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# SYSTEMATIZATION OF THE WORKSHOP ON **SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION**

Held on September 7 and 8, 2022 within the  
framework of the Regional Conference on  
Migration (RCM), in the city of Puebla, Mexico.

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# INTRODUCTION

On 7 and 8 September 2022, the Workshop on Sustainable Reintegration was held in the city of Puebla, Mexico, in the framework of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM). The event was possible thanks to the support of the Mexican government through the National Institute of Migration, as host institution, accompanied by the following agencies: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration Policy Unit, Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

The main objective of the workshop was to promote a dialogue between key actors in the region to improve the processes of national and regional articulation for the assistance of migrant returnee population, in order to ensure their sustainable reintegration into the country of origin and/or destination; in accordance with existing commitments and standards at global, regional and national levels through the development of a roadmap in the region. Specifically, the aim was to:

- Review key concepts, global and regional tools and frame sustainable reintegration in the context of countries in the region.
- Identify some challenges and actions regarding the reintegration of returned migrants in the region.
- To lay the foundations for the systematization of good practices in the region, which can serve as practical guidance for actors involved in reintegration issues.
- Promote the adoption of public policies (such as national or local plans) on sustainable reintegration that seek to improve protection and assistance services for returned migrants and are evidence-based.
- Highlight the special protection needs of the most vulnerable groups such as: unaccompanied or separated migrant children and adolescents returnee, returnees who are forcibly displaced upon arrival in their country of origin, and women.
- Generate regional recommendations on next steps to improve the response and articulation on sustainable reintegration of returnees among the member countries of the Regional Conference on Migration.

Delegations representing the following countries participated:

- Costa Rica
- El Salvador
- United States of America
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Dominican Republic

In addition to:

- Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RNCOM)
- Migration Policy Institute (MPI)
- Executive Secretariat of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Labor Organization (ILO)
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

During two days of work, the delegations representing the member countries exchanged their experiences. The workshop was based on a participatory dialogue methodology, through which concrete proposals were sought to advance the implementation of actions for the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants.

The first day included the participation of experts, who framed the topic in the regional and global context, and provided some conceptual foundations that served as a basis for the discussion. Likewise, the space was opened to Member States and observer organizations to present the challenges, progress and experiences regarding the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants, taking as a starting point the inputs generated in the reviews of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the information collected by the different instances.

On the second day, participants were divided into three working groups with the purpose of generating operational recommendations for the elaboration of an operational roadmap for sustainable reintegration in the region. Each working table was assigned with one of the levels of reintegration (individual, community and structural) and it was suggested to consider the economic, social, and psychosocial dimensions for the elaboration of proposals. Each table was coordinated by a moderator and a rapporteur of the discussion generated.

In response to a specific request from the governments of El Salvador and Mexico, IOM committed to support the development of a more detailed report to systematize the experiences shared during the workshop. This document is not an exhaustive description of all the practices that exist in the region, but rather reflects what governments and partners shared during the workshop, as well as additional information that was shared after the workshop. It does not analyze practices in depth, but aims to provide an overview of the range of activities already implemented.

# 1. CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

## 1.1 Relevance of the workshop

Migration governance should consider return migration<sup>1</sup> as a fundamental human right and promote public policies and programs that leverage the benefits and address the challenges that this process entails, including safe and dignified return and reception, as well as the availability of programs that facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants.

Addressing reintegration requires the joint and coordinated work of multiple stakeholders and should be based on an analysis of community, structural and individual factors to define where and how to intervene in order to enable environments for reintegration and achieve sustainable, effective and beneficial outcomes for all, while bearing in mind that circumstances may change over time. It is in this context that an integrated approach to reintegration becomes relevant, in response to economic, social, and psychosocial needs while addressing cross-cutting issues such as: the rights of returned migrants, gender equality, data collection, monitoring and evaluation of reintegration processes.

Exchanging information, experiences, lessons learned, and good practices is also an advisable exercise, as it contributes to generating synergies and expanding opportunities through the implementation of joint initiatives and bilateral coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Thus, it is relevant that public officials in charge of the processes of reception, assistance, protection, and reintegration of migrants returned to their countries of origin have an integrated vision of reintegration and direct their actions to achieve its sustainability in order to:

- Work for the full development of people and guarantee their human rights.

<sup>1</sup>Return migration is understood as: the movement of people returning to their country of origin or habitual residence. This can be voluntary or forced, assisted or independent. Such return is motivated by different factors including personal or family circumstances, migratory status, public migration policies at destination, with or without restrictive criteria; the political and socio-economic context in the host country and in the country of origin (IOM Glossary on Migration).

- To advance the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration<sup>2</sup>, more specifically by implementing planned and well-managed migration policies with international support and by building effective partnerships in the public, public-private and civil society spheres.

## 1.2 Context

In the region, particularly in the north of Central America and Mexico, high numbers<sup>3</sup> of migrant returnees have been registered over time and in a sustained manner<sup>4</sup>. While different efforts are being made in the countries of origin to ensure the safe and dignified return and reception of their nationals and/or habitual residents, programs to facilitate and ensure the sustainable reintegration of these persons are still in their early stages.

Generally, reintegration is understood as a multidimensional process in which migrants re-establish their economic, social and psychosocial links with the environment to which they are reincorporated within their country of origin or habitual residence<sup>5</sup>. In this process, the sustainability of the outcome depends not only on the person him/herself, but also on the community and the structural conditions of the context to which he/she returns, which is why interventions at these levels in coordination with other actors become indispensable.

There is progress and some efforts by countries to include this issue in their national agendas<sup>6</sup>. A key reflection of this is the incorporation in the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) of the twenty-first objective: **Working together to facilitate return and readmission in safety and dignity, and sustainable reintegration**. This goal shows the commitment of states both to "facilitate return in safety and dignity" and to "create conditions for the sustainable reintegration of migrants after return to their country of origin"<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The integrated approach to reintegration contributes, in particular, to **target 10.2**: Enhance and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all persons, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, **target 10.7**: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies, **target 17.17**: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships and **target 17.9**: Increase international support for effective and targeted capacity-building activities in developing countries to support national implementation plans for all Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular SDG cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> According to the IOM's Information Unit for the countries of northern Central America, between January and December 2021, approximately 125,257 returns of migrants to countries in northern Central America from the United States and Mexico have been registered, a figure that represents a 39% variation with respect to the total number of returns registered in 2020 (90,138), a year already marked by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic that affected the possibilities of mobilization of migrants. For its part in 2019, 251,778 were registered.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this concept note, the latter term includes both migrants who have voluntarily decided to return and those who have been deported.

<sup>5</sup> International Organization for Migration (2017). Towards an integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return. Available at [https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our\\_work/DMM/AVRR/towards-an-integrated-approach-to-reintegration-spanish\\_final.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/towards-an-integrated-approach-to-reintegration-spanish_final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> International Organization for Migration (2019). Reintegration study: migration and cities. Regional report, p.25. Available at <https://kmhub.iom.int/es/estudio-sobre-reintegracion-migracion-y-ciudades-informe-regional>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2019). Resolution 73/195. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Goal 21. Available at [https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/gcm\\_spanish.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/gcm_spanish.pdf)

The concern for sustainable reintegration has led to increased attention to the role of communities of origin in the design and implementation of beneficial and effective reintegration programs that address the specific needs of returning migrants and respond to the context. In turn, this has involved highlighting the role of local level and return and reintegration service structures and capacities in contributing to the achievement of states' economic and social development plans, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the provisions of other global frameworks for action.

### 1.3 Key concepts: reception, return and reintegration

An important starting point was the review of the conceptual framework. Through this, the foundations can be laid to move in the same direction and towards a better understanding of reintegration. Consequently, this will allow the design of medium and long-term actions and public policies to help achieve sustainable reintegration. In this way, three main concepts which are related but imply different moments and different responses were reviewed during the workshop: reception, return and reintegration.

In this conceptual review, the Reintegration Handbook. Practical Guide for the Design, Implementation and Monitoring of Reintegration Assistance<sup>8</sup> was one of the main tools used during the workshop, as it contains conceptual elements and the proposal of the integrated approach to reintegration.

**Reception:** Refers to the immediate and short-term admission and assistance upon return of migrants. Reception programs and services are the form of immediate and short-term assistance that migrants receive upon return, usually in dedicated centers at ports of entry. The type of assistance varies, but often includes admission and registration, basic medical care, legal guidance and advice, food, hygiene kits, limited transportation assistance to returnees' communities of origin, and limited referrals to emergency shelters<sup>9</sup>.

**Return:** A generic term for all forms, methods and processes by which migrants return or are forced to return to their country of origin or habitual residence, or to a third country<sup>10</sup>. Return can be permanent or temporary; voluntary or involuntary, as shown below.

<sup>8</sup> IOM (2020), *Handbook on Reintegration. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*, International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>9</sup> Ruiz, Ariel (2022), *Reception and reintegration in Central America* [Power point presentation], Migration Policy Institute (MPI), 7 September.

<sup>10</sup> IOM (2022), *Return and Reintegration in the Global Framework* [Power point presentation], International Organization for Migration, 7 September.

## Voluntary return

It is the return with or without assistance to the country of origin or transit, or to another country, based on the will of the returnee.

For IOM, voluntariness in the context of assisted voluntary return and reintegration will be considered to exist if two conditions are met:

- (a) freedom of choice, which is defined by the absence of physical or psychological pressure to enter into an assisted voluntary return and reintegration program; and
- (b) an informed decision, which requires the availability of up-to-date, impartial and reliable information on which the decision is based.

## Involuntary or forced return

It is the act of returning a person, against his or her will, to his or her country of origin, a place of transit or a third country that agrees to receive him or her, generally in application of an administrative or legal provision or decision.

Source: IOM (2020), Handbook on Reintegration. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland. p. 9.

Finally, it is important to point out that the different motivations to return influence the reintegration experience of each person. Therefore, it is relevant to know the conditions and causes of return and define concrete actions for reintegration that respond to the specific needs of people.

**Reintegration:** It is a multidimensional process that enables people to re-establish the economic, social, and psychosocial relationships necessary to preserve their lives, livelihoods and dignity and to achieve integration into civic life<sup>11</sup>. Reintegration includes medium- and long-term efforts to anchor returning migrants in the societies and communities to which they return. This includes supporting their reintegration into local labor markets, education systems and the broader socio-cultural context. Ideally, these services are synchronized and integrated with reception services, and may include skills and credential certification, vocational training, assistance in finding employment or enrolling in school, loans to start small businesses, and psychosocial care<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> IOM (2020), *Reintegration Handbook. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ruiz, Ariel (2022), slide 2.



Thus, **sustainable reintegration** is when returnees have achieved a level of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their community and psychosocial well-being that enables them to cope with the factors that prompted them to migrate (or re-migrate). When sustainable reintegration is achieved, return migrants can transform their future migration decisions into a matter of choice rather than necessity<sup>13</sup>.

Issues to consider for sustainable reintegration<sup>14</sup>:

- The sustainability of reintegration depends not only on the individual who decides to return, but also on the local community and the structural conditions of the context of return.
- Reintegration assistance can only be successful if there is some degree of reintegration in the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions.
- If the community of origin is unable to generate sustainable livelihoods and is already facing migratory pressures, it is highly unlikely that a migrant returning to this community will reintegrate in a sustainable manner.
- If push factors persist or the aspirations of returnees are not met, it will not be possible to achieve a level of sustainable livelihood comparable to that of the local community. Particular, in more unstable or underdeveloped contexts, access to basic services and security may be limited and offer few opportunities for sustainable reintegration.
- If left unaddressed, these structural factors will continue to encourage migration as a response mechanism to inadequate living standards, insecurity and lack of opportunities, whether real or perceived.

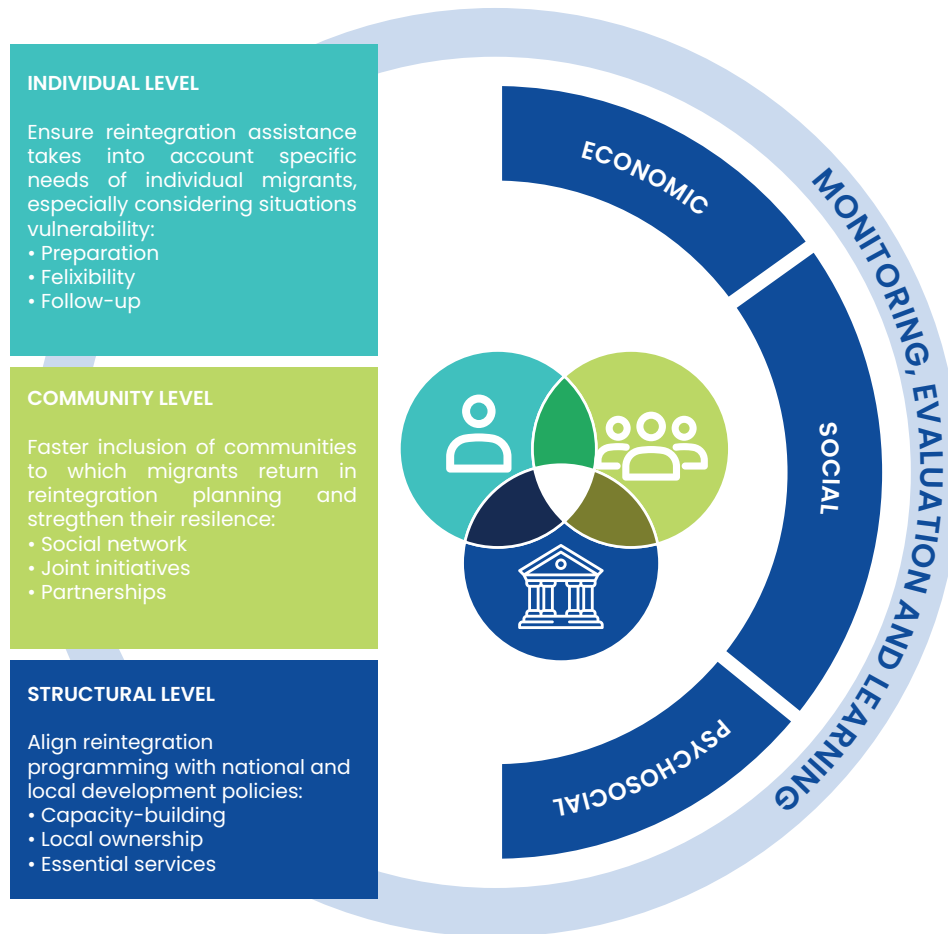
## Integrated approach to reintegration

IOM's proposal<sup>15</sup> through this approach considers the various factors that influence the reintegration process, in particular economic, social and psychosocial issues. It also addresses the needs of migrants and communities of return in a mutually beneficial manner, as well as addressing relevant structural factors. Elements of the integrated approach can be seen in the figure below.

<sup>13</sup> IOM (2020), *Reintegration Handbook. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12-13

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*



Source: IOM (2020), Handbook on Reintegration. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland, p. 14.

The integrated approach focuses on three levels of support:

- The **individual level** includes initiatives to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of returnees and their families, providing different support and accompaniment services.
- The **community level** encompasses initiatives that focus on the needs, vulnerabilities and concerns of the communities to which migrants return, including their families and non-migrant populations. This level also promotes strengthening social ties and increasing the absorption capacity of communities located in regions with a high rate of return.
- **Structural level** initiatives promote good governance of migration, through collaboration with local and national authorities and stakeholders, and aim to promote continuity of assistance through adequate local public services that foster the creation of an enabling environment for the restoration of a dignified life.

Within each of these levels, the integrated approach addresses three dimensions of reintegration:

Economic	Social	Psychosocial
<p>It covers aspects of reintegration that contribute to reintegration into economic life and sustainable livelihoods.</p>	<p>It includes migrants' access to public services and infrastructure in the country of origin, including health care, education, housing, justice, and social protection programs.</p>	<p>It encompasses the reintegration of migrants into individual support networks (friends, relatives, neighbors) and civil society structures (associations, self-help groups, other organizations and civic life in general). This also includes the re-assimilation of the values, way of life, language, moral principles, and traditions of the society of the country of origin.</p>

Source: IOM (2020), Handbook on Reintegration. A practical guide for the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland, p. 13.

An integrated approach to reintegration should include cross-cutting issues such as:

- The rights of migrants
- Gender equality
- Partnerships and cooperation
- Improve data collection and data protection.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration process

Encourage and include the participation of different sectors as shown below:

- National and local governments of host and home countries
- International non-governmental organizations
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Civil society organizations
- Private sector

In this approach, reintegration begins before the migrant returns to his or her country of origin. It is therefore suggested that migrants, as well as partners and organizations working in the field of reintegration, be assisted in preparing for the reintegration process before departure. Hence, it is necessary to think about all phases prior to reintegration, i.e. pre-return, return, post-return and finally reintegration.

## 1.4 Global and regional frameworks for reintegration

The topic of sustainable reintegration is framed in different global and regional instruments that place it as a priority issue. The following is an outline of the main frameworks.

- **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) 2018**: It is the first agreement negotiated at the governmental level, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. It is a non-binding framework for cooperation that recognizes the need for dialogue and joint work; focuses on the opportunity to improve migration governance; and is human rights-based and people-centered. It builds on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and consists of 23 goals and 10 cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles. In particular, Goal 21 is about working together to facilitate return and readmission in safety and dignity, as well as sustainable reintegration.
- **Darien Declaration (RCM, Panama, March, 2022)**: Through this declaration, the Regional Conference on Migration expresses its concern about the high risks faced by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the current context, including the possibility of being victims of organized crime, violence and insecurity in their journey, among other problems. At the same time, it reiterates the importance and commitment to promote and strengthen effective migration policies and stronger assistance and protection systems in the region, respecting the human rights of all persons on the move and facilitating access to international protection. Against this backdrop, reaffirms its commitment to promote regional actions to strengthen effective migration governance and protect the human rights of persons transiting through the territories of the region, especially those in situations of vulnerability. It recognizes that, as stated in the Global Compact for Migration, only through safe, orderly and regular migration will the region optimize the benefits of regular migration cycles for countries of origin, transit, destination and return, and for migrants themselves.
- **Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection (June, 2022)**: It builds on the foundation of internationally adopted principles and instruments, including the Global Compact for Orderly, Safe and Regular Migration. Through this Declaration, the countries of the Americas recognize the urgent need to work collaboratively to protect the dignity, life and human rights of all migrants regardless of their migratory status. The Declaration is organized around four fundamental pillars: 1) stability and assistance to communities; 2) expansion of legal channels; 3) humane management of migration; and 4) coordinated emergency response.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION IN THE REGION: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES

On the second day of the workshop, three working tables were organized, whose purpose was to generate a space for discussion and construction with the participating delegations to identify challenges, opportunities and experiences in the field of reintegration, which would serve as a basis for the development of an operational roadmap for sustainable reintegration.

Each roundtable addressed one of the levels of the integrated approach to reintegration, i.e.: individual level, community level and structural level, considering at the same time the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that, although each level was addressed separately, the three are interrelated, so we will see how in each table related topics and proposals appear.

As a result of the dialogue and contributions of the participants, it can be observed that the three working groups expressed common themes that were emphasized:

1. The need to create actions that are part of State public policies, with the ability to be flexible to meet the particularities of the cases.
2. Create medium and long-term actions that transcend reactive and short-term actions. This issue is fundamental, as sustainable reintegration focuses on the long and medium term.
3. Do not depend solely on cooperation agencies for the implementation of actions and projects, as this generates dependence and when the projects end there is no continuity, and therefore no sustainability.
4. Carry out a mapping for the standardization of regional and national processes that will allow a better and greater attention to the returnee population. But also at the national level to avoid dispersion and duplication of actions, as well as to identify gaps.
5. Generate confidence in the population, along with this, generate transparent and accountability processes.
6. Consider in the reintegration actions the factor of violence situations that are lived in different countries, since it becomes a challenge to reintegrate the returned population when this was one of the causes for which they migrated. Thus, it is necessary to rethink the return from a people's security perspective.

The central proposals arose from the different concerns expressed, among which the following predominated:

- Provide differentiated attention to the returnee population according to their characteristics and needs: women, indigenous people, people with disabilities, youth, children and adolescents, older adults, LGBTIQ+ population.
- Establish actions that put the person and his or her dignity at the center and that have a human rights perspective.

## **2.1. Individual level**

The individual level encompasses initiatives to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of returnees and families.

The discussion developed at this working table was guided by the following two questions to trigger the discussion:

- What are the challenges that individual returnees face in reintegrating into their community of origin or return?
- What is the current support provided to individual returnees? How is this support defined? How are needs and capacities assessed?

## CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Economical	Social	Psychosocial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indebtedness of returnees, lack of economic resources. The debts contracted force re-migration, which shows that reintegration is not being sustainable.</li> <li>• To know the reasons for migrating.</li> <li>• Long-term follow-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stigmatization of people in their communities (seeing them as a failure).</li> <li>• In the case of women, the stigma of sexual violence.</li> <li>• Where to reintegrate them if they left because of violence and insecurity, i.e., extortion.</li> <li>• Building trust in governments.</li> <li>• Security of returnees in their communities of origin and how to protect them from organized crime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the causes of migration, each cause has an answer.</li> <li>• Give assistance to the person who migrated and also to the family.</li> <li>• Care for migrants with disabilities.</li> <li>• Reinsertion into the educational system and catch-up processes.</li> <li>• Integral health care, where mental health occupies an important place.</li> <li>• Cultural uprooting and language barriers.</li> <li>• Housing relocation when they left due to violence and insecurity.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Community level

The community level encompasses initiatives that focus on the needs, vulnerabilities and concerns of the communities to which migrants return, including their families and non-migrant populations.

The discussion developed in this working group was guided by the following questions:

- What are the challenges for returning migrants to re-establish themselves in their communities?
- What are the challenges faced by communities in the face of returning migrants?
- How to identify the communities in which to intervene?
- What kind of community-level reintegration activities are carried out?
- How is community participation ensured?

## CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED AT A COMMUNITY LEVEL

Economical	Social	Psychosocial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displacement from the community to other cities or cities with more development.</li> <li>• Little attraction of the population by the traditional productive sectors in their communities.</li> <li>• Isolated and dispersed actions.</li> <li>• Actions for labor reintegration in traditional sectors.</li> <li>• Weak strategies to take advantage of migration programs and community settings.</li> <li>• Formation and creation of traditional and oversaturated enterprises in the market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insecurity and violence as a cause of migration.</li> <li>• Little involvement of the central authority at the local level.</li> <li>• Projects implemented without community participation in their design.</li> <li>• Take into account gender gaps and discrimination that contribute to migration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facing new socio-cultural conditions in the community, different from the ones he/she knew at the time he/she migrated.</li> <li>• Provide timely and immediate psychosocial care.</li> <li>• Lack of follow-up and sustainability of cases.</li> <li>• Involvement of migrants' families in care projects.</li> </ul>

### 2.3 Structural level

Structural level initiatives promote good governance of migration, through collaboration with local and national authorities and stakeholders, and support continuity of assistance through adequate local public services.

The table discussion at this level was guided by the following questions:

- What are the needs that are generated at the structural level?
- What policies, programs or initiatives exist to support the sustainable reintegration of returned migrants?
- Who are the actors involved/who are the actors that should be involved in reintegration programs?
- How does coordination between actors work to ensure the effectiveness of reintegration initiatives?



The challenges identified were:

1. To make visible the different types of return from an integral approach, identifying as part of the problem not only forced return, but also voluntary return; so that this contributes to the development of specific public policies for dignified and sustainable reintegration by the States.
2. To make effective the human rights approach as a transversal axis in public policies, programs, actions, analysis, and attention to the problem; in order to have adequate responses to the comprehensive reintegration of the returned migrant population.
3. Allocate resources to the various projects and programs related to the issue so as not to depend solely on funding from international organizations. The challenge is that all actions in this area are assumed as public policies of each country, to ensure the sustainability of the programs.
4. Recognize the labor skills of returnees and their accreditation for labor reintegration. As well as the recognition or homologation of studies and certificates when returning to their country of origin, or in their case, to a third country.
5. Improve and shorten the reception and care process for returnees or repatriated persons. This should include basic services such as: issuing provisional identity documents, economic support, transportation (for the transfer to their places of origin when necessary), medical care and ensuring family contact. All of the above in a humane, friendly environment that respects their rights.
6. Attending the mental health of the returnees is a priority; due to the fact that the process of repatriation or return itself entails the need of psychological assistance, not only for the returnee, but also for his/her relatives.
7. To have safe spaces of temporary shelter for returnees that provide security and stability, providing comprehensive care from reception, transfer, and follow-up.
8. Recognition of the benefits and time worked in other countries, so that they can be assumed in the pension and retirement processes, creating adequate inter-state mechanisms that guarantee these acquired rights.
9. Strengthen local capacities in different dimensions in order to have mechanisms and actions in accordance with their own realities and particularities.
10. To guarantee, through various State policies, a dignified life for its citizens and programs so that people do not migrate out of necessity.

## **2.4 Opportunities**

1. Take advantage of the framework of the MCA work plan to generate and coordinate actions in this area.
2. Strengthen the institutions involved in the implementation of reintegration actions.

1. Build alliances between the government and the private sector, trade unions and other social actors for the generation of employment or entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts of reintegration or integration of migrants.
2. Prioritize internal and external investment for reception and reintegration programs within economic development plans.
3. Provide guidance and information on services available to migrants to prepare them prior to their repatriation or return. To this end, the countries' consular networks have a key role to play.
4. Evaluate actions currently implemented in various countries in the region that have the potential for good practices for sustainable reintegration.
5. To have access to tools, experiences and inputs that contribute to the work of public servants in charge of the processes of reception, assistance, protection and reintegration of migrants in each country.
6. Review and evaluate the current migration policy at regional and national level in order to take concrete actions that have an impact on sustainable reintegration.
7. Generate a follow-up mechanism to provide continuity to this type of exercise (Workshop on Sustainable Reintegration).

# 3. WORKING TOGETHER: PROPOSALS FOR ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION IN THE REGION

As a result of the discussions at the working tables, each group issued work proposals for each level of reintegration. As may be observed, several of these proposals are transversal in the three levels, since, as previously mentioned, the three levels are interrelated. The proposals elaborated by each group are presented below.

## 3.1 Individual level

1. Ensure that nationals abroad have timely information about the services and benefits they will have in their country of origin, so that they can have a real picture of what awaits them and thus generate confidence in the institutions.
2. Strengthen the psychosocial approach with a gender perspective, especially in the care of women, including sexual and reproductive health, without prejudice.
3. To place the prevention of migration and the risks it entails on the work agendas of the institutions, with emphasis on human trafficking.
4. Identify in all cases the causes of migration, in order to avoid forced migration. If there is no correct mechanism for identifying the problem, it is very difficult to provide a concrete response, from the perspective of citizen protection and security.
5. Generate actions that are embodied in State policies to ensure the sustainable reinsertion and reintegration of returned migrants in their countries of origin. It is important that these policies are also flexible, in order to meet and respond to the needs and particularities of each case.
6. Articulate multidisciplinary actions and commitments on the part of the institutions.
7. Carry out an inter-institutional mapping that identifies the functions and actions/programs of each institution, in order to avoid duplication of actions.
8. Work together in the attention of each case, in a comprehensive and individualized manner, according to the needs of the returned migrant. For this, it is necessary to have a follow-up and monitoring mechanism, which will allow to verify the sustainability of the actions.
9. Standardize regional and national processes that allow a better and greater response to the assistance of the returnee population.
10. Generate confidence in the population, as this will determine the success of the actions taken in relation to specific cases.

### **3.2 Community level**

1. Implement at a local level a plan for the creation of comprehensive psychosocial care and monitoring centers for returned migrants.
2. Create a management mechanism of cooperation and co-responsibility, for the sustainability of successful initiatives in the care of returned migrants.
3. Design and implement a communication strategy for awareness-raising, promotion of the strengths of returnees and services for this population, with special emphasis on the business sector, government institutions and the community.
4. Increase the presence and intervention of the authorities at the local level.
5. Generate more development opportunities at a local level, from an integral work approach.
6. Strengthen the existing productive sectors at the community and rural level, from an innovation approach.
7. Generate socio-cultural roots of the returnee, in relation to his/her community.
8. Implement sustainable psychosocial care processes with a life plan approach.
9. Improve inter-sectoral articulation at all levels for the design of public policies, plans and programs focused on generating economic opportunities at the local level.
10. Generate employment opportunities, in innovative and new sectors.
11. Advise and facilitate the investment processes of the capital acquired abroad by a person benefiting from labor mobility programs.
12. Promote business initiatives in sectors with opportunities and innovative sectors.
13. Implement comprehensive strategic actions that include the families of migrants.

### **3.3 Structural level**

1. Coordinate actions at the inter-institutional, national, regional and international levels in order to count on collaboration and assistance in the solution of the problem. These actions must be evaluated in a comprehensive manner in order to be able to apply effective and efficient solutions. This includes the creation of mechanisms for comprehensive and intersectoral measurement, generating statistics that contribute to the creation of effective public policies. As a first step, it is important to review national and regional programs in order to have a comprehensive vision of what is currently being done.
2. Strengthen the State's commitment to the fulfillment of human rights as part of its obligations and commitments (the best interest of the child and adolescent, gender perspective, diversity and integrality, among others). Therefore, it is

necessary to include reintegration policies and their sustainability in the National Human Rights Plans, based on respect for people, for the fact of being human, without any type of discrimination.

3. Promote the creation of regulatory frameworks that contain aspects related to the guarantees of rights of returnees. It is necessary to mainstream the issues of health, education, work, access to justice in all actions implemented for the care of the population and their reintegration.
4. Promote public-private partnerships to integrate returned migrants into the formal labor market and make their skills and experience part of the supply chain.
5. Encourage the creation of companies and enterprises from the private sector with the sponsorship of the public sector, generate government-private sector agreements, and incentives for companies by governments.
6. Generate financial inclusion and education actions. It is necessary to generate rapprochement with banks to provide facilities and opportunities to returnees and their families.
7. Facilitate tax exemptions to the returned population, according to each situation, either for the constitution of enterprises, transfer of material and work equipment, household goods, among other.
8. Establish accountability and case tracking processes, as this contributes to the sustainability of reintegration actions and builds people's trust in institutions. Positive results can lead to better reintegration of other migrants.
9. Allocate budget for the implementation of actions, programs, and public policies in this area.
10. Guarantee social security for people at no cost in the reintegration process. In addition to the recognition of the time worked outside their country of origin.

## 4. SOME ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN THE REGION

During the workshop, some of the participating countries shared actions that they are currently implementing, which seek to contribute to sustainable reintegration and that could possibly become references for the region. In this sense, it is important to point out that in order to be considered as "good practices" they must comply with certain requirements and be evaluated with specific methodologies. Beyond that, having the experience of what some countries are doing is a first step to approach the situation in the region.

EL SALVADOR			
Action	Level	Dimension	Description
Specialized Assistance Window to Returned Migrant Women.	Community	Social	The initiative has an inter-agency working approach and is therefore implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the Ministry of Local Development. The main purpose of this mechanism is to assist and facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returned migrant women. To that end, six windows have been set up with a national scope of action. Through these, support is provided to returned migrant women in processes of certification of labor skills, creation of enterprises, labor intermediation, psychosocial care, among others.
Economic and Tourism Development for the Reintegration of Returned Migrant Women (Transforming Lives)	Community	Economic	The aim is to strengthen the personal, social and training capacities of returned migrant women, taking advantage of the potential of the tourist area. The project is implemented in the department of La Libertad. It consists of three components: technical training in surfboard repair, business and psychosocial training, and delivery of seed capital to start their associative business. As a result, two associative enterprises formed by migrant women were created.



Action	Level	Dimension	Description
Training for Returned Migrants in Electricity, with Fourth Category certification; Installation and Maintenance of Solar Panels (Renewable Energy).	Community	Economic	The main objective of the project was to train migrant returnees in the maintenance and installation of solar panels and renewable energy, the result was that knowledge and skills were provided to migrant returnees for their full reintegration, thus achieving, train, certify and deliver seed capital for the implementation of socio-productive activities to a group of 30 migrant returnees from the departments of San Salvador and Santa Ana.
Project of Certification of Labor Competencies.	Community	Economic	This initiative validates the knowledge and skills acquired in other countries by returned migrants. Thanks to this validation or certification, this population can freely practice a trade, justified in the standard norms of competencies of El Salvador. As a result, more than 200 people have been certified and have facilitated their reintegration into the labor market in areas such as rock board, ceramic flooring, fourth category electrician and gastronomy.
Training for the employability of migrant women in Central America - pilot program in El Salvador.	Community	Economic	The project's intended outcome was to train women who are at risk of irregular migration, returnees or regular migrants from another Central American country. The project consisted of the training and certification of 33 women from the municipalities of Santa Ana and Colón in basic digital skills and E-marketing.

Action	Level	Dimension	Description
<p>Contribution to the Care, Security and Psychosocial Recovery for Returned Migrant Women and their Children (Shelter House).</p>	<p>Community</p>	<p>Psychosocial</p>	<p>The objective of the project was to contribute to the care, protection and psychosocial recovery of returned migrant women and their children through the provision of technical equipment, furniture and equipment of the Shelter and Transition House in the eastern part of the country, for the incorporation into the economic and social reality in conditions of equality and non-discrimination.</p> <p>The target population of these actions are returning migrant women and their families from different countries, mainly the United States of America and Mexico, providing specialized care to returning migrant women who have experienced or faced any type or modality of violence in accordance with the Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free of Violence for Women (LEIV), either prior to their decision to migrate, in transit to the country of destination and/or on their return to the country.</p> <p>Finally, the result of the project was to benefit and assist 71 migrant women returnees with their children.</p>





Action	Level	Dimension	Description
Inclusion in the labor market of returned migrants.	Individual	Economic	In response to priority action 2 of axis 1 of the National Policy for Decent Employment 2017-2032 "National Migration for Development Program", actions are carried out aimed at generating decent employment by taking advantage of the knowledge and experience that Guatemalan migrants have acquired during their stay abroad. To address this priority action, key actors have been identified whose primary objective is the reinsertion and reintegration of returned migrants, promoting strategic alliances that favor the implementation of joint work and thus guaranteeing, through formal employment, a tool that helps to promote strategies for stability and permanence in our country.
Returned Migrant Assistance Window.	Individual	Social	It is the body that seeks to provide employment alternatives to the returned migrant population through the programs and services provided by the National Network of Public Employment Services such as guidance, technical training and labor intermediation, which also links to other services for the certification of skills, entrepreneurship and self-employment. Located in the Reception Centre for Returned Migrants of the Guatemalan Air Force, central offices of the National Employment Service and the Reception Centre for Migrants and Refugees in Quetzaltenango.
Job Orientation.	Community	Psychosocial	Advice on labor market trends and the training needs demanded by the productive sector, as well as identifying their potential and developing their skills to increase their chances of entering the labor market.



Action	Level	Dimension	Description
Labor intermediation	Structural	Social	It seeks to establish strategic alliances through awareness-raising meetings with the employer sector on issues of labor inclusion for returned migrants, with the aim of attracting job offers and intermediating them, to facilitate their employment.
My First Job Scholarship	Structural	Economic	The population is given the opportunity to join a private company as an apprentice, so that for four months it can enjoy the labor rights granted to Guatemalan citizens and at the same time obtain a formal job opportunity, in order to prevent irregular migration among young people aged 18 to 24.

## MEXICO



Action	Level	Dimension	Description
Dignified repatriation and repatriation procedure within Mexico			<p>The National Institute of Migration, through the Directorate General of Migrant Protection and Liaison, through the Directorate of Dignified Repatriation, serves Mexican Repatriated Persons arriving in the country, either under Titles 8 and 42 of the Code of the United States of America (USA), or in Voluntary Return, mainly from the U.S. or Canada, through the Repatriation Officers and Liaisons, located in the Northern Border and in the Representative Offices in the rest of the country, as well as in the Airports designated for this purpose.</p> <p>It should be noted that during the reception of repatriated Mexican nationals, the procedure operates with unrestricted respect for human rights and offers the services described briefly below:</p>

Action	Level	Dimension	Description
	Individual	Economic	<b>ACCES TO HEALTH SERVICES</b> Referral to the Instituto de Salud para el Bienestar (INSABI). If necessary, hospital transfer will be made so that the repatriated Mexican nationals receive emergency medical assistance.
	Individual	Economic	<b>POWER SUPPLY</b> Food and beverages are offered to Mexican returnees in order to meet their immediate food needs upon their arrival in Mexico.
	Individual	Economic	<b>EMPLOYABILTY</b> Through the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Mexican returnees are channeled to the National Employment Service's Employment Exchange and to the register of the Youth Building the Future Program, and are also informed about Unemployment Insurance.
	Individual	Economic	<b>ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROGRAMS</b> Mexican repatriated persons are informed of the social programs that the Government of Mexico has implemented to enable them to reintegrate in a better way in the labor, educational and social spheres.
	Individual	Economic	<b>RECOVERY OF BELONGINGS</b> Management for the importation of work tools, for a value of up to 5,000 dollars, during the first 6 months, from the repatriation.
	Individual	Psychosocial	<b>RIGHT TO IDENTIFY</b> Guidance to recover identity documents, such as: Birth Certificate, Unique Population Registry Code (CURP) and Temporary CURP, in case of not having any registration.

Action	Level	Dimension	Description
	Individual	Psychosocial	<b>REVALIDATION OF STUDIES</b> Resumption and revalidation of studies through the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA).
	Individual	Psychosocial	<b>CERTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF ACQUIRED SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b> Through the National Council for Standardization and Certification of Labor Competencies (CONOCER).
	Individual	Economic	<b>ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES</b> Through the Banco del Bienestar, formerly BANSEFI; presenting the Repatriation Certificate.
	Individual	Psychosocial	<b>LEGAL GUIDANCE ON ISSUES IN MEXICO</b> To direct the Mexican Repatriated Persons to the different agencies for the administration of justice, or similar, for the resolution of the issues of competence.
	Individual	Economic	<b>ADVICE WITH PENDING ISSUES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OR CANADA THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS</b> Arrangements for the possible recovery of belongings, through liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In this context of sharing actions that are currently being implemented, the delegation of Panama intervened to mention that some of the actions currently being carried out in the area of employment are: the identification of profiles required by companies to make a direct link with people; the delivery of seminars on development and employment with companies and trade unions; the alignment of actions and programs, as well as the generation of public-private partnerships.

In addition to the presentations made, there were interventions from Honduras and the Dominican Republic, who reported on the process they are currently undergoing and expressed their interest in the workshop and its relevance. The delegation of Honduras pointed out that they are currently working on the design of the comprehensive return policy and with it the issue of reintegration and reintegration; where the role of the National Council for the Protection of Honduran Migrants (CONAPROHM) is central, since it is composed of several government institutions, private companies, churches, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

For its part, the delegation of the Dominican Republic provided an overview of national legislation on reception, return and reintegration. It highlighted that on 6 November 2021, the Unit for the Reintegration of Repatriated Persons (UNRE) was integrated into the Human Rights Department of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic. Among the services it offers are: assistance with legal documentation (birth certificates, processing of identity cards; information on access to credit and financing; legal assistance for violation of their fundamental rights) and social and humanitarian assistance (support for education, assistance in labor management, medical assistance, support in temporary shelters for returnees who have no place of residence, etc.).

As it can be observed, while some countries are already implementing actions, others are in the process of designing plans, programs or modifications in the institutional structures, so it is relevant to share experiences in order to learn from other cases and move towards a comprehensive vision of sustainable reintegration.

#### **4.4 Key UN Agency Actions**

Other relevant actions and instruments that are implemented or have been developed by agencies of the United Nations (UN) in the field of sustainable reintegration are presented below.

##### **International Organization for Migration (IOM):**

- *Knowledge Management Centre for Return and Reintegration*

Established in 2017 under the European Union (EU) – International Organization for Migration (IOM) Joint Initiative, it aims to support the implementation of actions for the protection and reintegration of migrants, ensuring consistency of methodological approaches and harmonization of monitoring and evaluation

activities, establishing knowledge management tools and developing knowledge products.

- *Course on the Reintegration Handbook*

This online course is designed based on the Reintegration Handbook, covering the different levels (individual, community and structural) and dimensions (economic, social and psychosocial) of reintegration. It consists of five modules: 1) An integrated approach to reintegration; 2) Reintegration assistance at the individual level; 3) Reintegration assistance at the community level; 4) Reintegration assistance at the structural level and; 5) Monitoring and evaluation of reintegration assistance. It is available year-round, free and open to the public<sup>16</sup>.

- *Program: Integrated Responses on Migration from Central America*

The objective of this program is to contribute to reducing irregular migration from Central America by promoting safe, orderly and regular migration processes. It is aimed at migrants, returned migrants, their families and communities. Its geographical coverage includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. It is implemented with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and its implementation will be from 2020 to 2025. This program is expected to:

1. Improve mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of post-arrival care and the effectiveness of referral systems;
2. Facilitate sustainable integration and reintegration at individual, community and structural levels;
3. Design and implement evidence-based programs to reduce irregular migration, improve social services for vulnerable migrants and contribute to community-driven reintegration; and
4. Improve access to reliable information and spaces for sharing experiences and good practices through regional dialogue on human mobility and the dissemination of information products.

- *Thematic Working Group on Return and Reintegration of the United Nations Migration Network.*

In the framework of this group a toolkit was developed to support<sup>17</sup> the operationalization of the PMM objectives on Return, Readmission and Reintegration

<sup>16</sup> It can be accessed at the following address: <https://www.ecampus.iom.int/enrol/index.php?id=282>

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/es/thematic-working-group-5-return-and-reintegration>

(RRR). It consists of: 1) Position Paper: Ensuring Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration; 2) Mapping of Gaps and Promising Practices for Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration; 3) Checklist for Safe and Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration.

## International Labor Organization (ILO)

### • *Regional Socio-Economic Integration Strategy*

Addressed to the main host countries of the refugee, migrant and returnee population, in particular governmental institutions, employers' and workers' organizations, with the aim of promoting social dialogue on the socio-economic integration of people in mobility.

The Regional Strategy is geared towards formulating concrete responses to meet three objectives:

1. To reduce the levels of socio-economic vulnerability of people in mobility situations;
2. Maximize the contribution of this population to the economies of recipient countries; and
3. Promote social cohesion, thanks to initiatives that also benefit the host communities.

Priority axes of the Regional Strategy:

**Axis 1: Regularization and characterization.** To make the regularization and identification processes more flexible and expeditious and to carry out studies on their demographic and socioeconomic profile in order to promote their successful integration into the labor markets of the host countries.

**Axis 2: Vocational training and recognition of qualifications and competencies.** Promote vocational training, recognition of qualifications and recognition (assessment and certification of competencies) in the region, in order to promote labor inclusion.

**Axis 3: Employment promotion.** Promote access to and efficiency of labor intermediation programs and platforms, boost the employability of refugees and migrants, and take measures for the transition to the formal economy.

**Axis 4: Entrepreneurship and business development.** It contemplates the integration of migrants and refugees into sustainable entrepreneurship and value chain programs, as well as promoting self-employment.

**Axis 5: Financial inclusion.** It proposes facilitating access to financial services in host countries, promoting financial education and adapting the banking offer to the needs of the migrant and refugee population. In addition to raising awareness among actors about the rights and benefits of cooperation and partnerships within the sector.

**Axis 6: Access to social protection.** Promote a regional social protection floor and an information dissemination campaign on access to social security. The proposal is integrated with a horizontal dimension that refers to the number of people covered and another dimension, vertical, which refers to the social risks covered by the system and the level of quality of both economic and in-kind benefits.

**Axis 7: Social Cohesion.** Design of comprehensive programs for institutional strengthening and awareness-raising campaigns to combat discrimination and xenophobia. This axis promotes the linking of the host population to the different integration actions. In particular, the most vulnerable.



# CONCLUSIONS

There is great interest on behalf of the delegations representing the participating countries to work jointly on actions aimed at sustainable reintegration. To this end, they recognize that the main work has to be carried out within each State, where intersectoral, inter-institutional and intergovernmental coordination is necessary, in order to be able to work at a regional level. They recognize the need to learn from experiences with positive results in order to improve their internal processes in this area.

Although it is recognized that many of the actions implemented so far have been developed thanks to funding from international cooperation and support from various agencies (especially the IOM and ILO), it is also recognized that they cannot rely solely on these resources. Therefore, it is necessary to promote that each State generates public policies anchored to its institutional structures and that allocate resources for the planning, development and implementation of actions aimed at the returning migrant population, as well as the generation of public policies for social development and human security that contribute to prevent people from migrating for reasons of need.

At present, although there are initiatives focused on reintegration, most of the actions are focused on the short term. That is to say, many of the efforts are concentrated on assisted return and attention to conjunctural situations, but little framed in a reintegration plan. This is linked to the concern, also expressed by the representatives of the participating countries, that most of the actions and measures implemented are reactive, there is little in terms of prevention and actions thought in the medium and long term, as well as with a comprehensive perspective that leads to sustainable reintegration.

There is a need to have evaluation, follow-up and monitoring processes for the actions implemented in order to know the impact generated and the results, and based on this, to determine which experiences can be considered as good practices and be shared in the region.

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