
Monitoring and evaluating child-sensitive reintegration assistance

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Key Messages

- Child-sensitive indicators for sustainable reintegration provide guidance for implementing, monitoring and evaluating a holistic approach including addressing some of the root causes of migration.
- Reintegration monitoring will contribute not only to supporting individual children and families, and identifying rights' violations, but also to filling existing evidence gaps about what works in reintegration. Evidence on reintegration should also inform when returns should take place and how they are conducted.
- The monitoring of child-sensitive reintegration indicators can guide practitioners in measuring progress and identifying risks and vulnerabilities of returnee children and families as they move from one step of the case management process to the next.
- Children, families and other stakeholders involved in the reintegration process should be consulted on the development of indicators and learnings documented to strengthen the wider child-protection system.
- Monitoring should continue for long enough to detect stability in a child's life (recommended two years).

Target audience

Programme managers/ developers

Case managers/other staff

Donors

Overview

Monitoring and evaluation provide a link between the different levels of the integrated approach. Reintegration monitoring will contribute not only to supporting individual children and families, and identifying rights' violations, but also to filling existing evidence gaps about what works in making reintegration sustainable for children and families. Evidence on reintegration should also inform when returns take place and how they are conducted. Monitoring tools link progress made on the individual and family level with indicators playing an important role in the case management process. The monitoring of indicators can guide practitioners in measuring progress and identifying risks and vulnerabilities of returnee children as they move from one step of the case management process to the next. Child-specific indicators also consider the developmental needs of children as they grow. The use of multidimensional, child-sensitive indicators can help practitioners develop sustainable reintegration plans which take into account a child's needs and choices over their lifespan, helping practitioners monitor and assess when reintegration interventions and support have not been "successful". This allows practitioners the opportunity to review and revise reintegration plans to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. Monitoring should continue for long enough to detect stability in a child's life (recommended for two years).

6.5.1 Common challenges in monitoring reintegration assistance

Challenge

Logistical and other challenges in maintaining contact with returnee children and families interfere with the monitoring and review process. Inadequate investment in mechanisms which ensure and promote returnee children's participation.

Children, particularly those who are accompanied by their caregivers as they return to their country of origin, experience an extra barrier, where the focus of contact, participation and monitoring is on the parent or caregiver as the head of the household rather than on the individual child.

Monitoring may draw unnecessary attention to the returnee child or family. It can create unrealistic expectations from returnees who have not adequately understood the limitations of assistance. It can also trigger resentment or endanger returnee children and families due to the perception that they have received particular resources. Finally, it can draw resentment from caregivers who may feel that their authority is

What can be done

Incorporate community-support mechanisms to facilitate monitoring during the design phase.

Keep children informed throughout the return and reintegration process.

Design and develop child-centred monitoring mechanisms including play, art and drama as appropriate to the community.

Outline the limits of assistance and the purpose for monitoring and if possible and appropriate, engage and build the capacity of community members to conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Challenge	What can be done
being undermined. Lack of independent monitoring mechanisms for returnee children and families. Evidence gathered through monitoring is rarely used to adapt reintegration support programmes or in the design of new interventions (M&E is disconnected from programme design).	Engage national human rights' institutions or local civil society organizations. Strengthen national and local monitoring and evaluation exercises by ensuring adequate resource allocation and capacity-building.

Children, families and other stakeholders involved in the reintegration process should be consulted on the development of indicators and learnings documented to strengthen the wider child protection and other systems and services in place.⁸¹ Monitoring and evaluation can be considered at three levels:

- The individual level to track the progress of the child;
- At the agency level to evaluate the efficacy of the programme;
- At the multisectoral level to identify potential gaps in service provision.

Child protection monitoring visits

Child protection monitoring visits ensure continued support and guidance to the child and caregiver, the reintegration plan is reviewed to identify gaps in service provision, confirm implementation is on track and agreed actions remain relevant. Monitoring visits can also facilitate the variation of the reintegration plan in accordance with the child's and family's prevailing situation. Child protection monitoring visits serve to promote child safeguarding by mitigating the risk of abuse or exploitation and establishing appropriate reporting channels. During child-monitoring visits specific questions to be considered can revolve around how the child feels about the reintegration assistance provided thus far, what has worked well, what could have worked better, and what could strengthen the process going forward.

Community monitoring

Community monitoring can be implemented through child protection committees, volunteers or trusted members of society such as a religious leaders or traditional elders. Community monitoring can facilitate review and monitoring on an ongoing basis to strengthen service provision and reintegration programming. Where there is no individual case manager, there may exist a community-based child protection structure. Community level child protection structures can monitor the progress of individual children as well as provide vital information to inform the development of policies and initiatives at the structural level. A group approach to monitoring can be applied to a larger number of children in a specific community. This can be done by periodically reviewing the reintegration support they have received through ongoing reintegration programmes that bring them together such as education, vocational and business skills training.

6.5.2 Child-sensitive indicators for sustainable reintegration

Child-sensitive indicators for sustainable reintegration cross-reference individual child and family needs with accessibility to the means and resources to mitigate environmental or community vulnerabilities. They can also take into account structural considerations that may encourage or hinder access of returnee children and families to support and which may be available to other vulnerable children in the country or community of origin. Child-sensitive indicators for sustainable reintegration provide guidance for implementing, monitoring and evaluating a holistic approach including addressing some of the root causes of migration. Whereas this is important for designing reintegration specific programming, it is important to remember that similar structural considerations apply to all vulnerable children in a community. As highlighted in Chapter 6.4, sustainable reintegration assistance does not seek to create a parallel system of support for returnee children and families. Instead it makes the link between reintegration support and the vulnerability factors which serve as migration drivers in communities of origin. This enhances the sustainability of a reintegration programme by linking it to larger systems and resources without creating unintended incentives or disincentives for any vulnerable child or family seeking or receiving support.

6.5.3 Generating knowledge: towards the development of a child-sensitive results monitoring framework

IOM has developed a standardized Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS) tool to evaluate the sustainable reintegration of returnees in the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions. The survey and its accompanying set of indicators help to assess to what extent returning migrants have achieved a level of sustainable reintegration in their communities of origin. IOM's integrated approach to reintegration as well as the RSS tool and indicators are currently in use in reintegration processes for returnee children. However, when considering the specific needs of children, it is recognized that a more tailored approach should be used. It is understood that the experiences of returnee children and their specific needs and vulnerabilities require dedicated indicators and monitoring tools to measure the sustainability of their reintegration and identify good practices to best plan for and implement reintegration programmes for returning children and families.

[*The Durable Solutions for Children Toolkit*](#) developed by Save the Children in 2019 establishes indicators for the return and reintegration of children. The Toolkit covers the process of determining, advocating and implementing solutions for migrant children, including those returning from abroad and internally displaced persons (IDPs). It includes an indicator framework to measure the progress of solutions for children.⁸²

To best adapt this Toolkit for use in reintegration programmes with child returnees, IOM is undertaking a joint research study with Save the Children to refine the Toolkit indicators for returnee children. This joint IOM and Save the Children project will also develop child-specific monitoring tools and identify good practices to monitor and evaluate sustainable reintegration of children in the context of return. The outcome of this study should directly improve the design, implementation and evaluation of reintegration support programmes for children as well as feed into recommendations for child return and reintegration policy and advocacy. The results of the study, along with the accompanying tools will be available in early to mid-2021.

⁸¹ Delap, E. and J. Wedge, [Guidelines on Children's Reintegration](#), p. 7 Inter Agency Group on Children's Reintegration (2016).

⁸² [The Durable Solutions Toolkit for Children's Indicator Framework](#) can be found on page 38 of the document. This guidance package establishes clear standards, advocacy and programming guidance, and an indicator framework, to ensure children are incorporated into durable solutions' assessment for the first time. It is entering its second phase of roll-out, with an ongoing development of planning methodologies and specific indicators, thus connecting to Save the Children work on triple nexus and child recovery.

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