

GUIDELINE 15: Support migrants' host communities

Interventions should also address the impact on communities in the State of origin to which migrants return, host States from which migrants have fled, or States of transit to which migrants flee. Such communities may lack sufficient resources, services, and infrastructure to support migrants. If migrants receive assistance to the exclusion of members of host communities, perceptions relating to preferential treatment may create or exacerbate tensions and lead to discrimination, stigmatization, or social exclusion. An approach to post-crisis action that incorporates the needs of host communities is more likely to be successful than one that solely targets migrants and their families. Such an inclusive approach can foster community and social cohesiveness and stability in the long-term. This may be particularly important if migrants and their host communities continue to deal with the effects of crises years after they end.

The mass return of migrants to States of origin if not properly managed can also lead to adverse development impacts, including the loss of remittances, unemployment and underemployment, pressure on infrastructure, resources, services (including water, electricity, waste management, education, health, housing, and transportation), and increased poverty, all of which can cause broader societal tensions. Similarly, when large groups of migrants are evacuated or leave a host State in haste, their departure may create skill and labor shortages in host States. While migrants also contribute to States of transit, if they remain for unanticipated extended periods of time without effective integration, their presence may burden local infrastructure and services.

Effectively managing migration is important in the wake of a natural disaster or conflict. Host States may want to encourage migrants to return as soon as possible to aid in reconstruction or stimulate the local economy, and towards this end may create flexible visa options to promote migrant return to host States. States of origin may see value in facilitating diaspora engagement in post-crisis action and recovery.

Sample Practices

- *Analysis of short, medium-, and longer-term socio-economic impacts of return following crises, at the local and national levels in States of origin and host States.*
- *Promotion of diaspora contributions through actions, such as matching grants and customs waivers to facilitate financial and in-kind support.*
- *Inclusion of returned migrants' needs in State of origin development plans.*
- *Engagement of and support to host populations through consultations and inclusive responses.*
- *Social cohesion programs addressing migrants, migrant networks, and host communities to prevent and mitigate tensions and foster reintegration.*

PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT GUIDELINE 15: Support migrants' host communities

Multiple Stakeholders

Analysis of the socio-economic impact of return

Research to assess, analyze, and understand the short, medium-, and longer-term socio-economic impact of return following crises, at the local and national levels in States of origin and host States as well as on migrants, their families, and local communities, can facilitate better and more targeted responses in future crisis situations.

Host States

Integration of migrants and migration in recovery and reconstruction plans

Host States will develop plans for recovery and reconstruction. Migration and migrants should be incorporated into recovery and reconstruction plans. Factors to consider include:

- Whether migrants with particular skills are needed;
- Whether development frameworks need to be adjusted as a result of a crisis, and if so, how to incorporate migration and migrants when making those adjustments;
- Addressing potential tensions between local populations who may perceive migrants as competition, including in the context of reconstruction efforts;
- Engaging employers and relevant ministries, such as labor and economic ministries, to develop plans and understand labor market needs.

States of Origin

Inclusion of returnees' needs in development plans

Mass returns over short periods of time can strain local resources and infrastructure and negatively affect the local labor market. If the State of origin has a development plan in place, nationally or locally, such plans may need adjustments to address the consequences of mass returns. Development plans could also seek to take advantage of the resources and skills that returning citizens bring with them to the benefit of States of origin and host communities.

Engagement of and support to host populations

The return of large numbers of citizens can place pressure on host populations and community infrastructure and resources. When assistance is provided to returned citizens to the exclusion of host communities, it may exacerbate tensions and result in discrimination and stigmatization. Measures to mitigate such consequences include:

- Consultation mechanisms that include the participation of host communities, including community, traditional, and religious leaders, women, and local civil society;

- Inclusive service provision for returned citizens and host communities;
- Social cohesion and community stabilization programs.

Social cohesion programs

Social cohesion programs involving communities, community organizations, local authorities, and other stakeholders can strengthen the bond between returnees and host communities, prevent the creation of tensions, and foster reintegration. Measures to strengthen social cohesion include:

- Raising awareness on the positive impacts that can accrue from returned citizens;
- Cooperating with local social networks and organizations in developing community-based activities, such as sporting events, cultural events, or festivals;
- Bringing together local communities and returnees to discuss local issues, sources of conflict, and to create more cooperative intergroup relations;
- Identifying focal points within the community (and among returning citizens where they maintain connections with each other) and creating a network of community officers who can advise on issues as they arise, relay information on support and programs to local actors, and suggest events or campaigns;
- Creating funding programs to provide grants to community organizations as a means to invest in local community structures, ensure programming meets community needs, and empower communities to resolve tensions and find solutions. These programs could provide grants to raise awareness, promote understanding, respect, fairness and a sense of belonging, or host events, festivals, or cultural projects.

Promotion of diaspora contributions

Diaspora can contribute in significant ways to addressing the effects of crises on citizens, communities, and States. Ways to promote diaspora contributions include:

- Customs waivers to facilitate financial and in-kind support (e.g., infrastructure and equipment);
- Matching grants and other incentive schemes to promote investment in host communities;
- Providing work permits and flexible re-entry arrangements to enable diaspora to address essential needs, such as medical and psychosocial services;
- Promoting the ability of diaspora to create jobs for returned citizens;
- Facilitating the role of celebrity diaspora in raising awareness.

International Organizations

Multisectoral post-disaster needs assessment

International organizations can support the implementation of multisectoral and multi-stakeholder post-crisis needs assessments aimed at evaluating the impact of a crisis on migrants, their families, and communities. These assessments can be carried out in migrants' host States or States of origin with a focus on economic recovery and post-crisis reconstruction. To assess recovery needs in host States, existing tools, such as the post disaster needs assessment and

post-conflict needs assessment can be adapted to capture information on migrants' economic and property losses, access to social services, and the role of migration in local economies. Migrants should be provided with opportunities to participate in such assessments. In States of origin, the development and use of specific tools to assess the conditions of returning migrants would be helpful to inform targeted responses.

Development assistance frameworks

International organizations can promote the integration of migrants in multi-stakeholder national and regional development assistance frameworks and mechanisms, including when those frameworks need to be adapted to respond to the consequences of crises or mass returns.

Community development platforms

International organizations can create platforms to support community development approaches that involve national and local actors, including national and local authorities, the private sector, civil society, international and local humanitarian and development actors, and returning migrants. These platforms can ensure a multisector response to recovery.

Community development projects

Community projects in communities experiencing mass returns can improve the absorption of returned migrants, facilitate their integration, promote social cohesion, and reduce tensions to mitigate potential stigmatization of returnees.

Civil Society

The above-mentioned practices on multisectoral post-disaster needs assessment, community development platforms, and community development projects for international organizations are also relevant to civil society.

Programs promoting social cohesion between migrants and host communities

Community-based post-crisis recovery programs that take into account the needs of the broader community may benefit both returning migrants and the community to which they return. Social cohesion between migrants and their communities can be crucial for a sustainable reintegration process. Civil society can implement programs that promote this approach, including by:

- Involving migrants and relevant communities in local reintegration planning to obtain the views of migrants and the communities to which they return and assess the needs and challenges that may arise in the immediate and longer term. This involvement can take place through community meetings, focus groups, or social events;
- Advocating with States and other organizations providing assistance to ensure that migrant and community needs are understood and incorporated into national and local planning and programming;
- Promoting awareness-raising and information for host communities on migrants' specific needs and vulnerabilities;

- Advocating with State authorities to enhance resources for communities to which migrants return, including health facilities, schools, and shelters;
- Monitoring reintegration and alerting local and national authorities in case of conflicts or tension.