
Economic reintegration assistance

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Economic reintegration assistance helps returnees establish economic self-sufficiency upon their return. Many reintegration programmes include support for economic reintegration as often the reason returnees first leave is because of the lack of a decent income. This type of assistance is useful for helping returnees who need skills or resources to (re)establish adequate and sustained income generation for themselves and their families.

This section introduces different types of economic assistance at the individual level, although economic reintegration assistance can also be collective or community-based ([see section 3.2](#)) and different levels of assistance are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, returnees can be assisted individually with specific needs such as high levels of non-productive debt, whilst also being assisted within a collective project to set up an activity that will provide them with a long-term income.

If returnees are fit to work,²⁰ economic reintegration pathways can involve inclusion in local labour markets as entrepreneurs, co-owners of collective enterprises, including cooperatives, or wage or salaried workers.

To help returnees access these opportunities, individual economic reintegration assistance could include:

- **Creation or strengthening of income-generating activities** (for example, business start-up support, access to banking and microcredit);
- **Job placement** (apprenticeship/on-the-job training, paid internships); and
- **Training or educational support** (vocational training, skills' development, finance and budgeting counselling).

Economic reintegration measures should fit the specific needs and skills of the returnee, the local labour market, the social context and the available resources.

? Each beneficiary should be counselled **individually, and their individual skills, education, aspirations and limitations** considered against the **structural conditions**. For example, not all

returnees have the skills and capacity to successfully start their own business, just as entrepreneurship is not an optimal strategy in contexts where there are important structural challenges. In this case, using business-development support as a form of assistance risks not only the failure of the business but also negative consequences for the returnee such as debt, loss of social capital and both a negative emotional and psychological impact. It may even incentivize attempts at irregular re-migration. Guidance on assessing the labour market and returnees' skills can be found in sections [1.4.2](#) and [2.2.4](#), respectively.

? **Social factors**, including social norms on gender and age, should also be considered when determining the best type of economic support to provide returnees. There may be challenges for returnees wishing to pursue an economic option that challenges existing social norms in their community, and they may require additional support to overcome them. If a beneficiary's aspirations do not align with available or commonly sought opportunities, alternatives should be explored and their goals for economic reintegration met in other ways.

? Some returnees may have **barriers that would prevent them from working outside the home for long periods of time**, including childcare or other family responsibilities or limited mobility. In these cases, income-generating activities in or close to the home should be explored, or the possibility of providing childcare to allow returnees to attend trainings.

? Returnees' **psychological and emotional well-being** is also important. Studies on the impact of livelihood activities for different populations worldwide tend to suggest that returnees who have undergone highly stressful migratory paths or who are very distressed about the return may not be able to take full advantage of the livelihood opportunities that are offered to them.

A lack of a livelihood can be one of the main sources of stress for an individual and having an occupation can help to alleviate negative feelings. However, for a returnee to have a successful and holistic reintegration, livelihoods must be accompanied by a healthy social life and strong networks and connections. Moreover, certain psychological states characterized by toxic levels of stress, deep anxieties and social stigma can make it difficult for an individual to engage in livelihood interventions or benefit from livelihood opportunities. As such, the economic reintegration measures outlined in this section should be implemented in combination with the individually tailored social and psychosocial support measures detailed in chapters [2.5](#) and [2.6](#).

This chapter presents an overview of the following types of economic assistance typically recommended for consideration at the individual level, supported by further guidance in the annexes:

- **2.4.1 Skills development and vocational training**
- **2.4.2 Job placement**
- **2.4.3 Business Development Support**
- **2.4.4 Access to banking and microloans**
- **2.4.5 Budgeting and financial counselling**

2.4.1 Skills development and vocational training

Helping returnees develop skills for specific occupations, for example through technical vocational education and training (TVET), can be an effective way to support them in (re-)entering the workforce. Most reintegration programmes include skills' development and technical vocational

education and training in the country of origin following return, though they can also be beneficial if provided as part of pre-departure assistance in host countries (see *Case Study 3, below*).

Created with Sketch. Case Study 3:

Pre-departure vocational and soft skills' training in Morocco

Many migrants stranded in Morocco opt for assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR), but their lack of skills and qualifications often hinders their employability upon return.

FORAS, meaning “opportunities” in Arabic, is a project providing enhanced pre-return assistance to migrants returning from Morocco to eight West African countries. Through this project, and in coordination with a consulting firm (Samuel Hall), IOM conducted in-depth research on beneficiaries' profiles and needs and developed a socioeconomic mapping of the eight target countries. Based on the results, IOM designed six tailored training courses that are suggested to returnees before departure.

These courses are part of a holistic eight-week package for AVRR beneficiaries. The package of services aims to strengthen migrants' preparedness and skills while in the host country to improve their socioeconomic reintegration upon return. It allows migrants to optimize their time before their return. The courses cover soft skills, life skills, entrepreneurship, marketing, agriculture and handicraft. They also help build returnees' trust in the reintegration process.

To reach out to potential AVRR beneficiaries, IOM Morocco, in collaboration with the National Mutual Aid Society, established three migrant orientation points in three key transit areas. Printed, digital and audiovisual communication materials promoted awareness of the reintegration process and the FORAS programme.

Created with Sketch. Tips for success:

- Check that acquired skills are transferable to and applicable in countries of origin.
- When locating migrant orientation points, anticipate aspects of the local context that may hinder active migrant interest and participation.
- Provide direct support (accommodation, transportation, food) for beneficiaries during the training, since their participation in the training will mean that they are not able to generate income for the duration of the training.

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.

Following the skills' assessment at the reintegration planning stage, the case manager can design a skills' development component of the individual reintegration plan, based on the returnee's skill level, experience, educational profile, intentions and needs. If available prior to return, well-targeted skills' training can boost returnees' confidence in their ability to (re-) establish economic self-sufficiency in their place of origin. While skills' training should acknowledge the gender composition of the workforce of different work industries, returnees should not be limited to skills' training in a specific sector based on their sex or gender, but should be offered the same choices and opportunities for training regardless. It should be up to returnees alone to decide which opportunities to pursue.

Building on the assessments ([see sections 1.4.2](#) and [2.2.4](#)) of individual and family-level factors, the reintegration support services available in the country of origin and the wider socioeconomic and structural environment in the country of origin, returnees and the case manager can jointly develop a tailored skills' development plan. This plan can include one or more of the following components:

- **Technical and vocational training programme(s) and work-based learning programme(s)**, including apprenticeships, internships, on-the job training, professional mentorship programmes, career planning and guidance;
- **Business development training**, including financial literacy training or short-term training on business-plan development, which can be paired with other business development support such as grants or assets;
- **Scholarship and enrolment in primary/secondary/tertiary education** in the educational system in the country of origin; and
- **Adult education programmes** that can include literacy, numeracy and digital skills' classes as well as **soft skills' training** in areas such as teamwork, communication skills, life skills or **language training**.

To help skills' development programmes effectively support the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees, the following should be taken into account:

- Returnees may be interested in completing vocational training and willing to apply the practical skills learned there and generate income in formal employment or self-employment after the end of the vocational training.
- Sociocultural (especially gender) barriers in the community of return could negatively affect enrolment and participation in education. Family and community responsibilities may also have an impact.
- Returnees should have the necessary qualifications and skills for that level or type of education. For instance, if returnees want to pursue tertiary education, case managers need to verify that the individual has successfully completed secondary education.
- Skills' development and vocational training should ideally be linked to a pre-identified job placement strategy ([see section 2.4.2](#)), a specific vacancy or cluster of vacancies, or a partnership with an employer (*see Case Study 4, below, for an example of training linked to seasonal construction work in Burkina Faso*). If this is not the case, experience suggests that vocational and core skills' training risk raising false expectations that may prove detrimental to the overall process of reintegration.
- Can returnees support themselves financially while taking part in the education programme? In some cases, there may be a need to provide returnees with financial and other support (for example childcare, transport to venue) to follow through with the training from start to graduation.
- Skills' programmes can also be linked to community-based projects and community-level

interventions to facilitate participation in existing or forthcoming collective projects and enterprises ([see section 3.2](#)). This can enhance both the social and the economic reintegration of individual returnees and produce benefits for communities of origin.

The reintegration plan should specify the approximate length of time a beneficiary will access the skills' development services. It should incorporate, where possible, information on exit, transition and completion.

The feasibility grid for skills development and vocational training is available in [Annex 5](#).

Spotlight

Past reintegration projects generally show that when given the choice, the vast majority of returnees opt for business development support instead of skills' development and TVET options. The main reason for this seems to be the "shorter" process involved in the business start-up option and the faster return on investment. However, returnees often face severe challenges to sustaining their businesses after a short time period, suggesting that TVET and/or job-placement schemes may have been a more suitable option.

Created with Sketch. Case Study 4:

Skills development in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, Independence Day celebrations generate an annual labour demand related to various construction projects such as road rehabilitation, new housing and store renovations. Construction sites are thus opportunities for many returning Burkinabé who have acquired experience in the building sector during their migration journey, particularly in Libya and Algeria.

To consolidate and adapt their construction skills to local market needs, IOM Burkina Faso organized a one-month skills-development training in Tenkodogo for 40 people in the construction sector, facilitated by a local training partner. Because construction material can be limited and expensive in rural areas, the technical training also included making bricks and cobbles.

This skills-development training targeted returning migrants but also local community members selected by the regional Social Services Department. Training sessions were participatory, with returnees invited to share construction techniques they learned while abroad. This also reinforced social bonds between participants.

The one-month training course also included awareness-raising activities related to sexual health and coaching sessions to reinforce self-esteem. Trainers also conducted entrepreneurship sessions and helped beneficiaries develop business plans that would be submitted to local development funds supporting youth initiatives. Beneficiaries then received assistance to formally register their business

so that they could participate in public tenders for local rehabilitation projects

Created with Sketch. Tips for success:

Support participation through cash-for-training or small subsidies.

2.4.2 Business Development Support

Support for developing and launching small businesses is generally a popular type of economic reintegration assistance among returnees. When business development support leads to long-lasting livelihoods, this approach can have a high impact on overall sustainable reintegration. However, start-up businesses can fail when returnees are not fully invested or trained, or when they lack the knowledge on how to design and manage a business. Consequently, entrepreneurship support should only be provided in certain circumstances and must be accompanied by a coherent business plan and follow-up that is tailored to the relevant market system and value chains.

Business development support can either be provided by the organization managing the overall reintegration programme, or alternatively through a national or local partner in the country of origin, such as a Chamber of Commerce or a National Development Agency. Further information on how to develop partnerships for the provision of Business Development Support is provided in [Annex 2](#).

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.

Building on past experience and best practices, figure 2.5 gives an example of a selection, training and upscaling process for the business development support of returning migrants. This approach foresees a twostep selection process that applicants need to pass, which sets a comparatively high threshold both in terms of the requirements for applicants' skills, capacity and motivation for creating their own business (Step 2) and in terms of the feasibility of their business plans in the specific context of the local community, market system and value chain (Step 4). A selection process is especially useful when there are large numbers of returning migrants to one country and business development projects have to be prioritized. The selection process is also useful in order to promote the quality of businesses that are going to be developed by returnees. This process can be adapted according to the specific country context.

Figure 2.5: Integrated selection, training and upscaling process for business development support**1. Market assessment**

- Private sector mapping
- Value chain analysis
- Rapid market assessment

Influences curriculum

2. Assessment of beneficiaries

- Skills and education
- Motivation

Pre-selection of returnees

3. Short-term training on business planning

- Mentoring by reintegration partners (such as MFIs and NGOs).
- Entry point for social reintegration through cooperation of returnees through collective projects, exchange of expertise and value chain integration.

4. Selecting the most promising and realistic business plans

-
- Assessment of best ideas in collaboration with MFIs, sectoral boards, NGOs and others.
 - Nomination of most promising business ideas for additional support.

Negative

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Positive

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5a. Enrolment in other economic reintegration measures

- Skills development/TVET
- Education
- Job placement

5b. In-depth business development training and provision of adequate capital

- Training by mentors to beneficiaries to showcase feasible business models in similar communities.
 - Focus on filling technical gaps (basic accountancy, market research, legal requirements and access to capital).
 - Ensuring that sufficient capital is provided.
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6. Inclusion of business incubators

- Provide technical training to fine-tune business models over time or to expand beyond the small business model.
- Create champions to showcase results during meeting with new arrivals and to provide real-life examples of success.

Spotlight

Analysis of business development support programmes has shown that many startup businesses are unsustainable, that is they tend to be in operation only for a short period of time. In most cases of business failure, businesses either close directly after receiving the first support package (that is before initial opening, by misappropriating the cash-based assistance or by selling the assets that were provided in kind) or close after receiving the second tranche of business support in programmes where assistance is provided in several instalments. Methods to increase business sustainability are discussed in [Annex 2](#).

The feasibility grid for business development support is available in [Annex 5](#).

Detailed guidance on the implementation of business development support can be found in [Annex 2](#)

2.4.3 Budgeting and financial counselling

Many returnees, particularly young, unskilled and financially illiterate returnees do not have the experience of managing a sustained budget. Following longer migration experiences, returning migrants may have inaccurate perceptions of how much money is required to live in the country of origin and they might struggle to adjust their financial planning and budgeting to new income situations. This is particularly risky when returnees borrow money from MFIs or from relatives, such as when they are under pressure to settle remaining migration debts or other financial obligations. To respond to these issues, the lead reintegration organization can provide returnees with financial counselling and information on responsible budget management tailored to the available mechanisms and applicable living costs in the respective country of origin.

Financial counselling and budget planning support is an overarching measure that benefits most returnee households irrespective of any other economic interventions that beneficiaries may be enrolled in. Counselling should therefore be provided both in order to complement the provision of reintegration grants and to generally support returnees and their households in managing sustainable finances in the long term.

While the content needs to be tailored to the respective country of origin, financial counselling and budget planning training should provide information on the management, saving and investment of all potential sources of income and capital that returnee households may have at their disposal, including cash-based reintegration grants, in-kind grant packages, income through wage employment or self-employment, microloans, remittances from other family members and usage of existing assets (real estate, motor vehicles and so forth).

Such reintegration support should address sustainable debt management and managing financial shocks, such as those resulting from injury, illness or death of a family member that can lead to increased household spending or lost work time.

Finally, the counselling should provide information about and facilitate access to relevant community financial support groups, savings associations, debt management organizations and MFIs ([see sections 2.4.4](#) and [3.3.3](#)).

The lead reintegration organization can organize short-term training courses on financial literacy, budget planning and savings mobilization through cooperation with local partners and by creating synergies with relevant economic interventions:

? Where locally available, financial counselling, budget planning and saving mobilization training should be provided through, or in cooperation with, existing local providers. In many cases, local authorities, migrants' associations, trade-unions, community organizations or MFIs provide training in financial literacy and management to improve the ability of members of the community to use financial services and make the most out of remittances. The lead reintegration organization should engage with these entities to i) assess the adequacy and comprehensiveness of the training modules provided, ii) explore options to adapt and expand the financial training modules if necessary, iii) address potential needs for cost-sharing and iv) integrate the best suited organizations into the referral system for facilitated targeting of returnees ([see section 4.1.3](#) on establishing referral systems).

? Where feasible, budgeting and financial counselling should be embedded in the implementation of other economic interventions.

The feasibility grid for budgeting and financial counselling is available in [Annex 5](#).

²⁰ This should be determined as a result of the individual assessment process, in particular the results of vulnerability and risk assessments and results of any other preliminary needs-assessments, if conducted. It should also take into consideration national and local labour regulations, identified through the labour market assessment.

²¹ See ILO's [How to Design, Plan, Implement and Evaluate an Employment Fair, Manual for Public Employment Service Offices and local career guidance taskforces in Egypt](#) (2017).

²² A national apprenticeship network comprises all accredited apprenticeship programmes, as regulated by the pertinent line ministry or government agency in charge of the national apprenticeship system.

²³ Microfinance is a category of banking services that are provided specifically to people who would otherwise not have access to these services through conventional means. It covers microcredit, savings, insurance and often related services and is normally aimed at low-income or unemployed people.

2.4.4 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 saving accounts and investment schemes), those services which are particularly important for returning migrants, such as microcredit providers, microsavings schemes, savings and credit associations and other microfinance institutions (MFIs), may not be present or functioning in all settings.²³ In many countries of origin, banking and financial services be limited to urban 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 MFI services is generally dependent on eligibility and lending criteria. Due to the risk adverse nature of many lending institutions, barriers facing returnees (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.

? Lead reintegration organizations should **map available banking and microfinance (MF) providers in areas of high return and sensitize them to the needs and capacities of returnees**. In most cases, the lead reintegration organization can enable access to banking and MF services for individual returnees by i) documenting their enrolment in a livelihood support programme (such as business development support) and ii) providing cash-based reintegration grants or in-kind grant packages with a clear monetary value that may be used as collateral. In other cases, depending on programming parameters, the lead reintegration organization may be able to provide collateral directly to external banking providers by providing the necessary guarantees for obtaining loans, or

even granting microloans directly. An alternative option is the creation of groups of borrowers, in which groups of returnees provide collateral collectively, thus vouching for each other ([see section 3.3.3](#)).

? Sizeable reintegration programmes should furthermore explore options to utilize the economies of scale provided by the large number of potential clients to negotiate with banks and MFIs for preferential access to banking services and loans. Depending on the size of the reintegration programme, the lead organization could also engage with financial service providers to explore options to complement financial products with financial advice services. Before including any external banking institution or MFI in the referral network, programme managers should always run a background check on the entity, in particular on the appropriateness of interest rates, potential support for recipients on default schedules and any general mentoring and business support the MFI may provide.

? Particular care should be taken when facilitating returnees' access to microcredit services.

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 accessing lines of credit, case managers should:

- **Provide beneficiaries with information about the risks** associated with taking out a loan, underlining that if a returnee cannot meet his or her repayment schedule, a debt would imply an additional burden instead of serving as a means to support self-sufficiency.
- **Provide adequate capacity-building** in combination with loans. While some microcredit providers offer counselling, financial literacy and business training, it is the responsibility of the organization managing the reintegration process to check that prospective borrowers are provided with the required training.
- **Assess risks of misappropriation** through other household or community members. This can be done by both protection and livelihoods staff.
- **Verify basic requirements and documentation of the returnee**, irrespective of whether the credit is provided by the organization managing the reintegration programme or by an external service provider. Requirements may include:
 1. Documentation about own capital and collateral;
 2. Verifying whether there is a need for a microloan, taking into account the applicant's existing assets, other sources of support provided (such as reintegration cash-based or in-kind grant support) and the capital requirements detailed in the reintegration plan, needs' assessment, business plan or record book;
 3. Existence of a good credit history of the prospective borrower;
 4. Other requirements as stipulated by the reintegration programme, such as documentation of a professional qualification, own capital, an asset that can be collateralized, an existing business or a set of previous customer relationships.

The feasibility grid for microcredit is available in [Annex 5](#).

2.4.5 Job placement

Facilitating the integration of returnees in wage and salaried work depends primarily on the local economy. It is therefore critical that job placement interventions are aligned with the capacity of local enterprises to create sustainable jobs. The feasibility of different job placement strategies should be determined in light of recent labour market analyses, as outlined in [section 1.4.3](#).

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.

Career guidance and counselling

Connecting returnees with employment entails providing guidance and counselling to returnees on their career and job options. This is usually carried out by the case manager, or, where available, an economic reintegration specialist. This counselling aims to help the returnee:

- understand the range of realistic opportunities for securing salaried work as part of a viable reintegration process;
- perform the required actions to adjust his professional profile to jobs on offer in the local labour market, including the acquisition of soft skills and vocational training and re-training.

Irrespective of whether job placements are undertaken by an external referral partner or the lead reintegration organization, having accurate and up-to-date labour market information is critical for developing effective job placement services. Having taken into account local labour and skills needs, case managers need to provide career guidance to returnees, including providing realistic information on opportunities and challenges.

Career guidance and counselling involves using the returnee's skill profile and work experience to identify jobs that would be appropriate and determine if additional training is necessary to secure those jobs. Case managers should support returnees to make applications to available jobs, apprenticeship schemes and/or skills development programmes.

If labour market information, especially vacancy databases, are present and publicly available in the countries of origin, the lead reintegration organization should explore options to set up workstations with web-based resources on job search and counselling. Depending on the context, some skills may also be acquired through distance learning, including on searching for jobs, preparing a curriculum vitae (CV) or preparing for job interviews.

Case managers can refer to [Annex 1.G](#) for more detailed guidance on career counselling.

In reintegration contexts where local labour markets are vibrant and there are a sufficient number of migrants returns to the same area, the lead reintegration organization can develop a roster or

database of trusted individual employers and employers' organizations, including chambers of commerce. If a public employment service (PES) or a system of job centres is available, these activities should be conducted in partnership with those authorities. Partnerships can help increase the employability of returnees and help broker job opportunities for beneficiaries.

To do this, the lead reintegration organization should contact national and local associations of employers, as well as sectoral associations whose activities are most relevant for the typical skills profiles of returnees. When contacting employers, reintegration staff should highlight the comparative advantages of returnees, including any language skills and other competences acquired abroad. See Case Study 5, below, for a picture of how this was done in Iraq.

Created with Sketch. Case Study 5:

Joint approach in the field of job placement assistance for Iraqi returnees (Kurdistan Region of Iraq)

A study commissioned in 2010 by IOM Iraq revealed a demand in the Iraqi private sector to hire returnees. To better connect returning migrants with potential employers in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the European Return Fund (Community Actions 2013), with the participation of several EU member States, funded MAGNET II.

The project aimed at setting up a harmonized job placement and training support scheme to provide consistent and coordinated assistance to potential returnees from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, through homogeneous pre-departure information on job placement assistance, on the socioeconomic context of the KRI and on concrete job and training opportunities.

Post-arrival counselling and referrals were conducted by a specific reintegration team. Referrals were informed by a comprehensive market survey and mapping of relevant training centres (vocational, IT and language trainings), coupled with assessments of returnees' skills and experience.

To place suitable candidates for identified job vacancies in the KRI, a common database was set up, listing the professional profiles of returnees from the six participating host countries. It also helped returnees seize concrete job opportunities. Job and training fairs were organized to allow them to meet with potential employers, learn more about employment opportunities and receive help and tips for networking and CV drafting. A project website and Facebook page were set up to enhance the visibility of the project and sustain communication with potential beneficiaries.

To encourage local ownership of job placements as a long-term socioeconomic reintegration approach for returnees, links with local authorities were reinforced. This was ensured through the organization of follow-up workshops in the three governorates of the KRI, and through a study visit of local authorities to the participating EU member States. Further visits by European national employment agencies to the KRI helped reinforce cooperation and capacity-building.

Created with Sketch. Tips for success:

Organize regular small-scale networking and social events and involve employed beneficiaries to act as mentors.

Where there are groups of returnees, it may be useful to cooperate with strategic employers and with employers' organizations to secure multiple placements at once. Job fairs may be one way to strategically target employers and lead reintegration reorganizations may wish to organize their own job fair and combine the event with training for returnees on soft skills, CV writing and job interviewing.²¹

Apprenticeships

Job placement assistance can be offered alongside apprenticeship programmes that provide on-the-job training, sometimes in combination with classroom learning, to acquire vocational competences and knowledge.

Apprenticeship programmes vary greatly from country to country. For this reason, case managers need specific knowledge about the expected impact of different apprenticeship schemes on the employability of individuals and the desired post-apprenticeship activity (employment or self-employment). Apprenticeships should have clear job descriptions, offer returnees a salary and provide returnees with a contract of employment.

When areas of high return do not have adequate apprenticeship schemes, the lead reintegration organization, with sufficient budget, can consider creating one by engaging with employers' organizations, chambers of commerce and training providers. Before designing an apprenticeship programme, the lead reintegration organization should research potential employers that could participate. Table 2.3 provides an overview of the key steps required for developing a market-oriented apprenticeship scheme.

Table 2.3: Developing an apprenticeship scheme

| Step | Activities |
|------|--|
| | Explore apprenticeships as a strategy to meet reintegration objectives for returnees in need of training, retraining, or as a way to make them transit from the vocational school classroom to a stable job. Sectors and industries assessments should be pre-selected based on the findings of preceding labour market assessments (see section 1.4.2). |
| | Promote the apprenticeship programmes with employers' organizations, chambers of commerce and other industrial and training partners, highlighting potential benefits of taking part in an |

| Step | Activities |
|------|---|
| | <p>apprenticeship scheme, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered apprenticeships are a well-established approach for preparing workers for jobs and meeting employers' needs for a skilled workforce that continues to innovate and adapt to meet the needs of the markets. • Businesses that use apprenticeships reduce worker turnover by fostering greater employee loyalty and increasing productivity. • Apprenticeships offer workers a way to start new careers with good wages. <p>Partner with key stakeholders in the region to develop an apprenticeship programme. Identify employers and training providers whose curricula and methods are endorsed by employers. Build the core components of the apprenticeship programme: classroom training; theory; on-the-job training.</p> <p>Register the programme to join a national apprenticeship network.²²</p> <p>Launch the new registered apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>Fine-tune the training strategy with a local or sectoral expert and foster ownership of employers and training partners.</p> |

Public work or cash for work

3. Analyse

Public work or cash for work are types 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 re-establishing 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 concert with the local authority (see *Case Study 6*, below, for an example of how cash-for-work is set up in Guinea). 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.

6. Launch

Cash-for-Work in Guinea

Since 2017, Guinea has seen very unexpectedly high numbers of its nationals returning from Libya and the Niger. This has strained reintegration staff capacities to deliver reintegration assistance.

Cash-for-work (CFW) interventions are a tool to address returnees' short-term needs by providing them with a decent income during their initial weeks in their country of origin while building their trust in the reintegration process. Because CFW interventions typically consist of small rehabilitation activities, such as cleaning public areas, they strengthen returnees' involvement in the care of their communities and help them reconnect with community members. CFW targets both returnees and members of the local community as a way to reinforce social cohesion and avoid potential tensions.

In close coordination with local communities and municipal authorities, rehabilitation priorities are identified in areas with high return rates. In Guinea, beneficiaries work 45 days over a period of nine weeks. Wages are paid weekly, but 30 per cent is transferred to a bank account opened by each beneficiary as a savings scheme. As access to and transport of cash can be burdensome in some areas, IOM partnered with Orange Money to ensure regular payments that are directly accessible to beneficiaries via their mobile phones.

The CFW opportunity is an initial step in the returnees' reintegration process. Time is also dedicated to sessions on civic responsibility and planning for their future.

If, at the end of the 45 days of work, beneficiaries decide to invest their savings in a collective reintegration project, they receive additional support from IOM in the form of training and assistance in setting up their collective projects. In Guinea, most CFW beneficiaries choose this option. This reinforces their ownership and sense of responsibility in their collective income-generating activity and enhances their awareness of the importance of saving.

Created with Sketch. Tips for success:

- Capitalize on existing collaboration with local authorities.
- Present this initiative to returnees as a short-term intervention that constitutes just one step in their reintegration plan.

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.

The feasibility grid for job placement is available in [Annex 5](#).

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