and alignment centres on: (1) policy planning and preparation; or (2) implementation and monitoring support.

The following section lists the key stakeholder groups and their respective descriptions in actualizing the model.

# Stakeholders

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Stakeholder	Responsibility description
<b>Nodal government ministries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foreign affairs</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Women and children's affairs</li> <li>• Social protection</li> <li>• Corporate affairs</li> <li>• Provincial local governments</li> <li>• Home affairs/Immigration</li> <li>• Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and implement national policies and projects</li> <li>• Facilitate the convergence of relevant government schemes and programmes</li> <li>• Partner with onboard key stakeholders</li> <li>• Anchor and endorse the strategy, rollout plan and guidelines</li> <li>• Support targeting of different beneficiary groups within returning labour migrants</li> <li>• Manage public funds and provide necessary funding</li> <li>• Support resource mobilization at the field level</li> </ul>
<b>Donor agencies and sector practitioners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support orientation of government agencies and officials</li> <li>• Generate evidence for supporting the employment programmes</li> <li>• Identify and facilitate onboarding of different stakeholder groups including the private sector</li> <li>• Assist with funding, advocacy and capacity development</li> <li>• Support capacity-building of MRCs, employment service centres and PESs, as well as development of tools</li> <li>• Enhance visibility of the programme</li> </ul>
<b>Industry associates and private sector representatives/Private sector organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sector-wise market analysis</li> <li>• Ideate for returning migrant workers' integration through public-private partnership projects</li> <li>• Develop a conducive labour market for returning migrant workers</li> </ul>
<b>CSOs and CBOs, including WROs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map existing services and scope out areas of expansion across support areas</li> <li>• Facilitate the identification of returning migrant workers and support targeted interventions</li> <li>• Support advocacy, awareness and information campaigns</li> </ul>

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Stakeholder	Responsibility description
<b>MRCs/One-stop support centres to returning migrant workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register migrants and develop their profiles</li> <li>• Generate awareness of employment support services</li> <li>• Coordinate with stakeholders including line departments, CSOs and private sector organizations</li> <li>• Plan and facilitate job fairs</li> <li>• Link returnees with existing economic, social and psychosocial support</li> <li>• Maintain referral networks, databases and information on available schemes and programmes</li> <li>• Monitor the programme's progress and report</li> </ul>
<b>PESs (government)/Employment service centres/Employment departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on labour market opportunities, government schemes and employment support available</li> <li>• Organize job fairs</li> <li>• Support job placement and retention</li> </ul>
<b>Trade unions/Workers' organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the identification of migrant workers interested in return</li> <li>• Help build a peer support network</li> <li>• Enable industry connections for employment</li> <li>• Support training programmes</li> </ul>

Training organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct training for returning migrant workers in market-linked skill development</li> <li>• Provide certification for course completion</li> <li>• Support linkages with employers</li> </ul>
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise returning migrant workers to undergo RPL to facilitate employability or have their skills upgraded through accredited professional training courses</li> <li>• Participate in job fairs</li> <li>• Provide employment opportunities and market linkage</li> <li>• Incorporate and oversee guidelines for safe working environment for returning migrants within organization</li> </ul>

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

### Individual case management

Stakeholder	Responsibility description
Migrant collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support returning migrant workers through job referrals and social protection programmes</li> <li>• Engage successful returning migrant workers in providing career counselling and training to returnees</li> <li>• Provide peer support in manoeuvring reintegration support services based on personal experience</li> </ul>
Coordinators/Programme managers (government/non-government hosted) <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise closely with reintegration partners (including, when relevant, with host countries) and oversees overall reintegration programming at the individual, community and structural levels</li> <li>• Adjust programming according to feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders and ensure it is aligned with broader migration strategies</li> </ul>
Protection focal officers (government hosted)/Case managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide specific support to returning migrant workers in vulnerable situations</li> <li>• Coordinate closely with case managers and medical focal points</li> <li>• Support referrals (legal/protection/CBO support)</li> <li>• Work closely with community influencers for Communication for Development (C4D)</li> </ul>
Health-care service providers (government/non-government hosted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the establishment of referral mechanisms with medical service providers and assist returnees with health-related needs</li> </ul>
Counsellors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counsel and assess the well-being of returning migrant workers, both men and women, as well as their family members</li> <li>• Refer to mental health institutions for specific cases</li> <li>• Identify at an early stage “at-risk” or vulnerable members</li> </ul>
Mentors/Buddies/Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tagged to special cases to aid social reintegration</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Depending on the scale of the reintegration programme, there could be an overall national coordinator and several local coordinators at the regional level.

# Helpful resources

- ASEAN Secretariat (2020), *ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers*.
- Laurent Bossavie and He Wang (2022), Return migration and labor market outcomes: evidence from South Asia.
- Dina Deligiorgis (2022), Prevention of gender-based violence and harassment against women migrant workers in South and Southeast Asia.
- ILO (2014), *Regional Model Competency Standards: Domestic Work*.
- IOM (2019), *Reintegration Handbook: Practical Guidance on the Design, Implementation and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance*.
- IOM (2019), *Supporting Brighter Futures: Young Women and Girls and Labour Migration in South-East Asia and the Pacific*.
- IOM (2020), *Mentoring Returnees: Study on Reintegration Outcomes through a Comparative Lens*.
- IOM (2021), *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2020*.
- IOM (2023), *Migration data in Southern Asia*.
- IOM (n.d.), *World Migration Report 2020*.
- *The Migration News* (2021), Transnational migration in South Asia: trends, causes and factors.
- United Nations (2020), *International Migration 2020*.
- UN Women (2022), *Framework: Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Harassment against Women Migrant Workers in South and Southeast Asia*.
- Piyasiri Wickramasekara (2019), *Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers with Special Focus on ASEAN Member States*.





Former refugee Kali Muttushankar Kumar (centre) with his employees in Mannar, Sri Lanka. Since 2004, IOM, with support from the Australian Agency for International Development (Australian Aid), has helped more than 10,000 former refugees rebuild their lives in Sri Lanka. © IOM/Gina WILKINSON 2005

# Module 3: Assistance and planning towards economic and labour market reintegration

Economic and labour market reintegration is a critical factor to improve the **sustainability** of reintegration programmes. Prolonged stay abroad often creates challenges for returning migrant workers to **find suitable employment opportunities** upon return, primarily due to the **loss of contact with prior networks** in their home countries. Returnees may not have **access to up-to-date information** about employment services and current labour market situation. As a result, many returnees land up in low-skilled positions, informal employment or within the underregulated sectors.

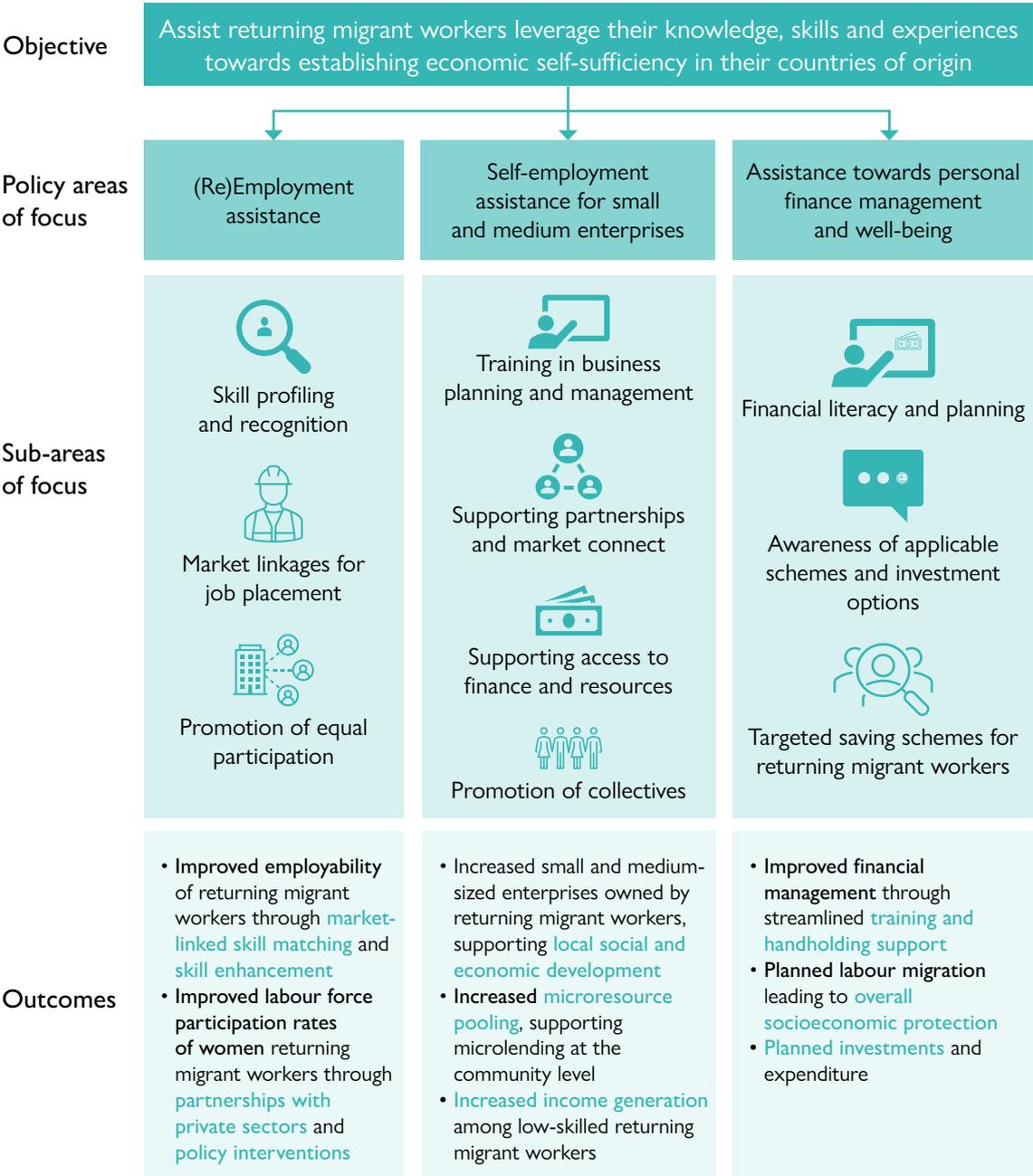
To minimize the likelihood of returning migrant workers from falling into poverty and to support them in leading a dignified life of choice, it is imperative to **support the returning migrant workers maintain and enhance their capabilities, assets and activities for economic and labour market participation**.

This module provides guidance on developing targeted programmes to support returning migrant workers towards levels of economic self-sufficiency within the country of origin. It also draws attention towards equitable access to economic resources as well as rights and services for women who often face high levels of discrimination.

# Overview of the levels of implementation of economic and labour market reintegration

Effective economic and labour market reintegration should allow returning migrant workers to earn their own living, in a dignified manner, with the freedom of choice. It should support the returning migrant workers and their families to effectively manage and plan their finances such that it helps build financial resilience and improve overall well-being.

The infographic below illustrates the overview of the economic and labour market reintegration model highlighting the key areas of focus. The model should be tailored to the country context, prioritizing linkages with existing initiatives for economic participation (bringing focus on returning migrant workers).



- **Individual level:** Implementation centres on supporting returning migrant workers with skill documentation, mapping and matching jobs and employers, access to resources and training in managing resources for (re)establishing adequate and sustained income-generating activities for themselves and their families. Focus is on [training](#), [counselling](#), [handholding](#), [peer connection](#), [awareness generation](#), [linkages with employers and the labour market](#), [supporting social development entrepreneurs and incubation support](#).
- **Community level:** At the community level, economic and labour market reintegration concentrates on building upon existing local development programmes to support collectivization and collective resource pooling. Community-level economic reintegration assistance is most appropriate when large numbers of returnees with similar skills and motivations return to the same community within a short time frame, and when the wider economy is doing well and/or there are local development initiatives already in place. Focus is on [incentivization of collective actions](#), [training and development of project plans for collectives](#), [easing the registration process](#), [community financial support activities](#), [market linkages and marketing support](#), and [partnerships with local development organizations](#).
- **Structural level:** At this level, economic reintegration considerations are mainstreamed into relevant development and sectoral policies and strategies at the national and local levels and prioritize partnerships and collaborations with multiple stakeholders including the private sector, development agencies, diaspora groups, migrant collectives, and local and regional governments. Focus is on [setting up international and local cooperation frameworks](#), [integrating migrant reintegration in the larger migration support policy communique](#), [partnerships](#), [capacity-building and setting up community-level structures to support returning migrant workers](#).



# Targeting and promoting economic and labour market reintegration services

These are the critical aspects for the successful uptake and implementation of the economic and labour market reintegration services:

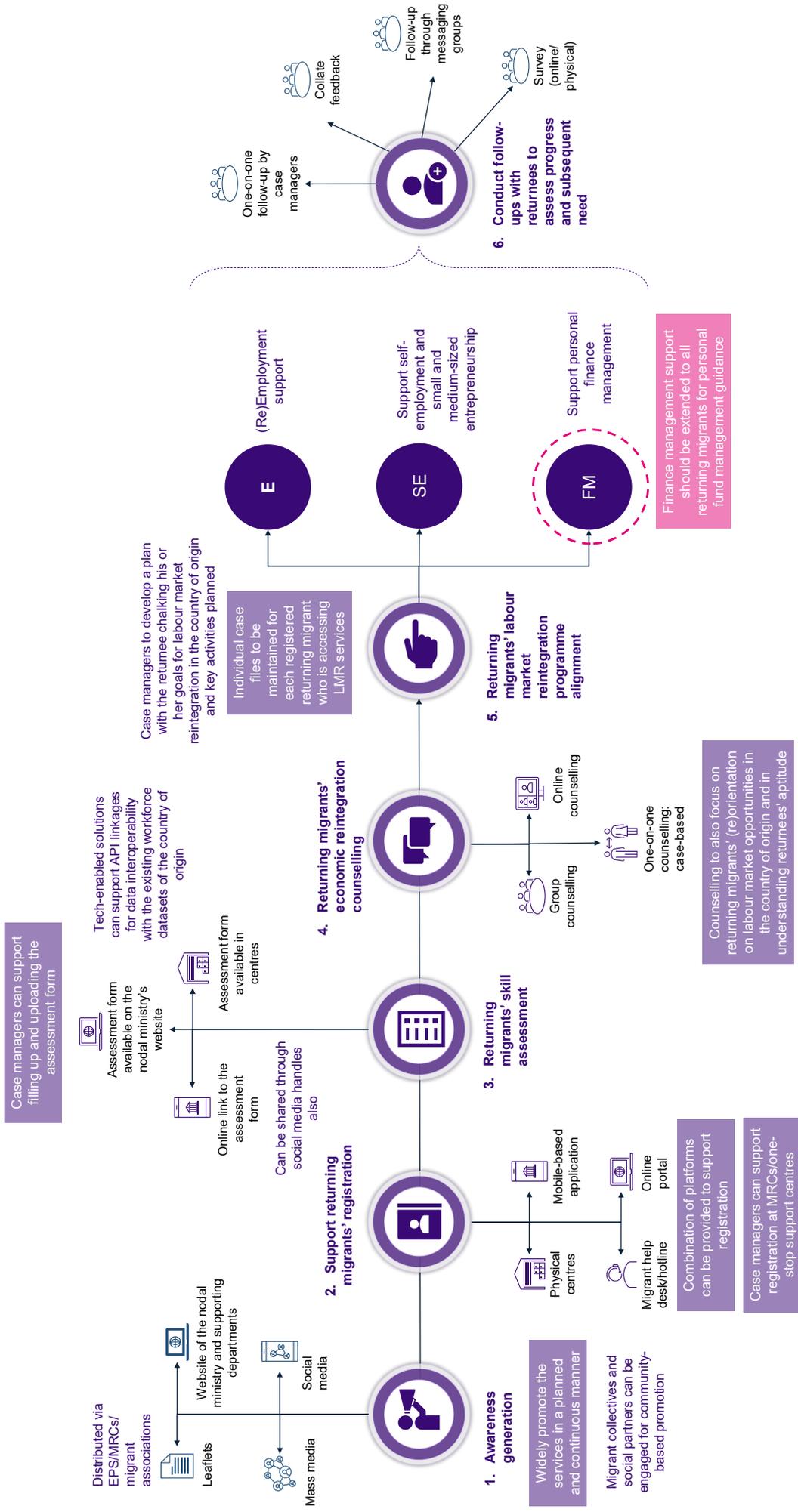
1. Accurately identifying beneficiary groups and efficiently reaching out to them to ensure that the services are encompassing men and women returning migrant workers who need the support;
2. Designing the economic and labour market reintegration services, closely aligned to the needs, skills and aptitude of the returning migrant workers as well as to the demands of the local market;
3. Widely promoting the availability of the services in a strategic and continuous manner through multiple channels of communication to ensure that returning migrant workers are aware about the services, trust their credibility and are compelled by a strong desire to enrol;
4. Closely monitoring and following up with beneficiaries to prevent them from dropping out of the programme.

The following infographic highlights the key steps in promoting and targeting the economic and labour market reintegration services among the beneficiaries. The sections that follow detail the strategies, activities and stakeholders for operationalizing the model.

Sections 3a, 3b and 3c detail the strategies, approaches and key stakeholders for the three areas of focus under economic and labour market reintegration, such as reemployment assistance, self-employment assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises, and assistance towards personal finance management, respectively. Within the strategies the icons for the different levels have been provided to draw indication for the implementation level for the proposed activity.

Age- and gender-responsive strategies are cross-cutting areas of consideration across policy areas of focus and levels of implementation. Select gender-responsive strategies for economic and labour market reintegration to be considered by countries in planning their reintegration frameworks and support action plans are presented too.

# Targeting and promoting economic and labour market reintegration services





## (Re)Employment assistance: Labour market linkage and employment generation

Employment support forms a key area of assistance under economic and labour market reintegration of returning migrant workers. It is critical to assist returning migrant workers identify and apply to employment opportunities matched to their skills and areas of interest. On an individual level, to support employment assistance, it is important to:

1. **Understand the returning migrant worker's skills through a systematic assessment.** A skills assessment should precede the development of the reintegration plan. Gather information on a returnee's skills, education and aspirations for: (a) **tailoring assistance** towards economic assistance; and (b) recognizing and **addressing potential mismatch** between the returnee's existing skills and training and the skills demand in the country of origin.
2. **Help the returnee develop skills for specific occupations**, for example, through TVET, which can be an effective way to support them in (re-)entering the workforce. Most reintegration programmes include skills development and TVET in the country of origin following return, though they can also be beneficial if provided as part of pre-departure assistance in the host country. In addition to improving employment prospects, skills development and TVET programmes can build the resilience of learners and drive their economic, personal and social development. If available prior to return, well-targeted skills training can boost returnees' confidence in their ability to (re-)establish economic self-sufficiency in their places of origin.

While skills training should acknowledge the gender composition of the workforce of different industries, returnees should not be limited to skills training in a specific sector based on their sex or gender. Returning migrant workers should be offered the same choices and opportunities for training regardless. It should be up to returnees alone to decide which opportunities they wish to pursue.

3. **Facilitate the integration of returnees in wage and salaried work.** Within the scope of job placement support, three activities are particularly useful for assisting returnees: career guidance and counselling; apprenticeship schemes; and public work or cash-for-work initiatives.

In meeting the above, **partnerships and collaborations between governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and CSOs** are recommended in supporting the labour market reintegration of returning migrant workers, especially women. This can include joint planning and implementation of policies and programmes, as well as sharing of information and best practices. Partnerships with private sector organizations (including employers and trade unions) can extend assistance to understand key sectors for extending employment, develop targeted skilling programmes, support skill validation initiatives, and extend support to design and launch programmes for employment targeted to returning women migrant workers. Partnerships with **development organizations, diaspora groups and migrant collectives** would help understand the need of the returning migrant workers and to connect with them for improved participation in the assessment, training and linking initiatives.

This section focuses on how (re)employment assistance can be extended to and operationalized for returning migrant workers by focusing on three key areas:



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## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Understand the patterns of return and reintegration for the country (for both men and women across different socioeconomic backgrounds) 	Suggested approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research/Survey</li> <li>• Collate and analyse data from ongoing programmes/surveys</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
Identify high-potential growth sectors (country of origin) and skill demand requirements of the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour market analysis               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collate information on the labour market</li> <li>- Research/Survey</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collate information on government employment schemes and skilling programmes</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; PSEs/MRCs; workers' and employers' organizations
Develop an employment support strategy for returning migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring out focus on supporting returning women migrant workers, especially the disabled, geriatric migrant workers, migrant workers of ethnic minorities, families of deceased migrant workers and others</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
Develop guidelines and a road map for skill mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines should focus on roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in supporting returning migrant workers</li> <li>• Partner with the private sector to assist skill recognition</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry in charge of skilling and skills profiling
Identify potential partners 	Develop a stakeholder map identifying key influencers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line ministries</li> <li>• Industry associates</li> <li>• Banks</li> <li>• Development organizations</li> </ul>	Employment department; local businesses; workers' and employers' organizations
Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action 	Suggested departments for convergence include those dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and child development</li> <li>• Foreign affairs</li> <li>• Social justice</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; Ministry of Women's Affairs

 Interventions at the structural level
  Interventions at the community level
  Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Prepare tools, guidelines and reference material 	Some suggested tools are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-RPL mechanism to digitize the RPL process</li> <li>• Smart CV mechanism for skill recording</li> <li>• App to provide guidance on applying for employment</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; donor agencies and sector practitioners; workers' and employers' organizations
Orient the coordinating government ministries and agencies 	Suggested tracks for orientation are challenges faced by returning migrants, benefits and opportunities for returning migrants and strategies for reintegration	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; donor agencies
Ensure capacity-building of implementing agencies 	Provide access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gender-disaggregated skills database</li> <li>• Labour market information</li> <li>• Strategy implementation tools</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
Generate awareness and demand among employers 	Develop an incentivization plan for returnees to encourage skill certification through RPL	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; MRCs; employers' organizations
Develop referral networks 	Training partners, career counsellors, RPL centres and others may be mapped based on area of specialization, target beneficiaries and areas serviced	MRCs/ESC/PESs
Develop a database of returning migrant workers' skills and experiences 	Develop a web-/app-based skills assessment tool for returning migrant workers' skill profiling integrated with a centralized database	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Reorient returning migrants to the labour market in the country of origin</p> 	<p>Some suggested strategies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling (group/individual)</li> <li>• Information dissemination on labour market shifts</li> <li>• Seminars/Workshops with employing organizations</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs/PSEs; recruiting agencies</p>
<p>Support returning migrants in developing an employment plan</p> 	<p>MRCs/ESCs/PESs can support returnees in developing tailored employment plans based on their age, skills, gender, experiences and needs</p>	<p>MRCs/ESCs/PESs</p>
<p>Develop peer support groups</p> 	<p>Peer support groups should focus especially on returning women migrant workers as well as other gender minorities</p>	<p>MRCs/CSOs/CBOs/WROs</p>
<p>Support skill upgrade/ recognition through referrals and certifications</p> 	<p>Suggested support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft skill training</li> <li>• Self-paced training material through online platforms</li> <li>• Resource library (online/offline)</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs/ESCs/PESs</p>
<p>Facilitate linkages with employers</p> 	<p>Connect returning migrant workers with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public employment services</li> <li>• Job fairs</li> <li>• Online employment portals/applications</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs/PSEs; recruiting agencies</p>
<p>Partner with the private sector to develop employment programmes</p> 	<p>Develop an incentivization plan for private sector involvement</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of employment; workers' and employers' organizations</p>



Interventions at the structural level



Interventions at the community level



Interventions at the individual level

## Call-out: Supporting returning migrant workers' access to public work or cash for work to support community economic reintegration

Public work or cash for work is a type of economic assistance in which returnees are given short-term employment, usually paid by the day or week, arranged by the lead reintegration organization for the purpose of improving communal or public spaces or goods. This type of active labour market programme is critical in economic reintegration contexts that have a high number of returnees and close partnerships with local authorities.

Public work can be very effective in reestablishing ties between returnees and their own communities while also providing returnees with an immediate income. Involvement in cash-for-work schemes usually lasts between one and three months. Typical activities include infrastructure construction activities, cleaning public spaces, gardening and other community services that are selected by the reintegration office in coordination with the local authority. There may be good opportunities for this type of approach in the sphere of community-based infrastructure for climate change adaptation. Public works on irrigation, flood risk or water conservation, for example, are usually labour intensive and require minimal training. Some also offer long-term jobs related to maintenance of the infrastructure or project that was the focus of the initial work.

Cash-for-work programmes should be designed so that returnees who are fit to work and in need of immediate livelihood support not only have an initial stable income but also engage in capacity-building and rehabilitation activities that increase their employability and prospects to earn a sustainable income after the programme has ended. The wage can be paid daily or weekly, in full or with a compulsory saving share, which can be used to complement other forms of reintegration assistance, such as a microgrant for entrepreneurship.

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## Self-employment assistance: Setting up small- to medium-scale enterprises

Self-employment and business development support that leads to long-lasting livelihoods can have a high impact on overall sustainable reintegration.

However, often businesses set up by returning migrant workers can fail due to various reasons, for instance, local market conditions and demand and supply match are not considered while designing self-employment programmes, returnees lack skills and knowledge on designing and running a business, there is no link between financial assistance and training, and follow-ups and mentorship support are inadequate, among others.

Most of the returning women migrant workers want to engage in entrepreneurship, but they don't know what is profitable, what skills they can leverage, what skills they require and how to effectively manage business

– National Network for Safe Migration, Nepal

In order to sustainably reintegrate returning migrant workers through self-employment and small- to medium-scale entrepreneurship in the country of origin, it is critical to:

- **Support** reintegration service providers and returnees with **local market research**;
- **Inform** returnees about the available self-employment and small-scale entrepreneurship programmes;
- **Provide tailored entrepreneurship support** to returnees based on their skills, resources, stage of development of business ideas and other factors;
- **Link training and financial support** provided for small-scale entrepreneurship;
- **Improve outreach** of loan programmes and access to seed capital;
- Support returnees in providing access to **markets** for their products;
- **Promote entrepreneurship** among returning migrant workers by recognizing their contribution to national development.

Returnees' access to business development support should be made contingent on an assessment of adequate capacity, skills, motivation and business acumen, based on clear selection criteria, a more competitive selection process, and an enhanced business development training and support component for the comparatively smaller cohorts of applicants who are finally admitted. The introduction of a selection process for administering returnees' access to business development support makes it essential to manage migrants' expectations during the initial counselling stage in the host country.

This section focuses on components that can strategically support self-employment of returning migrant workers within their countries of origin and on how to operationalize the same.



Entrepreneurship  
support



Market linkages

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Understand the patterns and skills of returning migrants (men and women) 	Suggested approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing database of the government</li> <li>Returnee migrant survey (skills, education and motivation)</li> <li>Connection with and understanding diaspora groups and migrant collectives</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; diaspora groups; returning migrant collectives
Identify relevant sectors with scope for business development 	Conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value chain analysis</li> <li>Private sector mapping</li> <li>Market potential survey</li> <li>Analysis of sectoral policies and plans</li> <li>Rapid market assessment</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship; private sector/industry associations; employers' organizations
Identify potential partners for supporting self-employment 	Identify partners for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procuring tools/equipment for self-employment</li> <li>Implementation of training and financial assistance programmes</li> <li>Incubation and mentorship support</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' entrepreneurship; line departments; industry associations; banks
Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action 	Suggested departments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women and child affairs</li> <li>Social justice</li> <li>Youth</li> <li>Minorities</li> <li>Foreign affairs</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' entrepreneurship
Develop a long-term integrated self-employment support strategy for returning migrants 	The self-employment strategy may also include the development of a scheme to felicitate successful returning migrant workers involved in entrepreneurship	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' entrepreneurship
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Prepare tools, guidelines and reference material 	Develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start-up kits (tools, equipment, manual for use) for identified sectors</li> <li>Develop selection criteria and procedure for annual awards recognizing successful entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship; donor agencies; sector practitioners
Orient coordinating government ministries and agencies 	Suggested tracks for orientation are challenges faced by returning migrants, benefits and opportunities for returning migrants, and strategies for reintegration	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; donor agencies
Ensure capacity-building of implementing agencies 	Provide access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A gender-disaggregated skills database</li> <li>Market potential surveys</li> <li>Relevant training/refreshers training modules to supplement start-up kits</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
Develop a referral network of training partners, mentors and business incubators, among others 	Training partners, mentors and business incubators, among others, may be mapped based on area of specialization, target beneficiaries and areas serviced	MRCs; workers' and employers' organizations
Promote private sector partnerships 	Partner with research institutes and the private sector to launch special programmes for returning women migrant entrepreneurship at scale	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
Develop a database of returning migrant workers' skills and experiences 	Develop a web-/app-based skills assessment tool for returning migrant workers' skill profiling integrated with a centralized database	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

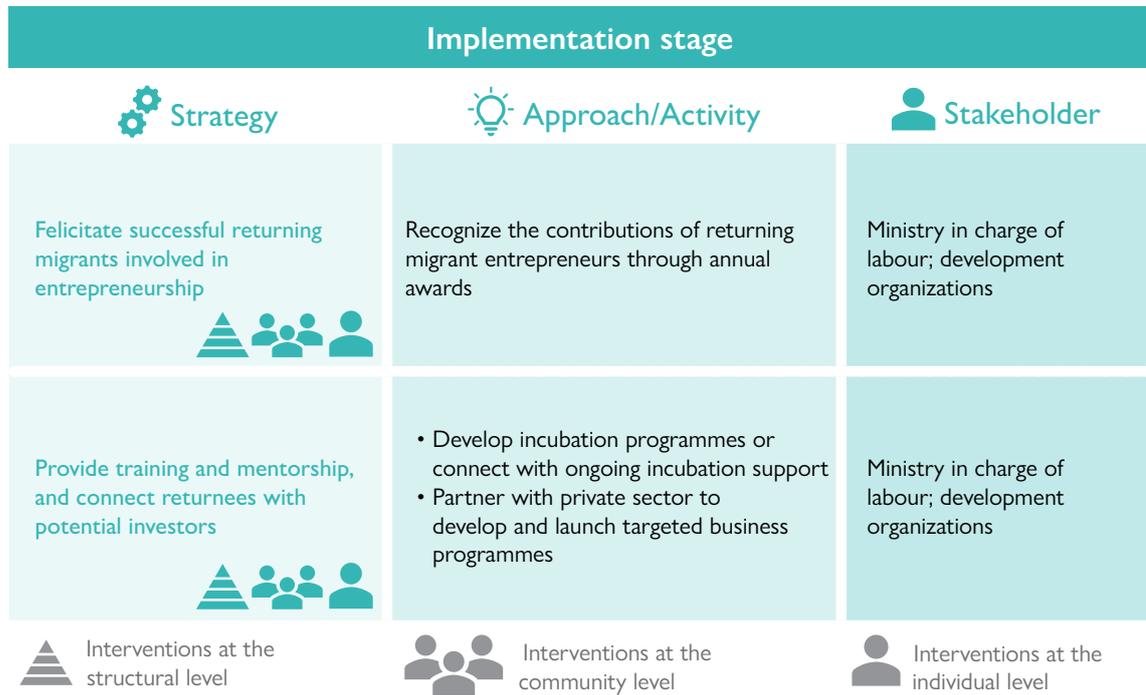
## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Create a supportive legal and regulatory environment</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop legal and regulatory frameworks to assist returning migrant workers to be informed of and access their rights</li> <li>• Formulate guidelines to ease the establishment and registration of small businesses</li> <li>• Reduce bureaucratic hurdles and simplify business registration procedures</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship; donor agencies; sector practitioners</p>
<p>Encourage social entrepreneurship</p> 	<p>Implement incubation programmes for social entrepreneurs; give awards to social entrepreneurs; design schemes for incentivizing social entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment; donor agencies</p>
<p>Support collectives and collectivization of resources</p> 	<p>Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schemes supporting collectives to register</li> <li>• Programmes to assist collectives with market linkages</li> <li>• Policies to encourage resource pooling and microlending</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship; development organizations; private sector organizations; financial institutions; migrant associations</p>
<p>Design schemes and programmes to support collectives and resource collectivization</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map available banking and microfinance providers</li> <li>• Sensitize them to the needs and capacities of returnees</li> <li>• Design cash-based reintegration grants or in-kind grant packages</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of returning migrant entrepreneurship; banks and financial institutions; diaspora groups</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Link returning migrants with self-employment programmes/ community-based livelihood projects</p> 	<p>Link returning migrants with existing livelihood projects (financial assistance training) of donors/NGOs based on their skills and needs assessment and business ideas</p>	<p>MRCs; diaspora groups; migrant collectives</p>
<p>Link returning migrants with mentorship support</p> 	<p>Connect returning migrant entrepreneurs with experts/successful returnees in the business field for mentorship support</p>	<p>MRCs; NGOs/migrant collectives</p>
<p>Provide support in developing business plans</p> 	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in basic business planning, business management and soft skills enhancement, among others</li> <li>• Handholding support</li> <li>• Connectivity to business incubators</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs; NGOs</p>
<p>Facilitate access to seed capital/ grants or soft loan programmes</p> 	<p>Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linkages with soft loan programmes</li> <li>• Handholding support in preparing loan applications</li> <li>• Linkages with potential investors</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs; NGOs; banks</p>
<p>Support branding and marketing of products</p> 	<p>Provide linkages with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-Commerce platforms and logistics company</li> <li>• Marketplaces in the form of kiosks and weekend/evening markets, among others</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs; e-commerce platforms</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3





## Call-out: Supporting returning migrant workers' access to banking and microcredit

Having access to banking and credit services can allow returnees to plan for their future and make investments to improve their economic situation. While most countries are likely to have basic banking services (such as savings accounts and investment schemes), those services that are particularly important for returning migrant workers, such as microcredit providers, microsavings schemes, savings and credit associations, and other MFIs, may not be present or functioning in all settings. Facilitating access to banking and microfinance services is dependent on the financial service providers operating in the country of origin, in particular in locations witnessing a large number of returns.

Access to banking and microfinancing services is generally dependent on eligibility and lending criteria. Due to the risk-averse nature of many lending institutions, barriers facing returnees (e.g. absence of documentation, credit history, proof of income and address) may prevent them from accessing banking and credit. Therefore, the lead reintegration organization has an important role to play in facilitating contacts with financial service providers, assessing returnees' eligibility and capacity to access specific services, advocating for their inclusion in existing banking and credit systems, and counselling returnees on the challenges and opportunities available to them.

Microcredit is not a solution for all returnees and not every returnee is able or willing to handle the responsibility of a microloan. Therefore, microcredit cannot be recommended as a general solution for returnees who are in need of financial means, but only in single cases. Before providing returnees with access to relevant banking institutions and MFIs for lines of credit, case managers should:

- Provide beneficiaries with information about the risks associated with taking out a loan;
- Provide adequate capacity-building in combination with loans;
- Assess risks of misappropriation through other household or community members;
- Verify basic requirements and documentation of the returnees, irrespective of whether the credit is provided by the organization managing the reintegration programme or by an external service provider.

# Key considerations



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- 1 Training must also focus on transversal skills (including computer literacy, language and workplace interpersonal skills relevant for the sector/trade) and financial literacy (savings, credit, subsidy, remittance, insurance and pension).
- 2 In case of reskilling or upskilling of persons already engaged in an occupation, practical and/or on-the-job training can be given.
- 3 Apprenticeship can be provided to those returning migrant workers that lack skills but require paid work and experience.
- 4 During the pre-departure orientations to migrant workers, a module on available reintegration services in the country of origin should be highlighted. Active channels of communication should be developed with migrant workers, either through web portals, social media platforms, diaspora groups, migrant associations and development organizations such that authentic and verified information on reintegration support can be periodically shared with migrant workers.



### Assistance towards personal finance management and well-being

Migrant workers contribute immensely to the social and economic development of the country of origin through remittances. Financial planning and effective remittance management can support sustainable reintegration of returnees upon return.

However, the money sent back by returning migrant workers is often not judiciously spent or saved by family members back home, due to lack of financial literacy and planning. Thus, when returnees return to the country of origin, they lack financial resources to invest in income-generating activities and do not have adequate savings to protect themselves from future economic shocks.

In Nepal, 10 per cent of public shares are reserved for migrant workers. Government is facilitating them in applying for shares and has been issuing saving bonds. But only 5 per cent of migrant workers have bought these bonds. They are not informed and, even if they know, they don't think it will benefit them.

– National Network for Safe Migration, Nepal

There is a need to:

- Support the financial literacy of returning migrant workers and their families;
- Create awareness about the benefits of financial planning and different financial instruments;
- Promote financial planning among returning migrant workers and their families;
- Ensure that returning migrant workers have financial security, resilience, control and freedom.

This section includes components that can strategically support returning migrant workers in financial management and on how to operationalize the same.

Women returnees, after coming back to origin country, wish to take up small business. In destination country, if they earn money, they send it to family and family has control over income. Money may be spent in family/household chores.

– National Network for Safe Migration, Nepal



### Financial literacy and planning

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Identify challenges faced by returning migrant workers in financial management 	Assess through research and evaluation studies	Donor agencies
Develop a strategy to promote financial literacy and management among returning migrant workers in the country of origin 	Incorporate financial planning in pre-departure orientation	Ministry in charge of finance
Map existing and potential partners for providing financial counselling and training 	Suggested partners include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government departments in charge of financial services</li> <li>• Banks and MFIs</li> <li>• Donors and private sector</li> <li>• MRCs and CSOs</li> </ul>	Local authority in charge of financial services
Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action 	Converge with departments in charge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and child affairs</li> <li>• Foreign affairs</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Skilling</li> </ul>	Ministry in charge of finance
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Develop reference material, tools and booklets, among others</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training modules on financial planning and remittance management for pre-departure orientation</li> <li>• Prepare informational booklets on savings schemes and investment options</li> </ul>	<p>Donor agencies; CSOs/ NGOs; workers' and employers' organizations</p>
<p>Ensure capacity-building of banks and MRCs</p> 	<p>Suggested areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building in targeting returning migrants</li> <li>• Understanding the roles and responsibilities for facilitating access to financial management support</li> </ul>	<p>Local authority in charge of financial services</p>
<p>Orient coordinating government ministries and agencies</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient ministries on roles and responsibilities in providing financial management support services to returning migrants</li> </ul>	<p>Donor agencies; ministry in charge of financial services</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Provide financial literacy to returning migrants</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct financial literacy camps for sectors that have heavy concentration of returning migrants</li> <li>• Facilitate weekly financial literacy meetings for specific groups of returning migrants</li> <li>• Conduct exposure visits to banks for returning migrants</li> </ul>	<p>Banks; CSOs/NGOs; MRCs</p>
<p>Provide financial counselling to returning migrants and their families</p> 	<p>Provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and investment strategies for income and capital</li> <li>• Different financial support groups, SHGs, savings groups and MFIs</li> </ul>	<p>Banks; donor agencies; CSOs/NGOs</p>
<p>Conduct hands-on training/ workshops on financial planning and budget management for returning migrants and their families</p> 	<p>Support returnees and their families in devising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term and long-term financial plans</li> <li>• Budget management plans</li> <li>• Debt management plans</li> </ul>	<p>Banks; donor agencies; CSOs/NGOs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

# Gender-responsive strategies for economic and labour market reintegration



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The **Framework on Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Harassment against Women Migrant Workers in South and Southeast Asia** highlights that women migrant workers from South Asia have increased significantly in the past decade, but the number remains low when compared to men. Additionally, women from the region are limited to only certain employment categories and sectors, such as domestic work and garment industry, that are commonly characterized as low-paid, informal and less visible with low bargaining power and almost zero labour and social protections. Select challenges faced by women migrant workers, particularly those from lower socioeconomic strata, are low remuneration, long work-hour commitments, poor working conditions and job insecurities.

When returning, women migrant workers may face challenges in accessing economic reintegration due to issues, such as low financial and digital literacy, lack of knowledge about savings schemes and investment alternatives, and lack of asset ownership/control of assets. They lack information about women-specific benefits and entitlements under government schemes and the process to avail them. Further, their economic condition deteriorated due to the COVID-19 and many returning women migrant workers struggle to find jobs after return. Across the economic and labour market reintegration areas of focus, gender equality has to be prioritized and consciously mainstreamed in the evidence gathering, planning, design, and implementation stages. Select strategies are highlighted in the next section.

# Case studies

Case study on assistance towards economic and labour market reintegration in Sri Lanka

Skills Passport: A one-stop solution to migrant portfolio management

**An IT-enabled smart CV to aid migrants collate cross-border experiences and ease visibility among employers**



© Reuters (n.d.)/Anindito MUKHERJEE (in: Rekha M. Menon (2016), "Indian workers are ready for the robot revolution. But are their managers?", World Economic Forum, 5 October)

Successful reintegration of migrant workers returning back to Sri Lanka largely relies on workers providing evidence of their expertise and experiences acquired overseas. **Presenting proof of experience and expertise has been difficult for low- and semi-skilled returning migrant workers** as they mostly work in informal jobs such as construction, hospitality and care giving. Even after gaining valuable skills and competencies, they are **not officially recognized or certified**. At the same time, **employers** in Sri Lanka that require certified labour often find it difficult to find qualified people to fill the available vacancies.

In light of this, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) of the Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations, together with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) and the ILO, introduced the **Skills Passport**, having identified the **need for a fortified skills recognition system** to assist returning migrant workers and workers in Sri Lanka become more visible to potential employers.

The Skills Passport is a **comprehensive portfolio of skills and qualifications of a worker acquired informally**. The skills are linked with **references** and ensures that all the skills, expertise and experiences are recorded in a methodical manner both within and across sectors.

The Skills Passport can also be linked with an RPL platform of Sri Lanka that **helps recognize informally acquired knowledge, skills and competencies through formal assessments and certifications**. This system of documentation ensures that the skills, expertise and experience of a worker is recorded in a methodical manner both within and across sectors.

#### Challenges:

- Lack of experience documentation due to informal jobs
- No official certification of skills
- Lack of references for proof
- Lack of visibility for employers to find qualified people

#### Interventions:

- Skills passport with a comprehensive portfolio of skills and qualifications
- Assistance for upskilling and reskilling

#### Stakeholders:

- Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations
- Employers Federation of Ceylon
- International Labour Organization

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[Sri Lanka Skills Passport](#)

[Sri Lanka National Skills Passport Project](#)

[Formalising Skills, Encouraging Mobility: A Case Study of Sri Lanka's Skills Passport and Bahrain's New Work Permit](#)

# Key considerations to prioritize and mainstream gender into economic and labour market reintegration

- Develop and roll out targeted financial training specifically for returning women migrant workers, such as:
  - Financial management and accounting;
  - Digital literacy and soft skills;
  - Business planning and management.
- Establish partnerships with local business associations and chambers of commerce to create mentorship and networking opportunities for returning women migrant workers to facilitate market access and market linkages.
- Engage CSOs, including WROs, for enrolment of returning women migrant workers in financial support groups or SHGs to provide access to collective savings schemes and microsavings schemes and facilitate networking and sharing of experiences and business opportunities and for mentorship support.
- Ease documentation and bureaucratic hurdles for returning women migrant workers to access microcredit loans.
- Engage CBOs and development agencies to support and form collectives of returning women migrant workers to ease resource pooling and microlending.
- Provide legal aid services and information on labour laws and regulations to support returning women migrant workers in asserting their rights in the workplace.
- Design targeted programmes for returning women migrant workers and their families to support the economic reintegration of women through informed decision-making and sharing of responsibilities.
- Incentivize the private sector to launch special programmes to specifically support returning women migrant workers in business plan development and entrepreneurship.
- Link returning women migrant workers with childcare assistance and housing support for women in need.
- Inform returning women migrant workers about their rights and relevant policies and programmes supporting them.
- Promote a professional job market for domestic and care work while increasing more diverse job opportunities for returning women migrant workers.

## Case study on assistance towards economic and labour market reintegration in Morocco

### Demand-linked training programmes to support reintegration

Morocco's FORAS project (FORAS means "opportunities" in Arabic) aims to strengthen the sustainable reintegration of migrants. It provides enhanced pre-departure support in the framework of the IOM AVRR programme for migrants returning from Morocco to eight countries in West Africa. With the support of IOM, there is an assessment of the needs and socioeconomic profiles of migrants, along with six training courses tailored on the skill demands of the migrant's country of return.



Two participants working as part of the FORAS Training taking place in Rabat. © IOM (n.d.)/Amine OULMAKKI

The courses comprise of training courses on soft skills enhancement, entrepreneurship, marketing, agriculture and handicraft. IOM Morocco partnered with the National Mutual Aid Society to set up three migrant orientation points in three main transit areas. Promotion and awareness of the reintegration process of FORAS was fostered through the print, digital and audiovisual media.

The key pre-departure activities included:

- **Orientation and counselling sessions** to provide AVRR beneficiaries with accurate and up-to-date information about the opportunities and challenges associated with the reintegration process and the different training opportunities in Morocco;
- **Pre-departure training** to strengthen the technical and motivational skills of the AVRR beneficiaries in view of their sustainable reintegration upon return.

#### Challenges:

- Lack of specialized skills for employment
- Dwindling motivation due to lengthy reintegration process

#### Interventions:

- Assessment on the needs, socio-economic profiles of migrants
- Counselling sessions and trainings to strengthen technical and motivational skills
- Promotion and awareness of the reintegration process
- Reintegration into the labour market

#### Stakeholders:

- IOM
- National Mutual Aid Society

Between September 2017 and December 2019, FORAS enriched the IOM AVRR programme by equipping beneficiaries with knowledge, skills and motivation with the support of respective IOM regional and country offices. Orientation and counselling sessions were held, which were attended by **1,589** beneficiaries, of whom around 886 attended at least one pre-departure training before their return.

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[FORAS \(United Nations Network on Migration\)](#)

[Reintegration good practices #7 - Pre-departure reintegration assistance in Morocco: orientation, counselling and training](#)

[Preparing the reintegration process prior to return: the FORAS project experience in Morocco \(a webinar organized by the KMH\)](#)

## Case study on assistance towards economic and labour market reintegration in Ghana

### Migrant cooperatives and their sunflower model

#### Formation of cooperatives and market linkages for returning migrant workers



Children commit to the tree of life – children in front of the Tree of Life after a community outreach session. © GlobalGiving (n.d.)

Based on a market assessment, IOM facilitated the formation of a cooperative union in Ghana for selling sunflower oil and biodiesel products in the local market. It assisted a group of 35 Ghanaians who returned from Libya to Nkoranza to form the cooperative. Participants included returning migrant workers who were taken through 10 practical-oriented modules including on planning and commencement of business, effective ways of crop cultivation, weather patterns, planting seasons and formation of cooperatives.

The workshop allowed participants to put into practice the theoretical concepts acquired and were assisted to cultivate an acre of land for sunflower production which they harvested and sold to the market. This community-based development approach benefited returnees as well as their families by providing them a livelihood opportunity and improving their overall well-being.

#### Challenges:

- Inadequate skills and knowledge on designing and running businesses
- Lack of follow-ups and mentorship support
- Lack of financial skills and management
- Networking and market linkages

#### Interventions:

- Formation of a cooperative union of migrant workers for selling sunflower oil and biodiesel products
- Support through workshops on farming, business planning, production, marketing and formation of cooperatives

#### Stakeholders:

- IOM Ghana
- Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[From seeds to oil: Community development and sunflower production \(IOM Ghana Newsletter, June, p. 2\)](#)

## Case study on assistance towards economic and labour market reintegration in Bangladesh

### Community social enterprises in Bangladesh

#### Returnee migrant workers' investment in social enterprises, benefiting entire communities

An IOM staff member in Dhaka advises a migrant about post-arrival reception assistance. © IOM/ Md. Al Amin MOLLA (in: IOM (2021), "IOM helps vulnerable Bangladeshis return from Lebanon as more migrants line up to leave", press release, 3 September)



IOM Bangladesh found that many returning migrant workers did not have the **experience and capacity required to sustainably operate a business** by themselves. **Women migrants especially requested support in managing their businesses jointly with their families.** To help drive the business ecosystem, IOM Bangladesh developed a mechanism wherein returning migrant workers were given the option to invest in social enterprises, effectively becoming shareholders. The investors were backed by CSO partners that had ground-level expertise and supported in managing, administering and governing these social enterprises.

Some enterprises set up through this project covered areas, such as crab and hydroponic farming, cow fattening and mobile food carts. They employed staff from local communities as well as returning migrant workers. This practice portrayed a positive image of returnees, by generating local employment and supplying goods and services to remote and rural areas. They also helped reinforce social cohesion since both returning migrant workers and the local communities directly benefited from it.

#### Challenges:

- Inadequate skills and knowledge of sustainably running businesses
- Capacity and networking challenges for women
- Lack of mentorship and guidance on financial management
- Community and market linkages

#### Interventions:

- IOM Bangladesh worked with returning migrant workers and local communities to help them create collective income-generating business in the form of social enterprises that could benefit the entire community

#### Stakeholders:

- IOM Bangladesh
- Local CSOs
- Local communities

For more information, please refer to the IOM *Reintegration Handbook*.

# Helpful resources

- Christopher Butler, ed. (2019), *Returning Home: Challenges and Opportunities for Women Migrant Workers in the Nepali Labour Market*.
- Chandan Kumar Mandal (2020), *Returnee women migrant labourers stare at bleak future, survey finds*.
- European Union–IOM Knowledge Management Hub (2022), *Monitoring and Evaluation Tools for Return and Reintegration Programmes*.
- Seefar (n.d.), *Building an app to support returned migrant workers*.
- ILO and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (2015), *Returnee Migrants: A Ready Workforce – How Returnee Migrants Can Become Active Economic Agents*.
- IOM (2019), *Reintegration Handbook: Practical Guidance on the Design, Implementation and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance*.
- IOM (2022), *Profiling Returnee Migrant Workers for Labour Market Reintegration*.
- IOM Belgium and Luxembourg (n.d.), *Job placement and country specific activities*.
- United Nations Development Programme (2022), *Job oriented skills training for returning migrants commences in Madhesh Province*.
- UN Women (2022), *Framework: Prevention of Gender-based Violence and Harassment against Women Migrant Workers in South and Southeast Asia*.
- Bilesha Weeraratne, Harini Weerasekera and Thilini Bandara (2022), *Comprehensive Mapping and Assessment of Reintegration Measures in South Asian Colombo Process Member States*.





Waiting for true empowerment. © Güldem ÜSTÜN/Flickr CC-BY-2.0 (n.d.) (in: Raghavan Srinivasan (2022), "Neither Licchavi, Uttaramerur or Westminster, India needs a republic that empowers its citizens", *The Wire*, 26 January)

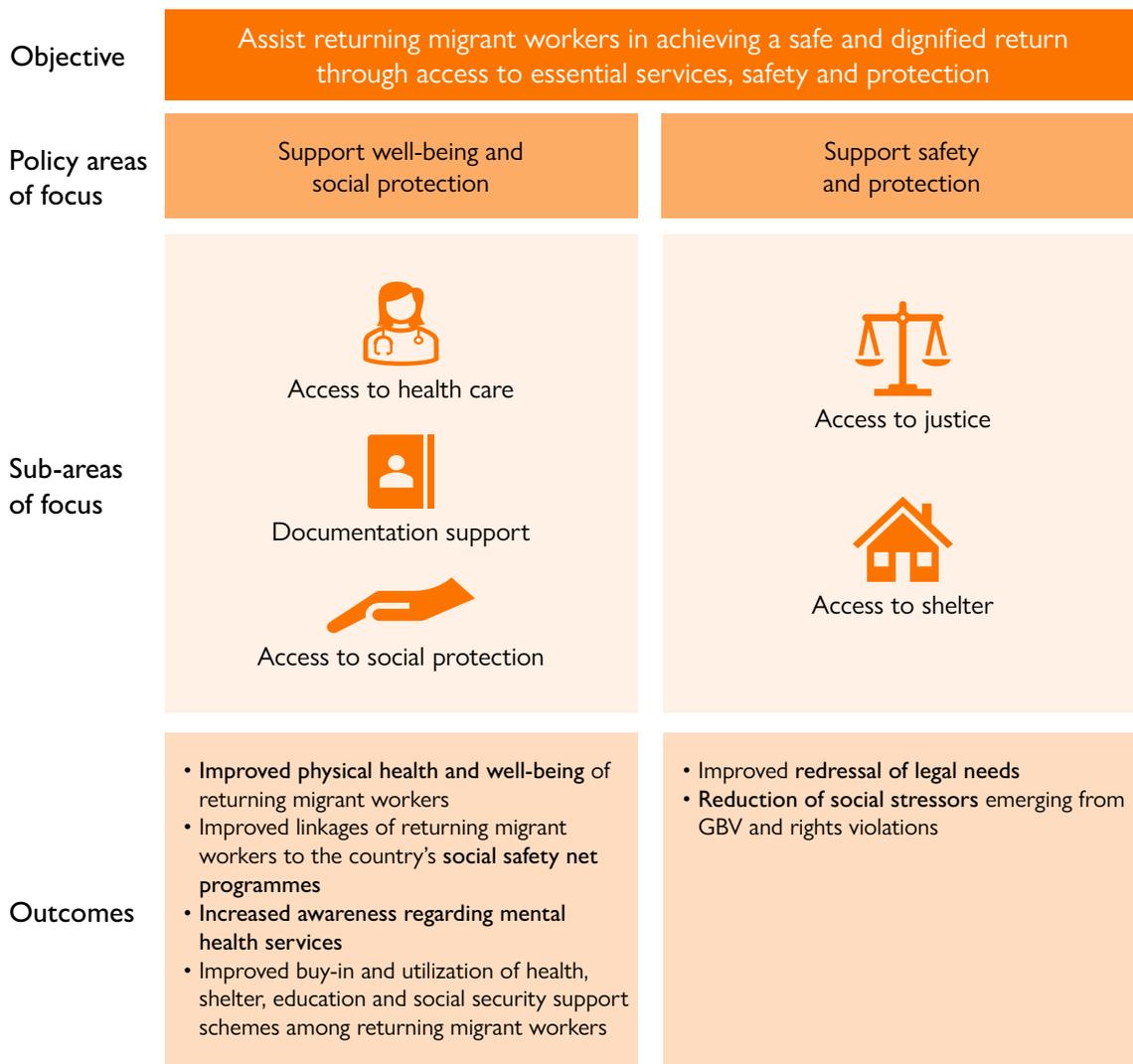
# Module 4: Assistance and planning towards social reintegration

Welfare programmes are crucial in building a base of support that alleviates the stress factors regarding the living standards of returning migrant workers and their families. Poor standards of health, shelter and legal services impact the returnee's ability to productively engage in the economy of the country of origin.

Returning migrant workers require support in areas pertaining to social reintegration such as well-being and access to social protection services and safety and protection. While most States have established several social protection and welfare programmes, the returning migrant worker's access to these programmes needs to be assessed and, if required, enhanced.

# Overview of the social reintegration model

Social well-being of returning migrant workers is an expansive area that functions within the realm of multiple government and non-governmental stakeholders. Social reintegration supports the sustainability of returnee reintegration by enabling the base support sought by returnees, such as documentation, shelter, education, grievance redressal and most importantly health care. The infographic below illustrates the overview of the social reintegration model focusing on key areas. The model should be tailored to the country context, prioritizing linkages with existing initiatives for social reintegration.



# Overview of the implementation levels of social reintegration

- **Individual level:** Many returnees need some assistance accessing social services, whether immediately upon arrival or later during the reintegration process. Social reintegration assistance for individual returnees in the country of origin is centred on facilitating access to and providing referrals for services in particular housing, education, legal, health, food and water, and other public infrastructure services within the community. The services provided by the lead reintegration organization or its partners should be tailored to the needs of individual returnees. Focus is on assistance towards **access to housing and accommodation, access to documentation, access to social protection schemes, access to health and well-being, access to education and training, access to food and water, and access to justice and rights.**
- **Community level:** Social reintegration assistance at the community level is focused on improving the accessibility and availability of social services in communities of return. This can benefit both returnees and community members. It is most appropriate when there are physical, language or other barriers hindering returnees' access services in specific high-return communities, or the services in these communities. Focus is on **community mobilization activities, peer support mechanisms and community networks.**
- **Structural level:** Social reintegration assistance at the structural level will focus on mainstreaming and integrating the concerns of returning migrants within the social protection programmes of the country. Special focus may be laid on understanding the vulnerabilities of returning migrant workers and designing policy initiatives to extend targeted support to the returnees. Joint planning and programming would be of key essence to ensure holistic programmes. Additionally, focus should be laid on developing the capacity and sensitization among officials and field functionaries in supporting returning migrant workers empathetically; reintegration considerations into relevant development and sectoral policies and strategies at the national and local levels; and prioritizing partnerships and collaborations with multiple stakeholders including the private sector, development agencies, diaspora groups, migrant collectives, and local and regional governments.



Sections 4a and 4b detail the strategies, approaches and key stakeholders for the two areas of focus under social reintegration: (1) well-being and social protection and (2) safety and access to shelter. Within the strategies, the icons for the different levels are provided to draw indication of the implementation level for the proposed activity.

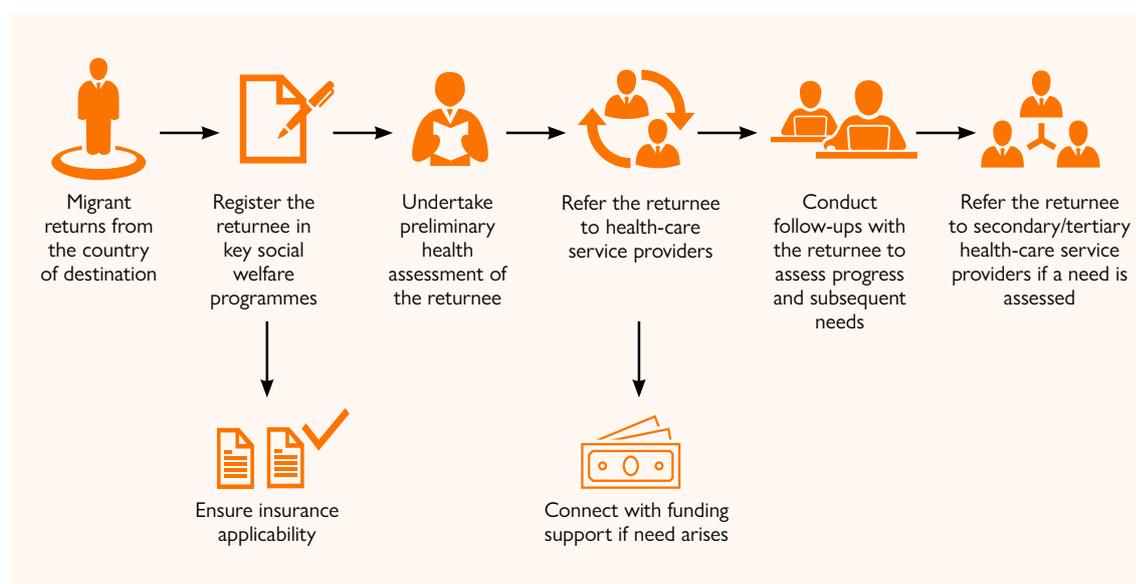
Age- and gender-responsive strategies are cross-cutting areas of consideration across policy areas of focus and levels of implementation. Select gender-responsive strategies for social reintegration are then presented to be considered by countries in formulating their reintegration frameworks and support action plans.

# Targeting and promoting social reintegration services

Eight critical aspects for the successful uptake and implementation of the social reintegration services are:

1. Accurately assessing the needs of returning migrant workers for social reintegration;
2. Adopting a gender-sensitive approach towards conducting assessments and consultations to build trust and gain the returning migrant workers' confidence in the system;
3. Mapping existing social protection schemes in the country and mapping the ones applicable to the returning migrant workers within a short timespan;
4. Developing and maintaining referral pathways for quick assistance;
5. Having a pool of qualified resource staff (counsellors, legal aid professionals, translators, etc.) to extend support on demand;
6. Widely promoting the availability of the services in a strategic and continuous manner through the multiple channels of communication to ensure that returning migrant workers are aware about the services, trust their credibility and are compelled by a strong desire to enrol;
7. Closely monitoring and following up with the beneficiaries to prevent them from dropping out of the programme.
8. Forming partnerships and engaging in joint planning across ministries, development partners, NGOs and professionals (such as mental health service providers, legal aid professionals) would be critical to extend timely, targeted and need-based support to the returning migrant workers.

The infographic below highlights the key steps in promoting and targeting the social reintegration services among the beneficiaries. The sections that follow detail the strategies, activities and stakeholders for operationalizing the model.





## Well-being and social protection

Returning migrant workers face several challenges in meeting their social welfare needs along the migrant life cycle, which also affects their social reintegration upon return. Enrolment in welfare funds, insurances or other schemes as formulated by the respective countries support migrants' and other returnees' access to such services even during times of distress.

Availability of adequate updated documents is a prerequisite to access any State-run welfare programme. Returning migrant workers may not have documents that identify their family members, which limits their access to State-provided welfare benefits.

Additionally, a substantial number of migrants in South Asian CPMs migrate irregularly, which makes them ineligible for the ambit of State-provided welfare benefits. Migrants need to be linked to pre-existing social security schemes in the country of origin. Administrative bottlenecks, costs and inaccessible offices often disincentivize registration in these schemes.

With regard to access to health care, returning migrant workers experience a variety of situations. Several may have been exposed to insufficient health facilities in the country of destination, occupational hazards, traumatic circumstances or accidents, which have impacted their physical health.

Thus, it is critical to ensure:

- Access to **documentation** for returning migrant workers through needs assessment and support;
- Quality and **accessible health care** for all returning migrant workers and their families;
- **Affordable, accessible and attractive welfare fund/scheme**, which will encourage formal routes of migration while providing crucial social safeguards.

**A convergent model of social security** through the participation of MRCs, community welfare centres and CBOs in bridging State-provided care with the community.

**This section focuses on components that can effectively support well-being and access to social protection for migrant workers and their families on how to operationalize the same.**



## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Ensure policy and programme revision to ensure equitable inclusion of returning migrant workers in State welfare programmes in the country of origin</p> 	<p>Some key areas for policy intervention include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition as a demographic category</li> <li>• Amendments to existing policies and programmes for equitable inclusion</li> <li>• Portability of social security programmes through intragovernment and bilateral agreements</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of health (equivalent)/ Ministry of External Affairs</p>
<p>Advocate for policy focus on sexual and reproductive care and trauma-informed care</p> 	<p>Draft policies and schemes for quality health care, which include maternal health, protection from sexually transmitted diseases and access to contraception</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of health; Ministry of Women and Child Development (equivalent)</p>
<p>Develop partnerships and cooperation protocols for inter-agency coordination to facilitate access to health care</p> 	<p>Suggested MoUs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoUs with countries of destination for health-care access for migrants through the countries of origin or specific migrant insurances</li> <li>• MoUs with medical facilities and other agencies (such as university hospitals)</li> </ul> <p>Ensure health insurance and State scheme applicability, if any, in health-care centres</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of health (equivalent)/ Ministry of External Affairs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Establish a contributory welfare fund or an insurance scheme in the country of origin to ensure availability of State-provided social protection measures upon return</p> 	<p>Facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral agreements and intracountry agreements for fund recognition to ensure availability of welfare benefits across the migrant life cycle</li> <li>• Contribution to the fund for all regular applications for migration</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of health/Ministry in charge of external affairs</p>
<p>Develop policies that ensure insurance applicability in the onboarded private or non-profit health-care service providers</p> 	<p>If costs cannot be borne solely by the insurance, provisions must be explored where the service can be subsidized through cost-sharing by the State or donor-run programmes</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of health/Ministry in charge of external affairs</p>
<p>Promote collaboration with CBOs and local influential stakeholders to facilitate access to welfare service delivery</p> 	<p>Collaborate with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBOs</li> <li>• SHGs</li> <li>• Trade unions</li> <li>• Influential local stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of health/Ministry in charge of external affairs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Facilitate information dissemination to increase awareness of available services through IEC campaigns</p> 	<p>Suggested IEC campaigns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of health and well-being</li> <li>• Availability of contributory and non-contributory welfare schemes and services</li> </ul>	MRCs/NGOs
<p>Ensure orientation of coordinating government ministries and agencies</p> 	<p>Orientation on roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis providing access to health care, documentation and social protection</p>	NGOs; line department of labour; ministry in charge of health
<p>Ensure capacity-building of all stakeholders</p> 	<p>Suggested areas for capacity-building include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-informed care</li> <li>• Preliminary health assessment</li> <li>• Identifying symptoms and referring individuals to State, private or non-profit health-care service providers</li> </ul>	NGOs; line department of health
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Ensure capacity-building of all stakeholders</p> 	<p>Suggested areas for capacity-building include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing welfare benefits</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities in social protection provision</li> <li>• Available programmes and eligibility needs</li> <li>• Tools to map and communicate programme availability</li> <li>• Handholding support for documentation or welfare scheme enrolment</li> </ul>	<p>NGOs; line department of health</p>
<p>Enable a referral network of health-care providers</p> 	<p>Map State, private and non-profit health-care service providers as per the following suggestive criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided</li> <li>• Target beneficiaries</li> <li>• Areas serviced</li> <li>• Alignment with government schemes/insurance</li> </ul>	<p>NGOs; line department of labour; ministry in charge of health</p>
<p>Prepare tools, guidelines and reference material</p> 	<p>Develop communication materials for awareness generation</p>	<p>NGOs; line department of health</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Guide returning migrants to assess their documents in community welfare centres, MRCs, union/association groups or equivalent</p> 	<p>Community workers must be apprised of the country-specific documentation requirements and programme eligibility</p>	<p>MRC; line department of labour</p>
<p>Provide tailored support for registration and updating required documents</p> 	<p>Community workers may accompany the returnees or their families in case of need such as disability or illiteracy</p>	<p>MRC; line department of labour</p>
<p>Undertake a preliminary assessment of returnees and support access to emergency and ongoing medical care</p> 	<p>Host intermittent medical camps in identified migrant source villages to identify individuals in need of health-care support</p>	<p>MRC; line department of health; hospitals</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Support linkages with social security services</p> 	<p>Facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linkages with specialized social protection measures relevant to the occupation</li> <li>• Social security camps to extend reach and enable access among migrant cohorts</li> <li>• Regular camps in CBO premises to promote enrolment in welfare programmes</li> </ul>	<p>MRCs/CSOs/CBOs</p>
<p>Support enrolment of migrant families in applicable schemes</p> 	<p>Enable an add-on mechanism in social protection schemes which ensures welfare benefits to migrant families including children</p>	<p>MRCs/CSOs/CBOs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

# Key considerations



The IOM One Room Shelter (ORS) programme gave women the opportunity to paint their shelters, allowing them to express their creativity and put their own stamp on their new homes. Their new houses provide women with more privacy, security and confidence in the future which they express through colorful and cheerful drawings. In this house a shelf was added to the walls to guarantee that household and kitchen items are safer from water damage. It also adds a decorative touch to the inside of the house. © IOM 2013

- 1 Housing options need to ensure safe water and sanitation including provisions that facilitate safe menstrual health and hygiene.
- 2 Accountability should be maintained by housing providers regarding security of residents. Adequate grievance redressal mechanisms should be put in place to address any complaints that may arise.
- 3 In countries with caveats for applications for single women due to cultural barriers (such as requiring family testimonials or non-object certificates), policies and guidelines should be revised to ensure equitable and inclusive provision of housing.



## Safety and access to shelter

Upon return, migrant workers face major stress factors related to their safety. Safety can be broadly understood as judicial and physical. Adherence to the legalities of the country of destination as well as the country of origin holds significance in determining the extent of reintegration. Therefore, access to legal institutions is a core aspect. Further, physical safety entails the availability of safe and decent shelter for all returning migrant workers. This includes shelter that protects them from abuse (physical or verbal), sustainable long-term housing options as well as safe in-transit shelter.

Returnees could be involved with the justice system in the country of destination and the country of origin for various reasons. They could have experienced human rights violations or wage theft for which they may be seeking redressal. Returnees may face abuse or transit-related problems in transit countries for which they may want to seek redressal. Further, returning migrant workers may have been involved in crimes or misdemeanour in the country of destination for which they may be needed to appear in court. Legal aid therefore is an important aspect of reintegration measures in order to enable sustainable and legal reintegration of returning migrant workers. Legal aid becomes further crucial among women and gender minorities who are at an increased risk of facing GBV.

With regard to physical safety, identifying and securing housing options for returning migrant workers, especially when financially constrained, is challenging. Returning migrant workers, especially women or gender minorities, may not be accepted into their previous homes due to societal prejudices about employment abroad. Additionally, returning migrant workers may not return to the same area of the country of origin they had left.

Thus, in order to sustainably support returning migrant workers and ensure their safety and protection, it is critical that:

- Returning migrant workers have **access to legal and grievance redressal systems**;
- Returning migrant workers have **access to shelter including different housing options**, such as safe temporary shelters, in-transit shelters and affordable rental housing.

**This section focuses on components that can effectively support the safety and protection of returning migrant workers and their families within their countries of origin and on how to operationalize the same.**



Access to justice



Access to shelter

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Facilitate inclusion of legal and judicial clauses in bilateral agreements</p> 	<p>Build:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms and protocols for intercountry coordination for managing legal misdemeanour of migrant workers in the country of destination</li> <li>• Linkages with respective country embassies for easy coordination</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Labour; Ministry of External Affairs; Ministry of Law (equivalent)</p>
<p>Develop a programme for rental housing</p> 	<p>Suggested approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizing existing government-owned buildings to convert into affordable rental complexes through private supportive agencies</li> <li>• Supporting public–private partnerships in a construction–operation–maintenance model</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Housing (equivalent)</p>
<p>Formulate guidelines on allocating housing to applicants</p> 	<p>Ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate information availability regarding the programme</li> <li>• Varied needs of returning migrant workers, such as individual woman resident, families and disabled residents, are met</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Housing (equivalent)</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Collaborate with trade unions or development organizations to support linkages for shelter in the countries of destination and origin</p> 	<p>Support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building partnerships and collaborations with trade unions/development organizations</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Housing; Ministry of Labour (equivalent)</p>
<p>Develop partnerships with non-profit service providers for rehabilitation and shelter</p> 	<p>Build a database of service providers</p>	<p>Ministry of Housing (equivalent)</p>
<p>Develop partnerships with private and non-profit legal aid providers</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify like-minded partners</li> <li>• Develop concept notes for partnerships</li> <li>• Develop a scope of partnerships and clear guidelines</li> </ul>	<p>Lead reintegration agency</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Enable a referral network of specialized legal aid providers</p> 	<p>State, private and non-profit legal aid providers may be mapped based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of specialization</li> <li>• Target beneficiaries</li> <li>• Areas serviced</li> </ul>	MRCs/CSOs/Service providers
<p>Facilitate information dissemination to increase awareness of available services</p> 	<p>Undertake IEC campaigns targeting beneficiaries on availability of legal aid and housing and shelter services</p>	Ministry in charge of social welfare
<p>Ensure orientation of coordinating government ministries and agencies</p> 	<p>Orientation on roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis providing safety and protection including access to arbitration, legal aid, housing, shelter and a grievance redressal system</p>	Donor agencies
<p>Ensure capacity-building of all stakeholders</p> 	<p>Suggested areas for capacity-building include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referring returning migrant workers to legal aid providers</li> <li>• Sensitization of basic legal rights, especially women returning migrant workers</li> </ul>	NGOs; Ministry of Social Welfare and Justice (equivalent)
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Conduct a preliminary assessment of returnees' legal needs</p> 	<p>Understand the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal needs of the returning migrant workers</li> <li>• Documentation and evidence needs of the returnees</li> </ul>	MRCs
<p>Connect returnees with legal aid service providers</p> 	<p>Ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate access to information associated with the legal aid including processes and costs</li> <li>• Necessary safety and security of returnees in conflict with the law or returnees who need to participate as witness and their families</li> </ul>	MRCs/CSOs/CBOs
<p>Connect returnees with shelter and housing options as per requirement</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRCs or equivalent may connect returning migrant workers with shelter and housing service providers through a referral network</li> <li>• Support linkages for shelter in the countries of destination and origin through collaboration with trade unions or international organizations.</li> </ul>	MRCs/CSOs/CBOs; line department of housing (equivalent)
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

# Key considerations



Migrant women learn how to use a mobile phone to tell their stories during a new media training conducted in the outskirts of Delhi. © Ideosync Media Combine (n.d.) (in: World Association for Christian Communication (2019), “‘New window’ opens for Delhi’s migrant women, girls”, 14 March)

- 1 Any legal proceeding should be undertaken with informed consent of the returnee. The informed consent should provide them with any requisite information about the risks or repercussions involved in the process, usage of personal data and costs.
- 2 If any legal proceeding leads to increased harm to the returnee, steps for increased protection for the returning migrant worker need to be advocated for.
- 3 Cultural considerations need to be made a crucial aspect of all legal proceedings and need to account for regional, linguistic, and societal barriers. Legal aid providers need to be capacitated to address these needs. Interpreters should be made available.
- 4 Provision of legal aid for survivors of GBV should be cognizant of the experiences of the returnee and must incorporate the trauma-informed services principle and prevent causing greater harm.

# Gender-responsive strategies for social reintegration



The government's draft National Policy on Migrant Workers has largely overlooked the specific needs and concerns of migrant women  
© Reuters (n.d.) (in: Lalita Panicker (2021), "Protect the rights of women migrant workers", *Hindustan Times*, 17 April)

Adequate SRH services are a crucial part of the health-care package directed towards women. SRH services receive relatively low focus due to their narrow beneficiary category and the lack of awareness of the importance they hold in overall health and well-being. Women migrant workers and non-binary individuals sometimes do not access available services due to inhibitions of entering hospitals or health-care centres, the stigma associated with sexual health and mistrust associated with modern reproductive care. Returning women migrant workers may find accessing SRH further challenging due to the lack of family support, unawareness and conflicting health priorities among family members.

Studies have shown that pregnant migrant women often delay seeking care. Work cultures in some countries of destination also prevent them from being able to work once they are pregnant, in some cases leading to deportation. Fear of deportation and loss of livelihood affect migrant women from seeking reproductive care. This trend is also present among returning women migrant workers who do not seek care due to lack of family support, fear of losing jobs or even by trivializing the need of care services. This leads to poor obstetric outcomes and, in some cases, adverse outcomes for the child as well.

With regard to physical safety, returning women migrant workers or those of gender minorities may not be accepted into their families due to societal prejudices about employment abroad. Additionally, for returning women migrant workers, identifying and securing housing options is particularly challenging because they may be more financially constrained. Furthermore, effective coordination and referrals for essential services (health, social services, legal aid/access to justice) to respond to the needs of returning women migrant workers subject to violence becomes further crucial. Given the above extent, some of the proposed strategies focusing on social reintegration support for returning women migrant workers are as follows.

## Strategies

- Advocate for SRH inclusion in insurance and State policies.
- Sensitize community workers and health-care providers to identify the issues faced by returning women migrant workers and those of gender minorities and provide the requisite care.
- Support capacity-building of SHGs and collaboration with them to facilitate access to welfare service delivery for returning women migrant workers.
- Handhold returning women migrant workers to complete documentation.
- Provide subsidized rental housing targeting financially constrained returning migrant workers especially women returning migrant workers.
- Provide housing for immediate shelter before and upon return of victims of GBV, trafficking discrimination and human rights violations.

# Case studies

## Case study on social reintegration support in the Philippines Assistance through a reintegration package

Arriving Filipino migrant workers are met by authorities at the airport to facilitate their trip back to the provinces. © Mike TABOY 2020 (in: Mark Saludes (2020), “Distressed Filipino migrant workers decry lack of government support”, LICAS.news, 22 June)



Various returning migrant workers have been displaced from their jobs due to hostile environments, such as political conflicts, harsh policy reforms, and illegal recruitment or human trafficking.

These challenges prompted the DOLE in the Philippines to create a **set of reintegration services and mechanisms** that would aid a smooth reintegration process for such migrants.

Implemented with the help of a set of social partners and organizations, the **Balik-Pinas, Balik-Hanapbuhay** programme was created in 2011 under the National Reintegration Center for OFWs to enable women OFW returnees to **start and operate livelihood undertakings for self-employment**. The programme provides **non-cash livelihood support and welfare assistance** that amounts to around **Php 20,000** along with necessary training. An administrative order in 2013 expanded to include women OFWs in Migrant Workers and Other Overseas Filipinos Resource Centers in Philippine Overseas Labor Offices.

The programme offers **capacity-building opportunities through community mobilization and maintaining OFW family circles**. It also assists in **availing social security measures and services like psychosocial counseling, stress debriefing, values formation and financial literacy**.

### Challenges:

- Inadequate knowledge about welfare assistance and livelihood measures
- Lack of specialized skills and capacity to set up businesses or undertake self-employment

### Interventions:

- A package of livelihood support/ assistance intended to provide immediate relief to returning member-OFWs (distressed/ displaced) amounting to a maximum Php 20,000

### Stakeholders:

- DOLE/Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
- Philippine Overseas Labor Offices
- DOLE's reintegration services

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[Reintegration services for overseas Filipino workers](#)

[Balik Pinas! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program](#)

[Philippine migration journey: Processes and programs in the migration life cycle](#)

[Updated Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022, Chapter 21: Protecting the rights, promoting the welfare, and expanding opportunities for overseas Filipinos](#)

## Case study on social reintegration support in Nepal

### Combating human trafficking through policy measures

Human trafficking is a complex challenge that requires multidisciplinary solutions with the support of many stakeholders. Nepal is a source, transit and destination country for labour, sex and organ trafficking. Some studies estimate that a quarter of a million Nepalese are in forced labour or other forms of trafficking at any given time, with millions more vulnerable due to poverty and a lack of employment and opportunity. In addition, victims and survivors lack the resources they need to help them recover.



Life skill to a survivor of trafficking means a lot in order to change her life from a nightmare. Here, a survivor of trafficking learns weaving at a shelter home run by a national NGO in Bogra District in Bangladesh. © IOM/Bashir Ahmed SUJAN 2007

Hamro Samman, a programme co-funded by USAID and UK Aid, partners with the Government of Nepal, CSOs and the private sector to strengthen the prevention of human trafficking, protection among vulnerable populations and prosecution of traffickers in Nepal.

This programme:

1. Improves capacity and advocacy efforts of survivor groups;
2. Facilitates innovative partnerships with the private sector to create employment opportunities and safer environments in the workplace for at-risk populations;
3. Promotes coordination among national, regional and local governments to strengthen policies and support shelter facilities, psychosocial aid, health care and social service referral mechanisms.

These measures of support drive confidence among the survivors to rebuild their lives while also raising awareness among the vulnerable and at-risk populations.

#### Challenges:

- Various forms of trafficking, forced labour, lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of resources among the vulnerable population due to poverty and unemployment
- Lack of motivation and capacity to rebuild lives after facing trauma

#### Interventions:

- Capacity-building of and advocacy for survivors
- Innovative partnerships with various government, non-government and private entities for reintegration (social and psychological) support
- Strong coordination among national and local governments to provide holistic legal, economic, social and psychosocial support

#### Stakeholders:

- Government of Nepal
- USAID
- UK Aid
- CSOs
- Private sector organizations
- Social welfare organizations
- Courts of law

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[Hamro Samman: Nepal](#)

[Hamro Samman: Partnerships to combat human trafficking in Nepal](#)

[Mapping of Reintegration Services in Nepal](#)

# Helpful resources

- IOM (2019), *Reintegration Handbook: Practical Guidance on the Design, Implementation and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance*.
- United Nations, Human Rights Council (2017), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (A/HRC/34/51)*.
- United Nations, Human Rights Council (2019), *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing: Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (A/HRC/43/43)*.
- Bilesha Weeraratne, Harini Weerasekera and Thilini Bandara (2022), *Comprehensive Mapping and Assessment of Reintegration Measures in South Asian Colombo Process Member States*.



Burmese migrant workers crossing the Moei River which forms the natural border between Thailand and Myanmar. Hundreds of migrant workers cross the Moei River daily to come and work in the Thai bordertowns. There are an estimated 2 million migrant workers from neighboring Myanmar working in Thailand. © Rehan RADHEYA 2014 (in: Rehan Radheya (2014), "Burmese migrant workers in Thailand", *The Diplomat*, 20 October)

# Module 5: Assistance and planning towards psychosocial reintegration

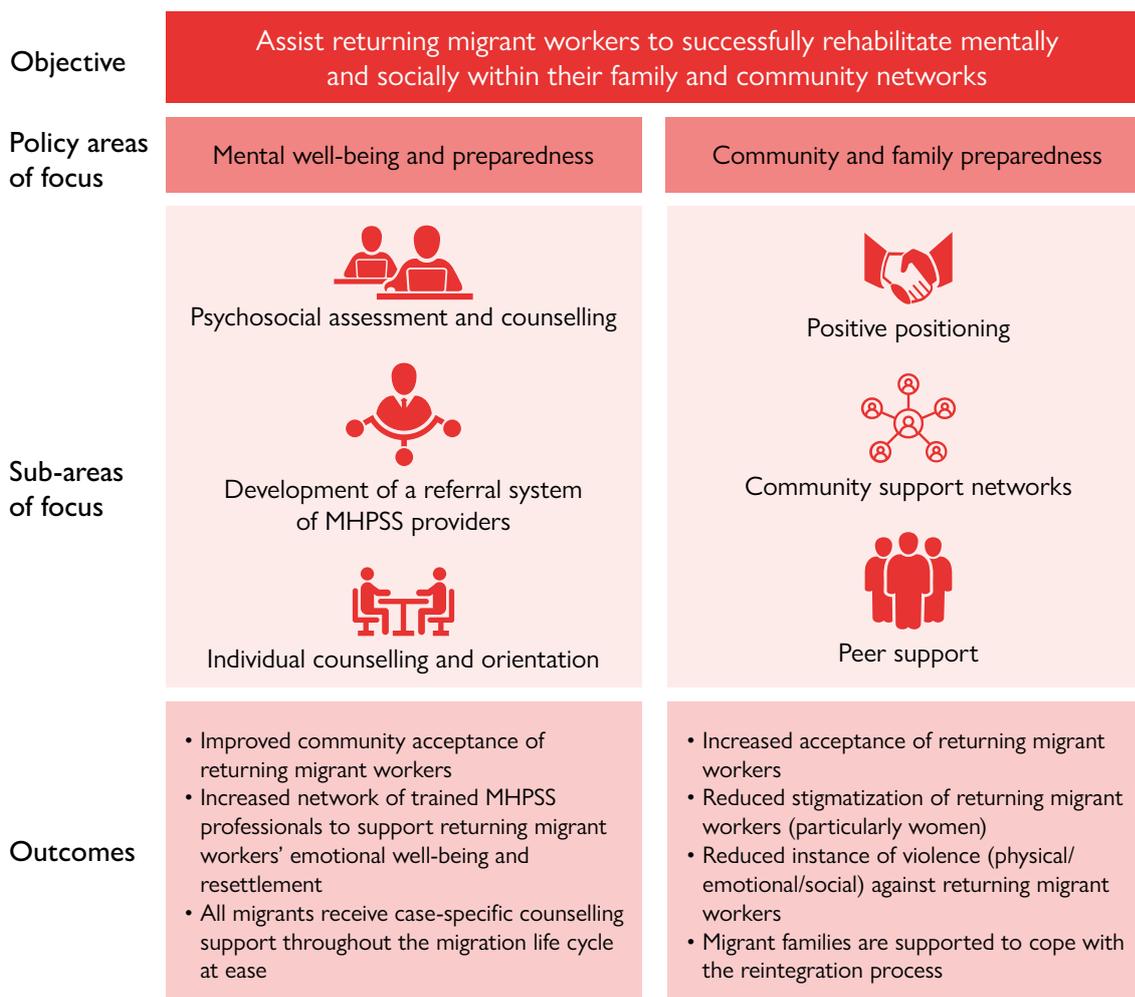
Returnee migrants often face significant stress factors upon their return. These stress factors could be associated with unplanned return, traumatizing experiences in the country of destination or transit, inability to meet basic needs such as food and shelter, or concerns regarding their employment, safety or community acceptance. These stress factors lead to poor psychological health, which is a hindrance to achieving sustainable reintegration. Poor psychosocial health prevents people from actively engaging in the support available on the economic and social fronts. Therefore, it is crucial that a strong system is put in place to alleviate psychosocial stressors.

Along with individual psychological health, psychosocial support also refers to promoting community acceptance and behaviour change towards returnees and building community support networks. Through this, we enable a conducive environment that facilitates a tailor-made approach to reintegration through preliminary assessments, counselling support and connections with support networks.

# Overview of the psychosocial reintegration model

An **effective psychosocial reintegration strategy** addresses core stress factors and facilitates the assimilation of returning migrant workers within family, peer and community networks. Competent psychosocial health is an enabling factor and determines the success of all reintegration support provided. Psychosocial measures are often met with disdain and reluctance due to the stigma associated with mental health. However, psychosocial measures address more than just mental health. It looks towards building community platforms for interaction between the community and returning migrant workers and positive positioning of migration and return. Successful reintegration at an individual level relies on a multitude of characteristics that lead to varied migration experiences for each person. Some of these factors include age, sex, gender, ethnic and cultural identity, social networks, financial standing and health. These factors, combined with experiences and circumstances of return, determine the nature of support each returnee requires. These circumstances include exposure to diseases, poor mental health, detention in transit countries, loss of community support, sexual abuse or harassment, and other human rights violations. Psychosocial support that assesses and delivers the required support is critical to ensure that returnees are able to tap into their full potential.

The infographic that follows illustrates the overview of the psychosocial reintegration model focusing on key areas of policy. The model should be tailored to the country context, prioritizing linkages with existing initiatives for psychosocial assistance.





## Mental well-being and preparedness

**MHPSS** support returnees' mental well-being, which may be affected by emotional, societal and cultural changes; traumatic experiences in the countries of destination or origin; or stressors emerging from unplanned return. Poor mental well-being impacts overall reintegration by hampering the returnees' ability to participate in social or economic activities. Further, it impacts their ability to **rebuild social networks**, leading to an increased sense of isolation and detachment.

The duress faced by the returnees and their accompanying families could be addressed by ensuring they are better prepared in their efforts to reintegrate within the return community. In order to sustainably support returnees in this effort, it is critical that:

- A **preliminary psychosocial assessment** is conducted for all identified returning migrant workers and their families;
- Returning migrant workers are guided towards **necessary counselling and clinical support**.

Psychosocial assessment comes as a crucial step prior to all support extended in the social and economic front. The assessment and counselling allow case managers and community workers to intercept any duress and negative emotions and guide returnees towards necessary support.

Stigma associated with MHPSS especially impacts buy-in for available services. This is evident among men and women. While women largely face limitations of mobility or family support in accessing these services, men are largely impacted by the personal and community stigma associated with poor mental health.

**This section focuses on components that can effectively support the well-being of returning migrant workers and their families within their countries of origin and on how to operationalize the same.**

The key interventions designed are:



## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Develop a contextual understanding of psychosocial stressors relevant to the country of origin</p> 	<p>The context-building exercise must take into account the key demographics of the returning population, key areas of support required in the region and existing support mechanisms</p>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of health and social welfare; civil society/research organizations</p>
<p>Ensure inclusion of MHPSS support in national insurances and policies</p> 	<p>Inclusion of MHPSS is crucial in key acts, schemes and guidelines to ensure sufficient political and public attention</p>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of health and social welfare</p>
<p>Identify key regions where MHPSS support is crucial</p> 	<p>Identification of areas may consider the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of returnees in the area</li> <li>• Mobility limitations in the area</li> </ul>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of health and social welfare; CSOs</p>
<p>Converge with relevant government departments</p> 	<p>Some relevant ministries could be those handling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and child affairs</li> <li>• Health and family welfare</li> <li>• Social welfare</li> </ul>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of health and social welfare; multilateral organizations</p>
<p>Develop a comprehensive psychosocial assessment protocol</p> 	<p>The MHPSS protocol must include guidelines on who, how and where the support will be provided</p>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of health and social welfare; CSOs; service providers</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Develop a referral service network of assessment and service providers</p> 	<p>Map State, private and non-profit service providers according to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of expertise</li> <li>• Regions serviced</li> <li>• Target beneficiaries</li> <li>• Associated costs</li> </ul>	Nodal ministry; service providers; CSOs
<p>Develop a psychosocial assessment tool</p> 	<p>The tool must be able to guide case managers and community workers to discuss health, accommodation, work and personal experiences, and self-assessment of support required</p>	Nodal ministry; service providers; CSOs
<p>Capacitate case managers and CSO functionaries to conduct psychosocial assessment</p> 	<p>Sensitize community workers on the challenges in the migration life cycle and equip them with the tools and vocabulary to address the returnees</p>	Nodal ministry; CSOs
<p>Develop appropriate communication material</p> 	<p>Equip community workers/MRC workers with requisite material to reach out to returning cohorts</p>	Service providers; CSOs
<p>Mobilize community leaders to influence migrants, returnees and families to undergo psychosocial assessment</p> 	<p>Community leaders include local government leaders, religious leaders and local business leaders, among others</p>	Nodal ministry; CSOs
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
Identify returning migrants and guide them towards psychosocial assessment centres	Identification may be done with the aid of front-line community workers and community leaders or through self-registration at key entry points	Ministry in charge of foreign employment/ external affairs; CSOs; trade unions
Conduct a preliminary psychosocial assessment and identify required support	The assessment must be conducted in safe and easy-to-access spaces such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community centres</li> <li>• Employment exchanges</li> <li>• MRCs</li> </ul>	MRCs/CSOs/Service providers
Guide the returning migrants towards necessary economic/ social/psychosocial support	After the assessment, case managers must guide returnees towards economic or social support mechanisms (In cases where extreme duress is identified, the next step must be taken up.)	MRCs/CSOs/Service Providers
Guide returnees towards clinical counselling support	Clinical counselling support includes primary and secondary counselling and therapy services	Health service providers/ CSOs
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level



All psychological support must be provided following due informed consent. Highest standards of privacy and confidentiality should be maintained. The principles of trauma-informed services and “do no harm” should be followed with the highest regard.

# Key considerations



© Free Thought Society (n.d.) (in: Randall Hansen (n.d.), "The global obsession with cheap migrant workers", Free Thought Society)

- 1 Advocacy for MHPSS in primary health care is pivotal to ensure insurance applicability and policy focus.
- 2 Awareness about MHPSS is necessary to promote uptake among returning migrant workers. Discussions during field visits by community workers and targeted IEC campaigns are crucial for de-stigmatization.
- 3 Mobility constraints restrict the ability of returnees, especially women, in accessing MHPSS. Therefore, wherever possible MHPSS should be made available in accessible locations in source migrant villages to reduce the need for travel.
- 4 The associated costs of MHPSS hampers the inclination in accessing services even in dire need. Therefore, returnees should be provided with necessary financial support which can be available through the State, CSOs or international development agencies.



## Community and family preparedness

The family and the community of return form a pivotal part in ensuring the objectives of the reintegration support are met. These networks bolster morale, provide guidance and enable sociocultural resettlement. However, the main barrier emerges through **poor community perception**.

Return is often viewed as failed migration, which builds negative perceptions of returnees as incompetent, or in certain cases as criminals. This is exacerbated in situations where migrants return in financial or psychosocial duress. Women returning migrant workers often face the brunt of this, as migrating for domestic care work in the South Asian CPMSs is met with perception of sex work, leading to demoralization of women in return communities.

**Positive positioning of migrants** becomes key in enabling a supportive environment for reintegration. It facilitates better preparedness of the community and the family to absorb returning members, or new members in case migrants do not return to their original communities. This is done through consistent **communication and education**.

Another key element in enabling better reintegration is **promoting community-based networks, such as SHGs, support groups and migrant collectives**.

Support networks form an important part of reintegration services since they provide the returnee with a social backing which they may not receive from their own family or friend groups. Community networks support sustainability of reintegration measures since they boost morale and enable easier maneuvering of social and administrative processes.

Support groups also become important for migrant families who face difficulties in coping with the return of migrant family members. Therefore, formation of community-based groups enables higher buy-in of reintegration services and ensures sustainability of reintegration efforts.

**This section focuses on components that can build community networks for returning migrant workers and their families within their countries of origin and on how to operationalize the same.**

The key interventions designed are:



## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 1

Preparation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Converge with ministries, civil society and multilateral platforms for promoting formal migration and return</p> 	<p>Ministries must take an active role in facilitating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy dialogue</li> <li>• Behaviour change campaigns</li> <li>• Pre-departure orientations</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of external affairs or foreign employment</p>
<p>Collaborate with CSOs/NGOs to expand the reach of de-stigmatization programmes</p> 	<p>Key areas of de-stigmatization include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female migration</li> <li>• Care work</li> <li>• Challenges along the migrant life cycle and mental health issues</li> <li>• Failed migration</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of external affairs or foreign employment; CSOs; MRCs</p>
<p>Constitute support groups in collaboration with SHGs, trade unions and CSOs</p> 	<p>Some examples of basis for grouping could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return countries</li> <li>• Gender groups</li> <li>• Occupations</li> <li>• Shared experiences such as GBV and alcoholism, among others</li> </ul>	<p>CSOs; SHGs; trade unions</p>
<p>Mobilize community leaders to influence migrants, returning migrant workers and families</p> 	<p>Community leaders include local government leaders, religious leaders and local business leaders</p>	<p>CSOs; SHGs; trade unions; local governments</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 2

Initiation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Develop guidelines and abiding principles for positive positioning</p> 	<p>Guidelines should be relevant to the local sociocultural contexts and must ensure safety and inclusivity.</p> <p>Some important guiding principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory</li> <li>• Gender responsiveness and sensitivity</li> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• “Do no harm”</li> <li>• Trauma-informed care</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry in charge of external affairs or foreign employment; CSOs; MRCs</p>
<p>Develop multilingual IEC material</p> 	<p>The IEC material must be developed in an easy-to-understand format and disseminated for higher recall</p> <p>Some examples of communication material may include brochures, pamphlets and short-byte videos positively positioning returnees</p>	<p>Ministry in charge of external affairs or foreign employment; CSOs; MRCs</p>
<p>Build capacities of front-line community workers</p> 	<p>Sensitize and equip community workers and support group moderators with requisite vocabulary and tools</p>	<p>CSOs; MRCs</p>
<p>Build capacities of support group moderators</p> 		<p>CSOs; MRCs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level

## Operationalizing the initiatives: Step 3

Implementation stage		
 Strategy	 Approach/Activity	 Stakeholder
<p>Implement an IEC campaign in key identified locations</p> 	<p>Some key locations for IEC campaign implementation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source migrant villages/towns</li> <li>• Key transit cities</li> <li>• Key entry points</li> </ul>	<p>Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment</p>
<p>Support returnees in accessing local CBO networks</p> 	<p>Community workers may facilitate inclusion of returnees by bridging CBO leaders and returnees through communication and necessary handholding</p>	<p>MRCs; CSOs; CBOs</p>
<p>Facilitate support group meetings in regular intervals</p> 	<p>Support groups must enable safe conversations and allow for peer networking and guidance</p>	<p>MRCs; CSOs; CBOs</p>
<p>Follow up with returning migrants to assess status and progress</p> 	<p>Follow-ups could be done in a monthly manner to ensure returning migrants are guided towards economic and social support along with MHPSS</p>	<p>MRCs; CSOs; CBOs</p>
 Interventions at the structural level	 Interventions at the community level	 Interventions at the individual level



Social interactions for those returnees who have been distressed and are survivors of abuse and human rights violations can be extremely triggering. Case managers and community workers should be cognizant of and sensitive to these experiences and address them accordingly. Incorporation of *trauma-informed services* principle is one way to go.

# Gender-responsive strategies for psychosocial reintegration



Women cross paddy land destroyed by floods. © Amantha PERERA 2011

Psychosocial needs are varied across the range of returnee groups. They are determined by past and current experiences, health concerns as well as other sociopolitical interactions such as discrimination, unavailability of support services and societal structures. However, demand for MHPSS is low due to prejudices, associated stigma and lack of community support in subscribing to the services.

The gendered challenges in psychosocial reintegration are far-reaching on both ends of the spectrum. Women face a myriad of concerns in accessing MHPSS due to mobility restrictions or family-associated abuse. Returning women migrant workers often face a higher risk of violence and discrimination than men returnees at different phases of migration. For South Asian women migrant workers, when they return to the country of origin, many experience a great deal of stigma associated with their overseas employment. When designing interventions to address psychosocial issues, it is important to engage with returning women migrant workers, and the people that support them, such as their families and those who work in shelters, and not just assume what the impact will be on the survivors.

Men suffer from higher stigma associated with mental health and non-recognition of psychosocial stressors. Gender minorities too suffer from non-recognition, mobility restrictions and non-provision of services. These challenges hinder their ability to avail and sustain the support provided under social and economic dimensions.

MHPSS needs to provide tailored support through its network of primary and secondary MHPSS providers. Further, community support groups are crucial for women as returning women migrant workers face higher challenges in rebuilding social and peer networks.

## Strategies

- Establish exclusive support groups for men and women based on shared experiences.
- Sensitize community workers and support group moderators on trauma-informed approaches.
- Advocate for non-discriminatory migration policies that do not criminalize women and gender minorities.
- Establish MHPSS centres in accessible and safe locations.

## Trauma-informed care

Trauma-informed care is an approach to health and care interventions based on the understanding that **trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development.**

A gender-responsive model for reintegration, especially health-care services for returning migrant workers, needs to be cognizant of the strenuous and traumatic circumstances that they may have had to face. Diagnosis needs to account that a traumatic event may have led to certain physiological symptoms and needs to be treated responsively and sensitively. Key considerations when getting started with trauma-informed practice are:

- Understanding that **trauma can affect individuals, groups and communities;**
- **Recognize the signs**, symptoms and widespread impact of trauma;
- **Preventing re-traumatization** through reexperiencing of thoughts, feelings or sensations experienced during the time of the traumatic incident.

In some contexts where gender issues are culturally sensitive and may have an impact on the psychosocial support, returning migrant workers should be given options of female or male service providers (whenever possible).

# Case studies

## Case study on psychosocial reintegration support

### Tales around the bonfire: Healing through narration



© IOM Yenna (n.d.) (in: IOM Yenna (n.d.), "Migrants as messengers and psychosocial support: A selection of evidence-based activities for psychosocial support with returned migrants").

In many countries in West and Central Africa, people migrate in large numbers, and after spending months or years outside their countries of origin, returning can be a very difficult process. Many migrants often face severe **psychiatric or psychological disorders due to isolation and abandonment**. To compensate for the weakness of State support, various initiatives have been created mostly by local or international organizations. However, they face **systemic obstacles**, such as a lack of health professionals and specialists, a lack of medication and a lack of priority afforded to mental health policy as a public health priority. Different organizations therefore have developed **methods of care and psychosocial support for those facing such psychological vulnerabilities**.

#### Challenges:

- Psychiatric or psychological disorders due to isolation and abandonment caused in the migration
- Systemic obstacles like a lack of medical health professionals, medicines and priority accorded to mental health

#### Interventions:

- Healing through storytelling and narrative building
- Support groups to guide this means of self-expression

#### Stakeholders:

- IOM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa

Evidence from Senegal demonstrates a psychosocial activity that enables migrants to discuss their difficult experiences, vulnerabilities and challenges through **storytelling**. The activity is led by professional storytellers who begin by narrating stories which include characters associated with the migratory journey.

The choice of tales relates to the initial journeys, exiles, hidden violence and migration aspirations. Storytelling is led in a way where participants are made to revisit their own experiences of migration, which allows them to explore their own feelings, trauma and journey of healing.

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[Migrants as messengers and psychosocial support: A selection of evidence-based activities for psychosocial support with returned migrants](#)

## Case study on psychosocial reintegration support in Ghana

### Sensitization through dialogue



© IOM 2019 (in: IOM (2019), "ECOWAS, IOM conduct advocacy and sensitization campaign on free movement and migration in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire")

In the subregion of the Gambia, traditional healers are known to be primary caregivers. As members of the grassroots community, they are often presented as a source of support for migrants and their families. Having faced harsh and unfavourable migratory conditions, **many migrants face mental health issues** that require direct intervention in the form of psychosocial aid.

IOM Ghana has been organizing **focus group discussions** with the aim of sensitizing migrants and their families on the challenges faced by returning migrant workers in order to motivate them to play a positive role in their reintegration experience. They provide mental health tools and knowledge, thus combating prejudice and other stigmas faced during migration.

The FGDs are usually small gatherings of 20 people including returning migrant workers, family members and community members. Returnees are encouraged to **share their experiences**, while family and community members are led through with **prompts and direct conversation**.

These discussions build a safe space, allowing returning migrant workers as well as the community to **voice out any concerns** they may have. It operates **cathartically** and enables returnees **rebuild social networks**.

#### Challenges:

- Disturbing migratory circumstances leading to mental health issues among migrants
- Systemic obstacles like a lack of medical health professionals, medicines and priority accorded to mental health

#### Interventions:

- Focus group discussions aimed at sensitizing migrants and their families on the challenges faced by returning migrant workers
- Psychosocial aid through communication and peer networking
- Professionals to guide narration and self-expression

#### Stakeholders:

- IOM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

[Migrants as messengers and psychosocial support: A selection of evidence-based activities for psychosocial support with returned migrants](#)



Migration Forums, established in the framework of the Prottasha project in Bangladesh, are local community forums of influential community representatives. Community leaders, teachers, businesspersons, social workers, religious leaders and former returnees act as focal points to help returnees in accessing relevant services, retrieve information, organize awareness-raising events and generally accompany them in their reintegration journey. © IOM/Beyond Borders Media 2022

## Module 6: Monitoring and evaluation



M&E is used to assess how a programme is performing and whether it is meeting its intended objectives. Monitoring is concerned with the short- and medium-term programme data, which then feeds into programme redesign and improvements. Evaluation takes this a step further and looks at the impact of a programme on the goals and what are the key enabling and hindering factors and how these could impact future programmes and interventions.

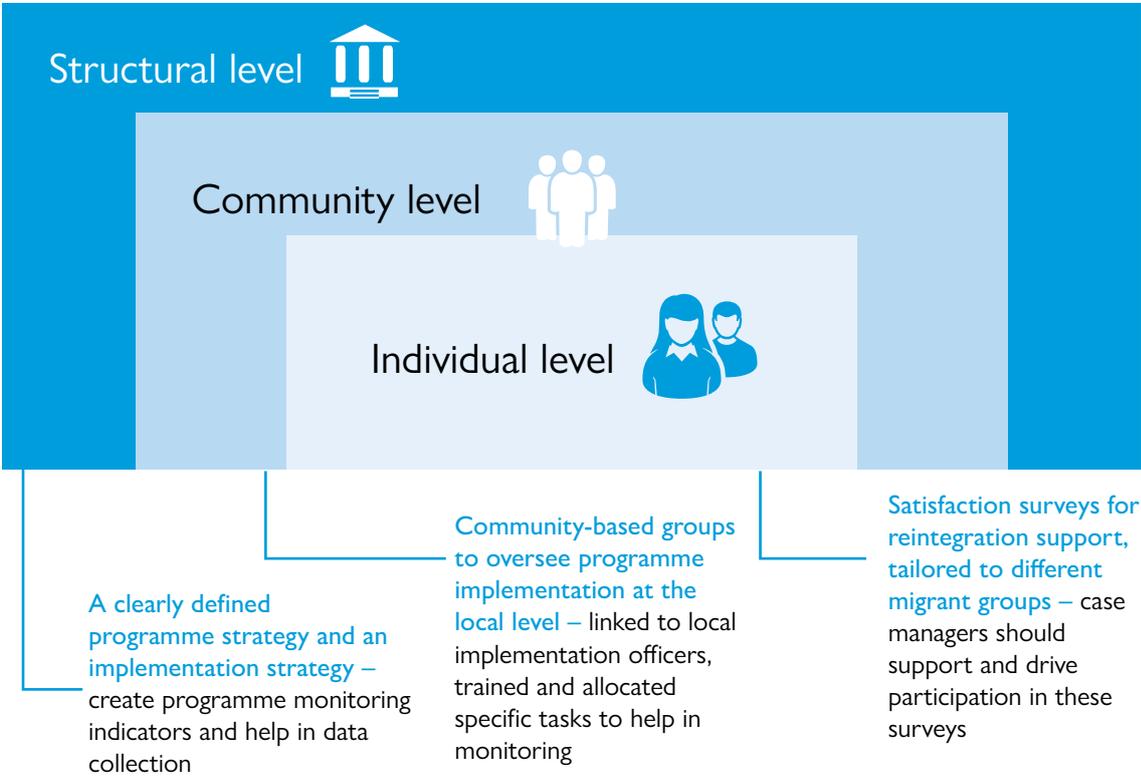
Countries must:

- **Establish a robust monitoring framework** against a detailed workplan of implementing and monitoring activities. Countries must keep in mind their human resource and technological capabilities and the pace of service execution.
- **Develop a database** of service providers, available services and targeted regions to keep track of reintegration activities and monitor them consistently.
- **Enable feedback mechanisms for returning migrant workers** to provide feedback and submit grievances, if any.

For the reintegration model to be successfully integrated, it would be important to:

- Start planning early in the programme design phase for monitoring and evaluation by developing a theory of change that describes how activities lead to desired results and helps in setting indicators to check progress and assumptions.
- Integrate monitoring into programme activities and mechanisms for the collection of accurate and timely data of the programming.
- Institutionalize findings from monitoring and evaluation processes and make them useable to those who need them to foster learning and improve the impact of future programming.

Below are some examples of activities and tools that can be used for monitoring:



An indicative M&E plan covering different themes is provided in the following sections.

# Monitoring and evaluation plan for economic and labour market reintegration

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to leverage their knowledge, skills and experiences towards establishing economic self-sufficiency in their countries of origin**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Access to labour market reintegration support	Understand the trends and skills of returning migrants (sex disaggregated)	Assessment conducted	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Identify high-potential growth sectors (in the country of origin) and skill demand requirement of the private sector	Assessment conducted and sectors identified	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Develop an employment support strategy for returning migrants	Strategy developed	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Develop guidelines and a road map for setting up an RPL system	Guidelines prepared	Nodal ministry in charge of skilling
	Identify potential partners, such as industry associates, employers' organizations and development organizations to support labour market reintegration	Identification done	Employment department
	Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action	Convergence plan developed	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Prepare tools, guidelines and reference material	Guidelines developed	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Orient coordinating government ministries and agencies	Orientation conducted	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Ensure capacity-building of implementing agencies	Capacity-building plan developed Capacity development sessions conducted	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Generate awareness of and demand for RPL among employers and returning migrants	Awareness creation plan developed Awareness generation sessions conducted	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
Develop referral networks of training partners, career counsellors and RPL centres	Referral plan developed Referral networks put in place	MRCs/ESCs/PESs	

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to leverage their knowledge, skills and experiences towards establishing economic self-sufficiency in their countries of origin**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
<b>Access to labour market reintegration support</b>	Develop a database of returning migrant workers' skills and experiences	Database developed	Nodal ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
	Support returning migrants develop an employment plan	Plan developed	MRCs/ESCs/PESs
	Develop peer support groups	Peer support groups formed	MRCs/CBOs
	Support skill upgrade/recognition through referral and certification	Skill upgrade plan developed	MRCs/ESCs/PESs
	Facilitate linkages with employers	Plan developed	MRCs/PSEs; recruiting agencies
	Partner with the private sector to develop employment programmes	Partnership plan developed	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
<b>Access to self-employment</b>	Identify relevant sectors that have a scope for business development and match skills of returning migrant workers	Identification done	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
	Identify potential partners for supporting self-employment	Partnership plan developed	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
		Partnership plan implemented	
	Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action	Convergence plan developed	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
		Convergence plan implemented	
	Develop a long-term integrated self-employment support strategy for returning migrants	Strategy developed	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
	Prepare tools, guidelines and reference material	Tools developed	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
	Orient coordinating government ministries and agencies	Orientation plan developed	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment
		Orientation conducted	
	Ensure capacity-building of implementing agencies	Capacity-building plan developed	Ministry in charge of returning migrants' employment;
Capacity-building plan implemented			
Develop referral networks of training partners, mentors and business incubators, among others	Referral plan developed	MRCs (equivalent)	

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to leverage their knowledge, skills and experiences towards establishing economic self-sufficiency in their countries of origin**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Access to self-employment	Develop an incentivization plan for research institutes and the private sector to launch special programmes for returning women migrants' entrepreneurship at scale	Plan developed	Ministry in charge of entrepreneurship
	Link returning migrants with self-employment programmes/ community-based livelihood projects	Linkage plan developed Linkage plan implemented	MRCs
	Link returning migrants with mentorship support	Linkage plan developed Linkages established	MRCs
	Provide support in developing business plans	Plan developed	MRCs
	Facilitate access to seed capital/ grants or soft loan programmes	Plan developed	MRCs
	Support branding and marketing of products	Branding plan developed Branding plan put into practice	MRCs
	Felicitate successful returning migrants involved in entrepreneurship	Plan developed Plan implemented	Ministry in charge of labour
Access to financial management	Develop a strategy to promote financial literacy and management among returning migrant workers in the country of origin	Strategy developed	Ministry in charge of finance
	Map existing and potential partners for providing financial counselling and training	Map developed Mapping conducted	Local authority in charge of financial services
	Converge with ministries/ departments for coordinated action	Convergence matrix created Convergence done	Ministry in charge of finance
	Develop reference material and tools, among others	Reference materials developed	Ministry in charge of labour migration and other relevant ministries; CSOs; workers' organizations

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to leverage their knowledge, skills and experiences towards establishing economic self-sufficiency in their countries of origin**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Access to financial management	Ensure capacity-building of banks and MRCs	Capacity-building done	Ministry in charge of labour migration
	Orient coordinating government ministries and agencies	Training plan developed	Ministry in charge of finance
		Training conducted	
	Provide financial literacy to returning migrants	Plan developed	Ministry in charge of labour migration; banks; CSOs
		Plan implemented	
Provide financial counselling to returning migrants and their families	Financial counselling provided	Banks	
Conduct hands-on training/ workshops on financial planning and budget management for returning migrants and their families	Hands-on training on financial planning and budget management provided	Banks	

# Monitoring and evaluation plan for the social reintegration model

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to achieve a safe and dignified return and reintegration through access to essential services, safety and protection**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Access to documentation	Conduct a need-based assessment of document support required	Percentage of returning migrant workers who are registered in MRCs and seeking documentation support for enrolment in a welfare programme	MRCs/CSOs
	Provide support to ensure returning migrant workers' access to documentation	Percentage of returning migrant workers successfully receiving documentation support	MRCs/CSOs
	Capacitate community workers/ MRC workers	Percentage of MRCs wherein functionaries have undergone capacity-building	MRCs/CSOs
	Facilitate information dissemination	Information-sharing protocols developed	MRCs/CSOs
Access to general health care	Establish MoUs with countries of destination for health-care access for migrant workers	Percentage of returning migrant workers having adequate health-care services access	Ministry of Health (equivalent)/Ministry of External Affairs
	Establish formal MoUs with medical facilities/medical insurance companies and other agencies such as university hospitals	Percentage of returning migrants having portable health insurance services	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Develop policies for equitable care and safe transfer of medical information	Policy developed and ratified	Ministry of Health (equivalent)/Ministry of Information Technology (equivalent)
	Capacitate health-care service providers on migrant workers-specific psychosocial care	Percentage of health-care providers undergone training in psychosocial care for migrant workers	Ministry of Health (equivalent)/Ministry of Women and Child (equivalent)
	Develop a local database of service providers	Database developed	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Establish formal MoUs with private and non-profit health-care service providers	MOUs developed MOUs signed	Ministry of Health (equivalent)

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to achieve a safe and dignified return and reintegration through access to essential services, safety and protection**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
<b>Access to general health care</b>	Facilitate a referral process for returning migrant workers	Referral system in place	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Conduct a preliminary health screening of returning migrant workers	Percentage of returning migrant workers (including family members) undergoing a health screening post arrival	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Conduct follow-up assessments with returnees	Percentage of cases requiring follow-ups contacted for follow-up services	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Facilitate information dissemination	Information dissemination plan implemented	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
<b>Access to sexual and reproductive health</b>	Provide age-appropriate and tailored information	Information brochure developed	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Carry out preliminary testing of and referrals to services	Percentage of female returning migrant workers undergoing testing services	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
	Sensitize community workers and health-care providers to identify and provide the requisite care	Sensitization sessions conducted	Ministry of Health (equivalent)
<b>Access to welfare schemes</b>	Establish a contributory welfare fund or an insurance scheme	Contributory welfare fund established	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent)/ Supporting agencies (e.g. public banks)
	Facilitate bilateral agreements and intercountry and intracountry agreements for fund recognition	Intercountry agreements formulated with key countries of destination  Intracountry agreements formulated (with states/ provinces)	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent); Ministry of External Affairs (equivalent)
	Revise policies and programmes to ensure equitable inclusion of returning migrant workers in State welfare programmes	Policies and programmes reviewed and updated	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent); Ministry of External Affairs (equivalent)
	Capacitate community workers/MRC workers or equivalent	Capacity-building plan prepared  Capacity-building sessions conducted	Ministry of Social Welfare

**Outcome: Returning migrant workers are able to achieve a safe and dignified return and reintegration through access to essential services, safety and protection**

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Access to welfare schemes	Provide referral and need-based handholding for enrolment in applicable schemes	Protocols developed	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent)
	Enrol migrant families in applicable schemes	Enrolment systems developed	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent)
	Disseminate information	Information dissemination plan developed	Ministry of Social Welfare (equivalent)
Access to legal aid	Facilitate the inclusion of legal and judicial clauses in bilateral agreements	Inter-country agreements formulated with key countries of destination	Ministry of External Affairs (equivalent); Ministry of Law and Justice (equivalent)
	Build mechanisms and protocols for inter-country coordination for managing legal misdemeanour of migrants in countries of destination	Inter-country agreements formulated with key countries of destination	Ministry of External Affairs (equivalent); Ministry of Law and Justice (equivalent)
	Develop a local database of State, private and non-profit legal aid providers	Database developed	CSOs/MRCs
	Establish formal MoUs with private and non-profit legal aid providers	MoUs signed	Ministry of External Affairs (equivalent)
	Facilitate a referral process for returning migrant workers, following a preliminary psychosocial assessment	Percentage of returning migrant workers (and their families) requiring such services have been able to avail of these services	CSOs/MRCs
	Conduct a preliminary assessment of returning migrant workers' legal needs	Needs assessment conducted on a periodic basis	CSOs/MRCs
	Connect returning migrant workers with legal aid service providers	Systems in place for these services	CSOs/MRCs

# Monitoring and evaluation plan for the psychosocial reintegration model

Outcome: Returning migrant workers have successfully established their psychosocial well-being within their families and communities

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Psychosocial assessment	Develop psychosocial assessment guidelines and tools	Assessment tools and guidelines in place	Ministry of External Affairs
	Establish assessment centres at key entry points, welfare centres or MRCs	Number of assessment centres established	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Foreign Employment
	Undertake a preliminary psychosocial assessment to assess key needs and challenges	Assessment conducted	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs
	Mobilize community leaders to influence migrants, returning migrant workers and families to undergo a psychosocial assessment	Community leaders onboarded Community leaders oriented	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs
	Develop communication materials and endorse in key entry points and migrant source villages	Communication materials placed in key areas	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Foreign Employment
Provision of MHPSS	Map State, private and non-profit service providers	Database of service providers developed	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Health
	Develop guidelines for assessment, identification and referral	Guidelines in place	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Health
	Refer returning migrant workers to appropriate MHPSS centres	A number of returning migrant workers referred to a psychosocial assessment	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs

## Outcome: Returning migrant workers have successfully established their psychosocial well-being within their families and communities

Output	Activity	Indicator	Lead stakeholder
Provision of MHPSS	Advocate for MHPSS in primary health care	A number of returning migrant workers registered for MHPSS following assessment	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Health
	Equip community workers and MRC workers to disseminate information about MHPSS	A number of capacity-building workshops conducted  Communication materials shared with community workers	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Health
	Destigmatize MHPSS during community field visits	A number of field visits conducted	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs
Positive positioning of returnee migrants and building community support networks	Collaborate with CSOs/NGOs to undertake sensitization programmes in migrant source villages and neighbouring regions	CSOs/NGOs onboarded	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Social Welfare
	Develop multilingual communication materials	Communication materials disseminated in key areas	Ministry of External Affairs/Ministry of Social Welfare
	Onboard influential community leaders to support positive positioning	Community leaders onboarded	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs
	Onboard SHGs/trade unions to destigmatize returning migrant workers and build community networks	SHGs and trade unions oriented and onboarded	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs
	Support returning migrant workers in accessing local CBO networks	A number of returning migrant workers linked with community networks	CSOs/NGOs/MRCs

## Helpful resources

- IOM (2020), *Annex 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Tools, Reintegration Handbook*.
- IOM (n.d.), *Training on Monitoring and Evaluating Return and Reintegration Programmes*.



A successful returnee worker runs his own tea stall at a rural bazaar in Sirajganj district, Bangladesh. © IOM/Bashir Ahmed SUJAN 2007

...Next steps towards  
and actionable strategy

The *Manual for Inclusive and Sustainable Reintegration of Returning Migrant Workers in South Asia* is designed to provide a framework to policymakers and practitioners as a guide in prioritizing and planning targeted reintegration assistance.

Based on the reintegration model, this manual has been detailed to guide how the model can be contextualized by the States. As a guidance, it also aims at pulling together case studies to support the reader with actionable solutions and ideas for replication.



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# Looking ahead...

The manual seeks to build on the convergent and sustainable frameworks that address the immediate needs of returning migrant workers and (to a degree) of their families while providing them with a pathway to ensure a safe, decent and productive life within the community they choose to return.

Further, the manual identifies and involves the returning migrant workers, communities, development partners and regional governance structures as active stakeholders in facilitating sustainable reintegration across economic, social and psychosocial dimensions. A key focus of the manual is towards mitigating the information gap that is persistent at the supply as well as demand side.

For the reintegration to be successful and sustainable, the manual provides specific attention on addressing socioeconomic stressors and access to necessary psychosocial support, thereby prioritizing the well-being, participation, integration (within the systems and processes of the country of origin) of returning migrants along with economic engagement and participation within the returnee community.

With this manual, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society model is envisaged where interventions are made with respect to collaborations with countries, amendment of schemes and programmes, as well as processual support such as the establishment of resources centres and technology enablement. The manual reinforces the importance of effective coordination and management of the reintegration process to enhance sustainable reintegration. The infographic that follows highlights the key outcomes envisaged from the implementation of this model. This manual is envisaged to provide a practical guidance tool for countries to adopt and contextualize solutions to reach a state wherein returning migrant workers, both men and women, are sustainably reintegrated with pride and self-esteem within their respective countries of origin such that they (both men and women) become productive assets of society.





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