

FRAMING BRIEF

IMPACT

Evaluation of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa Region

In March 2020, IOM commissioned to Itad an impact evaluation (hereafter referred to as IMPACT) of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa region. This brief outlines the rationale, the challenges of conducting a study of this kind, as well as its proposed approach.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The IMPACT study focuses solely on Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, the three countries with the largest reintegration caseload in the Horn of Africa region, whereas the EU-IOM Joint Initiative covers and closely cooperates with a total of 26 African countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa. While the results of the study will not be generalisable beyond its three target countries, they will still bear relevance for the initiative at large.



Why a study of this kind?

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative is a flagship programme for IOM and a lifeline for thousands of African migrants who find themselves stranded and decide to return to their countries of origin in a safe and dignified way, in full respect of international human rights standards and in particular the principle of non-refoulement¹.

After return, IOM provides migrants with various forms of assistance, across the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions, to support them during the long and non-linear process of reintegration. Being among the first initiatives seeking to follow IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative enlarged the scope and diversity of services provided to returning migrants, and also introduced innovations in the way assistance is provided.

The current monitoring and evaluation framework in place for the EU-IOM Joint Initiative is limited to outcome measures and cannot untangle whether changes observed in individual reintegration outcomes can be attributed to programme interventions or external influences. This limits the amount of learning that can be generated from this unique experience.

IMPACT is intended to overcome these limitations, generate substantial learning on what works and what doesn't in terms of reintegration assistance, and provide an accountability mechanism to beneficiaries of the programme, the donor, the humanitarian sector, civil society organisations and academia.

Objectives



Get a better sense of the net effect of reintegration assistance on individual reintegration outcomes.



Deepen the understanding of the concept and measurement of sustainable reintegration.

“ Reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity.² ”



Inform future methodological standards for impact evaluations in the context of reintegration

Challenges

No precedent exists for conducting impact evaluations of a reintegration programme of the size and complexity of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (HoA). On top of that, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing logistical and access challenges to reaching returnees.

Methodologically, there are limitations that arise from the practical and theoretical constraints faced by this complex evaluation. For example, sampling is a key challenge in a context where programme beneficiaries (returnees) are entering the programme on a rolling basis (especially while the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting the regularity of return flows), which affects the ability to provide precise sample size estimates at this stage. Additionally, defining and measuring reintegration sustainability is complex and there is currently no universally agreed definition or measurement framework.

To respond effectively to these challenges, methodological innovation and testing is key to the design and effective implementation of IMPACT, and fundamental to driving sectoral learning on the measurement of reintegration and on the conduction of impact evaluations of reintegration programmes more broadly. While the detailed design articulated in the IMPACT Methodological Report is subject to changes due to constraints related to what is technically and practically possible given the current circumstances, all parties involved in the IMPACT study are working in close collaboration to ensure agreement on the inevitable trade-offs between the scope, precision and resource constraints faced by the evaluation.

Approach

To meet its objectives, IMPACT features a hybrid, semiexperimental evaluation design with four components, which are:

1

Review of IOM's Instruments
Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS)

2

Quantitative Modelling

3

Natural Experiment

4

Qualitative Framework

1

Review of Measurement Tools Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS)

The Reintegration Sustainability Index is a collection of indicators used by IOM to estimate the level of reintegration based on the survey data (RSS). As the concept of sustainable reintegration is challenging to validate, and requires looking at multiple parameters, IMPACT will test the validity of additional indicators, with respect to if and how they add insight into the process and outcome of reintegration programming.

Approach

Additional questions added in the IOM institutional RSS instrument, which cover the following topics:

1. Information on the migration cycle
2. Skills acquired during migration
3. Family reunification.



IOM staff oversee a film production led by returnee Nour Abdi Garaad.
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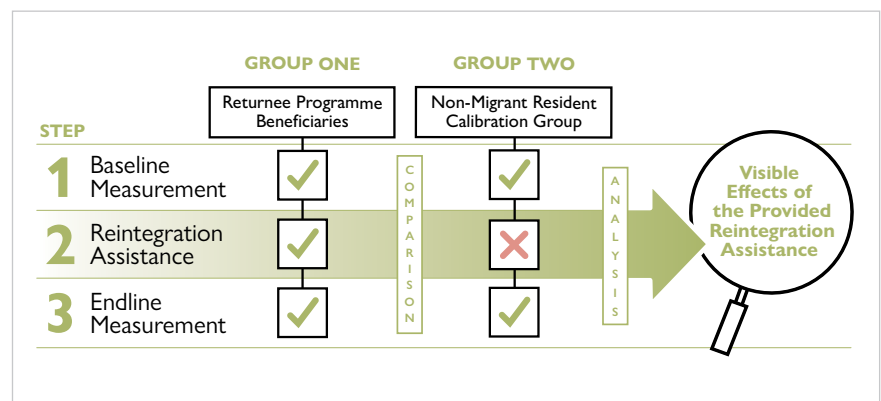
Quantitative Modelling

The quantitative modelling allows the evaluation to test the validity of different ways of measuring reintegration, considers 'before and after' changes, and compares programme beneficiaries with a group of non-migrant residents. This provides a better understanding of the impacts on returnees that can be attributed to the programme.

Approach

IMPACT uses a non-migrant resident calibration group. A calibration group refers to a group of non-migrant residents comprised of demographically similar respondents residing in the same, or similar locations as the returnees. The calibration group offers a standard against which the evaluation can assess the progress of migrant returnees towards reintegration. Where possible, IMPACT will also draw on intra-returnee calibration cohorts assisted under the same programme, identifying different groupings of returnees and characterising their differing experiences of reintegration to better understand the extent of reintegration, including what is working and for whom.

Methodology Overview



3

Natural Experiment

A natural experiment uses unplanned changes (either internal to the programme or as a result of external events) to test important hypotheses. The IMPACT design incorporates both internal and external natural experiments.

Approach

Through the analysis of internal programme changes, IMPACT exploits delays in receiving assistance as well as changes in the procurement of in-kind support towards mobile money and cash-based options. This will provide a better understanding of the impact of different programme modalities on returnees' reintegration. IMPACT will also carry out a natural experiment based on an external event through the investigation of the effects of COVID-19 on programme implementation and returnees' reintegration across the three countries.



A migrant returnee in West Darfur receives cash as part of reintegration assistance.
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Qualitative Framework

The qualitative research both supports and complements the modelling and natural experiment components. It will provide in-depth information on how the EU-IOM Joint Initiative is contributing to change, including understanding the impact of programme changes or extreme events under the natural experiment.

Approach

Through interviews and focus group discussions with returnees, the qualitative framework will provide an in-depth understanding of how and why reintegration does (or does not) occur. Where possible, participatory approaches will be introduced to facilitate detailed discussions and capture rich data on returnees' experiences of return.



IOM staff hand out support items to Ethiopian migrants in the Bossaso MRC.
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CREDITS

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ENDNOTES

- 1 IOM defines the principle of non-refoulement as “The prohibition for States to extradite, deport, expel or otherwise return a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she would risk being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, or would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance, or of suffering another irreparable harm.” (IOM, 2019. [Glossary on Migration, international Migration Law, 34.](#))
- 2 IOM, 2016. [Towards and Integrated Approach to Reintegration in the Context of Return.](#)