

IOM Finland

REPORT ON A REINTEGRATION SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY AMONG VOLUNTARY RETURNEES FROM FINLAND

October 2019



ASYLUM, MIGRATION
AND INTEGRATION FUND

Supported by the European Union



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SUMMARY

This report presents the key results of the *Pilot Project on Monitoring of Voluntary Returnees from Finland* implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) between November 2018 and October 2019. The project was funded by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) as part of the AUDA project¹. Monitoring was conducted in the target countries of the AUDa project: in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan. The main objective of this monitoring project was to contribute to further developing reintegration policies and practices in Finland based on evidence obtained through *reintegration sustainability monitoring* of voluntary returnees assisted through the Finnish Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) system. Among the main aims of this monitoring exercise was to learn to which extent migrants assisted with AVRR from Finland reintegrated in a sustainable manner in the communities to which they returned, and to identify the main factors that affected the sustainability of the returnees' reintegration. The interviewees were assisted in their voluntary return by IOM to the afore-mentioned countries under the project *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for Asylum Seekers and Other Migrant Groups in Finland* (AVRR-FI), which is an ongoing programme funded by the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) based on relevant Finnish legislation. The Finnish Immigration Service and the applicant's reception centre coordinate the application procedure and decide on the beneficiary's eligibility to a reintegration grant, after which the case is referred to IOM. IOM's assistance includes coordination of domestic and international travel arrangements, acquisition of travel documents from relevant embassies, provision of departure, transit, and arrival assistance, and payment of cash grants upon departure and of post-arrival reintegration support through IOM offices, including implementation of tailor-made in-kind reintegration support measures for eligible beneficiaries.²

This report describes first the context of the monitoring project, and subsequently the methodology underlying the survey. The subsequent chapter provides information on the practical arrangements as well as more detailed background information on the interviewees. The chapter 'Survey results' presents the major findings of the survey and suggests analysis of, and explanations for, the results. In the end of this report, "lessons learned" are described and recommendations given for future actions to be taken in AVRR programming in Finland.

¹ AUDA ("Assisted Voluntary Return to Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan") is a two-year (2018-2019) project run by Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) in cooperation with Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Crisis Management Centre Finland. The aim of the project has been to further develop AVRR in Finland by increasing cooperation with the countries of origin and other international counterparts, monitoring reintegration of returnees, diversifying communication methods, cooperating with the diaspora and cooperating with the Finnish civilian crisis management experts. The project has been funded by the National AMIF Programme of Finland.

² For more details on the financial assistance available, please refer to the section "Survey respondents"

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Assistance to voluntary returnees has been provided by IOM Finland since the early 2000s under various funding arrangements, and since 2009 through AVRR projects funded by EU funding instruments (European Return Fund, SOLID) as well as the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri).

These projects have included reintegration assistance, but there has been a lack of information on the impact of the assistance provided and sustainability of reintegration of the beneficiaries more specifically, as no systematic monitoring of AVRR beneficiaries from Finland has been carried out. The project at hand is also the first time that monitoring of reintegration sustainability has been requested and funded by Migri. IOM Finland has conducted monitoring on the reintegration of voluntary returnees only once (2014-2015), but on a limited scale. For evidence-based programming, gathering context-specific data on post-return outcomes is needed in understanding their varied needs after return as well as informing ongoing and future AVRR programme planning³.

As this was a pilot monitoring project, it is expected that its results will also provide essential information for planning how monitoring can be streamlined into global AVRR programming in the most effective and efficient manner, and to contribute to answering the question “To what extent have migrants assisted by IOM achieved a level of sustainable reintegration in communities to which they return?”

METHODOLOGY

IOM advocates for the adoption of a holistic approach to reintegration. The monitoring methodology used in this project is based on IOM’s “Integrated Approach to Reintegration”⁴, which represents a comprehensive way to view the reintegration process, and aims to examine returnees’ reintegration according to indicators related to economic, social, and psychosocial factors. At the same time, the integrated approach acknowledges that reintegration has not only individual, but also community and structural levels. This means that notwithstanding the essential need for a tailored, migrant-centred approach to reintegration – which allows to respond to the individual needs of the returnees – also communal factors and larger structural issues should be considered when designing and implementing reintegration assistance schemes.

According to IOM, 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 decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity. Sustainable and successful reintegration does not exclude a possible remigration.

IOM sees that “the factors affecting the reintegration process and its sustainability can be similar to those that resulted in the decision to migrate in the first place. They can be of economic, social, and

³ A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (IOM 2018).

⁴ Towards an integrated approach to reintegration in the context of return” (IOM 2017).

https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/Towards-an-Integrated-Approach-to-Reintegration.pdf

psychosocial nature and they relate at the same time to the individual returnees, communities to which they return, and the structural environment. Various factors influence a person's ability to reintegrate into his/her country of origin. This process takes time, as returnees' individual capacities and vulnerabilities, community absorption capacities and perceptions, and the external environment may present opportunities for or barriers to sustainable reintegration."⁵

In this survey, IOM applied the *Reintegration Sustainability Survey*, developed in 2018 in the framework of the EU-IOM Knowledge Management Hub, based on the indicators identified and field-tested under the DFID-funded Mediterranean Sustainable Reintegration (MEASURE) project⁶. In the MEASURE project, a stock of key standards and indicators to measure sustainability used by actors in the field of return and reintegration were charted, and the findings were tested with the support of the Samuel Hall think tank through comprehensive fieldwork in five countries of origin: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Senegal and Somalia. A set of 15 core indicators and 30 measurement elements recommended for measuring sustainability of reintegration was among the main accomplishments of the project, and they are adapted in this survey into 32 questions. They approach and measure the sustainability on three different dimensions: *economic*, *social* and *psychosocial*.

The *economic dimension* of reintegration covers aspects of reintegration which contribute to economic self-sufficiency, such as ability to borrow money, need for food rationing, adequacy of employment, etc. The *social dimension* observes the extent to which returnees have reached social stability within their community. Indicators used are, for example, access to services relating to housing, education, justice, health, and other public infrastructure services in the community. The *psychosocial dimension* of reintegration covers the emotional, mental, and psychological elements of reintegration, and indicators in this section of the questionnaire are participation in social activities, sense of physical security, feeling of discrimination and sense of belonging to community, among others.

The indicators are accompanied by a scoring system allowing to measure the sustainability of reintegration. The data collected in the reintegration sustainability survey is coded and fed into the system which produces one composite reintegration score representing as a numerical measure overall reintegration across dimensions. Based on the core indicators adapted from the MEASURE project, the system also produces three separate dimensional scores which measure sustainability in three specific facets of reintegration: economic, social and psychosocial. The 32 questions (30 + two follow-up questions) of the survey form are divided accordingly in three sections.

⁵ A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (IOM: 2018)
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/a_framework_for_avrr_en.pdf 15.10.2019

⁶ Samuel Hall / IOM (2017) *Setting Standards for an integrated approach to reintegration*, commissioned by IOM and funded by DFID.
https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/IOM_SAMUEL_HALL_MEASURE_REPORT%20017.pdf 15.10.2019

see also: *Measuring sustainable reintegration*, in: Migration Policy Practice Vol. IX, Number 1 , 2019 (pp. 30).
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mpp_37.pdf 15.10.2019

These scores are generated from respondents' answers using a weighting system⁷. Each indicator is assigned a "weight" factor, indicating its relative importance to the sustainability of the reintegration process. Respondents' answers are measured between the values of 0 and 1. They are either binary (coded as 0 or 1), or they are scored on a 5-point scale. If a score is 0, it suggests that a returnee does not show any signs of reintegration, and that he/she requires intensive reintegration assistance. A higher score (up to a maximum of 1) indicates that a returnee has succeeded better in his/her reintegration.

If the composite reintegration score (or the individual economic, social, and psychosocial score) reaches values above 0.50, the beneficiaries are generally considered to be able to progress in their reintegration rather independently. Scores under 0.50 suggest that the beneficiary needs intensified support.

Interpretation of the scores is, however, not always necessarily unambiguous or straightforward. While the composite reintegration score is useful as an overall tool for evaluation, reporting, and analysis, the three dimensional scores can highlight discrepancies in progress between the dimensions, and two persons with a similar composite reintegration score might have very different dimensional scores, and varied reintegration experiences and needs. In this report, the scores are reviewed in relation to returnees' background information, such as sex, age, return city/community, reintegration grant type and family status.

Survey participants were asked also an open, two-part question; "*What is your opinion on the quality of the reintegration support you received from Finland? Have you got any suggestions on how to improve it?*" The additional question was requested by the Donor, and its purpose was to give beneficiaries a possibility to express themselves regarding how they experienced the reintegration support they had received from Finland. Answers to this additional question did not affect the reintegration scores.

TIMELINE, CASELOAD AND PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

As reintegration is a long and non-linear process, in an ideal case, reintegration sustainability monitoring interviews would be conducted on three occasions: soon after the return in order to get a baseline assessment, six to nine months after the return to see the progress of reintegration, and again 12-18 months after the return. IOM's approach regarding completing a reintegration sustainability survey recommends that if monitoring data can be collected only once (as was the case in the project at hand), it should be done 12-18 months after the beneficiary has returned to his/her country of origin. Given the mentioned timeframe, in this project a cut-off date was set at 15.4.2019. The beneficiaries to be monitored were chosen from those who had returned from Finland to their countries of origin ca. 12-18 months before the cut-off date, with the assistance of IOM Finland. The interviews took place in the period February to June 2019, meaning that the cut-off date was set in the middle of the interview period. In this project a baseline assessment of the returnee's reintegration

⁷ The indicators and monitoring questionnaire will be published as part of the IOM (2019) Reintegration Handbook: Practical Guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, produced with financial support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

could not be established as reintegration sustainability monitoring had not been included in the project at the time when the respondents returned to their countries of origin.

The project's original target was to interview 25 returnees both in Afghanistan and Somalia, and 150 in Iraq. However, it proved challenging to find enough respondents in Afghanistan and Somalia, and finally it was possible to interview only one person in Afghanistan and four in Somalia, and the rest of the survey participants (195) were selected in Iraq.⁸

There were ca. 550 potential interviewees of which approximately 10 per cent were women vs. 90 per cent men. In order to ensure that possible differences in reintegration sustainability between men and women could be more reliably analysed, IOM and Migri jointly decided that the monitoring conducted should aim for a slightly higher percentage of women at ca. 25 per cent (and 75% men). The target was not quite reached as 16.5 per cent of the respondents were women vs. 83.5 per cent men. ⁹Beneficiaries of 18-34 years formed the biggest interviewee age group.

When conducting the interviews, gender and cultural factors were taken into consideration. For example, female participants were interviewed by a female staff member when it was possible. Most of the interviews were conducted at the homes or working places of the interviewees in order to get a more in-depth picture and understanding of beneficiaries' situation and living conditions. There were five IOM staff members conducting interviews in different parts of Iraq, and one each in Afghanistan and Somalia. It took approximately 30 minutes to complete one questionnaire.

A training visit was arranged by IOM Finland to IOM Iraq in Erbil in February 2019. Two staff members from Finland met with relevant colleagues in Erbil and went through the methodology applied in this monitoring project, the questionnaire and all practical arrangements regarding the interviews, documentation and other details related to the survey. IOM staff in Afghanistan and Somalia were briefed via video calls and e-mail communication, which was considered sufficient in light of the small caseload in these two countries.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

This chapter gives demographic and other relevant background information on the respondents.

- In total, 200 persons were interviewed, of which 195 in Iraq, four (4) in Somalia, and one (1) in Afghanistan.
- 67.3 per cent of respondents were 18-34 years old, 31.7 per cent were 35-64, and one per cent was 65 years or older (Table 1).
- 16.5 per cent of the respondents were female vs. 83.5 per cent male (Table 2).
- 20.5 per cent returned as a family/couple vs. 79.5 per cent who returned alone.

Note: This breakdown merely refers to whether a returnee travelled alone or with family members; many 'single' returnees may have spouses or other close family members in their country of origin.

⁸ See chapter Conclusions & Recommendations for a more detailed explanation.

⁹ See chapter Conclusions & Recommendations for a more detailed explanation.

- Ca. 71 per cent (141) of interviews were conducted outside of an IOM office, i.e. at home/working place of the returnee or somewhere else, and ca. 29 per cent at IOM premises. Only one person was interviewed by phone.
- Length of absence from the country of origin was on average 32 months (with the median being 31 months).
- 91.5 per cent (183) of respondents had received reintegration assistance in cash ranging between EUR 750 and 2,000, while 8.5 per cent (17) received in-kind reintegration assistance at EUR 2,500/person.¹⁰ The average reintegration assistance amount across all support types was EUR 1,674. Cash reintegration assistance at a *reduced* amount had been granted to 7.5 per cent of respondents, the regular amount to 57 per cent, and an *increased* amount to 27 per cent of respondents¹¹ (Figure 1).
- 61.5 per cent of the respondents did not work at the time of the survey.
- Most of the beneficiaries in Iraq had returned to Baghdad area, therefore also most of the interviews (120 of 195) were conducted in Baghdad.
- 75.5 per cent of survey participants had returned to the same community they had originally left from, and 24.5 per cent had settled in a different community following their voluntary return (Table 3).

Table 1: Respondents by age group (N=200)

Age group	%
18-34	67.3%
35-64	31.7%
65+	1.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

Table 2: Respondents by sex (N=200)

female	male	Grand Total
16.5%	83.5%	100.0%

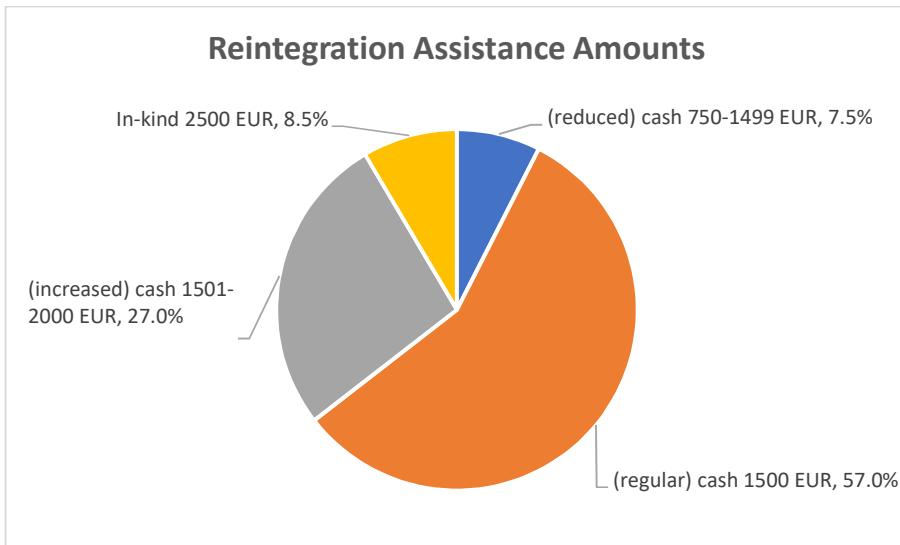
¹⁰ Beneficiaries could choose between cash or in-kind support when applying for AVRR.

¹¹ The regular cash grant to Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia was EUR 1500 per person according to the Decree on Assisted Voluntary Return (648/2017) valid at the time of the return of monitored beneficiaries. For justified reasons, the returnees could receive increased assistance up to EUR 2000, but it is also possible that the sum was reduced, or assistance not granted at all if it was considered that grounds for assistance do not exist. The in-kind assistance was EUR 2500. In-kind assistance was implemented by the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) in Iraq, and by IOM in Afghanistan and Somalia. As per the afore-mentioned decree, grant decisions are made by Finnish reception centres or by the Finnish Immigration Service.

Table 3: Respondents by community of return vs. origin

Community of return same as community of origin	% of respondents
No	24.5%
Yes	75.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Figure 1: Respondents' reintegration assistance by type and amount



SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter compiles the survey results. Most results are presented without specifying any of the target countries, given that, comparing the results in the three countries would not be reliable due to the very limited number of respondents in Afghanistan and Somalia. Furthermore, as 97.5 per cent of the interviews were conducted in Iraq, some information in this chapter is country-specific, and related only to Iraq as indicated.

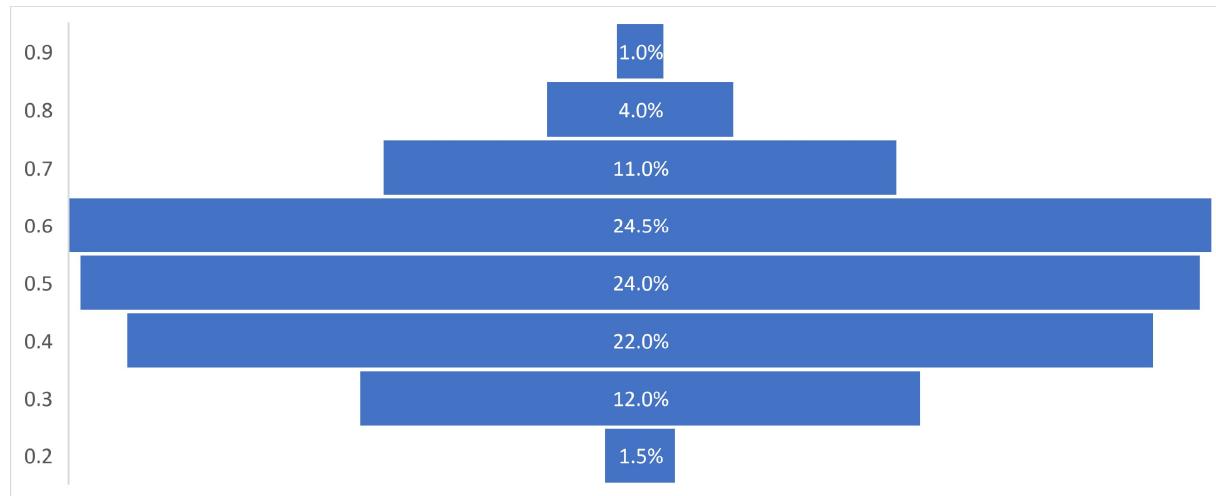
As explained in the methodology section, the composite reintegration score provides a general picture of returnees' reintegration, while the three dimensional scores provide a more detailed understanding of beneficiaries' individual needs and experiences in the economic, social and psychosocial dimension, respectively. Bearing this in mind, the composite score results are reviewed first, in particular how they are related to sex, age, return community, reintegration support type (cash/in-kind) and family status, as well as to the time of absence from the CoO.

Thereafter, a closer look is taken at the dimensional reintegration scores and some specific individual questions. Finally, after a comparison of three example cases, a sample of answers to the additional, open question is presented.

Composite and dimensional scores – Overview

In general, it can be noted that there was not a wide dispersion among the average composite or dimensional reintegration scores. The average composite and dimensional scores were in the range of 0.42 – 0.54.

Figure 2: Composite reintegration score, respondents per score (N=200)



It is noticeable that 65 per cent of all respondents scored 0.5 or higher on the composite reintegration score (Figure 2), which could be interpreted so that most of the respondents have reached a fair level of reintegration. According to IOM's reintegration sustainability monitoring methodology used in this

survey, respondents with a reintegration score below 0.50 are more likely to require additional, more comprehensive individual support¹².

However, as mentioned earlier in the methodology chapter, the explanation might not be that unambiguous, as the composite score provides a general picture only, whereas respondents' dimensional scores may differ and some may require additional support in one particular, low-scoring, dimension. This is indeed the case with the sample analysed in this report, since some significant differences between average dimensional scores can be observed: As Table 4 shows, the average score among all respondents in the economic dimension is considerably lower (0.42) compared to the social and psychosocial dimensions (0.54 for both). The fact that economic reintegration proved more challenging for survey respondents is also illustrated by the percentage of respondents with scores of 0.5 and above: In the economic dimension, only 34.5 per cent of respondents had a score of 0.5 or above, whereas in the social and psychosocial dimensions the share of respondents was 74.5 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively (See Figure 3)

Figure 3: Economic reintegration score, respondents per score (N=200)

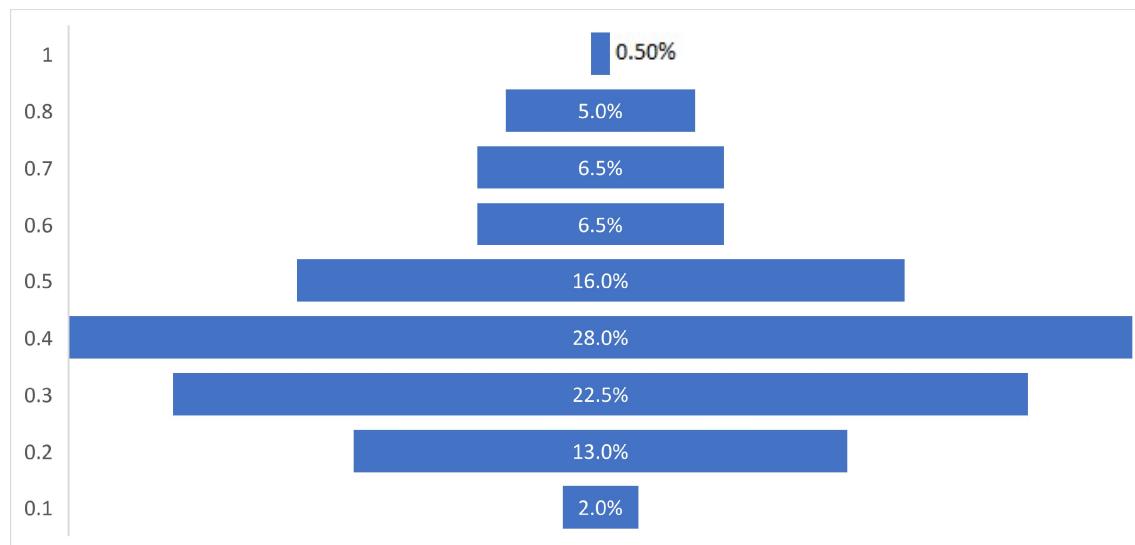


Table 4: Average dimensional scores (N=200)

Economic reintegration score	Social reintegration score	Psychosocial reintegration score
0.42	0.54	0.54

¹² Samuel Hall / IOM (2017) *Setting Standards for an integrated approach to reintegration*, p. 24.

Results according to respondents' demographic and other characteristics

Overall, the survey results show that respondents' sex, age, reintegration assistance mode of delivery (cash vs. in-kind), or length of absence from the home country do not seem to have a *significant* impact on the **composite reintegration** score among the respondents of this survey.

As Table 5 shows, the length of absence from the country of origin does not seem to correlate with the respondents' composite reintegration scores. However, a slightly higher score (0.56) can be noted for those who had been away for more than three years ($=< 37$ months) compared to those who had been abroad for a shorter time (0.50-0.53).¹³

Table 5: Average composite reintegration score and length of absence from country of origin

Length of absence	% of respondents	Composite reintegration score
<=12 months	4.0%	0.53
13-24 months	28.5%	0.50
25-36 months	57.5%	0.50
>=37 months	10.0%	0.56
Grand Total	100.0%	0.51

Some slight differences can be noted concerning respondents' community of return (Table 6): 75.5 per cent of the respondents had returned to their original community and 24.5 per cent to another community. The average composite reintegration score of the whole sample was 0.51. However, those who had returned to the same community they had left from showed slightly higher scores (0.52), whereas those who returned to another community appeared to face somewhat more challenges in their reintegration (0.47). This difference appears to be due in particular to challenges faced in the social dimension of reintegration (Table 7), as those who returned to another community than their original one had an average social reintegration score of 0.49 compared to 0.56 among those who returned to their community of origin.

Those who returned to a different community reported challenges, among others, in accessing housing, justice and law enforcement, as well as health care. For example, among the respondents who did not return to their original community, 60.7 per cent reported (very) poor access to housing. Moreover, among the same group, 51.0 per cent rated their access to justice and law enforcement (very) poor (vs. 31.8% of those who returned to their original community). Similarly, access to justice was rated as (very) good by 42.4 per cent of returnees to their original community (vs. only 18.4 per

¹³ Due to the rather small size of the group of respondents who had been away from their country of origin for less than a year or more than three years, the data unfortunately does not enable further analysis of, or explanations for, this finding.

cent among those who returned to a different community). Regarding access to housing, 36.7 per cent rated it (very) poor among the respondents whose return community was not their original one (vs. 17.9% out of the group who returned to their original community).

Table 6: Average composite reintegration score and community of return and community of origin

Community of return same as community of origin?	Respondents	Composite reintegration score
No	24.5%	0.47
Yes	75.5%	0.52
Grand Total	100.0%	0.51

Table 7: Average reintegration scores and community of return and community of origin

Scores	Community of return the same as origin?		Total
	No	Yes	
Economic reintegration score	0.41	0.42	0.42
Social reintegration score	0.49	0.56	0.54
Psychosocial reintegration score	0.52	0.55	0.54
Composite reintegration score	0.47	0.52	0.51
Respondents	49 (24.5%)	151 (75.5%)	200

There were hardly any noticeable differences between the reintegration scores of male and female respondents, except for the social reintegration score in which women scored slightly lower (0.51) compared to men (0.55) (Table 8). It appears that women's lower social reintegration score is a combined result from all questions measuring social reintegration, with no single question standing out to explain the difference. However, the overall composite scores between men and women were close to each other with a difference of 0.01, which is likely negligible (0.50 vs 0.51).

Table 8: Average reintegration scores and sex

Sex	Economic reintegration score	Social reintegration score	Psychosocial reintegration score	Composite reintegration score
female	0.41	0.51	0.54	0.50
male	0.42	0.55	0.55	0.51
Grand Total	0.42	0.54	0.54	0.51

Reintegration scores between age groups are shown in Table 9. Approximately two thirds (67.3%) of respondents were in the age group of 18-34 years and one third (31.7%) were 35-64 years old. The latter group scored somewhat lower than the former in the economic dimension, otherwise there were very small differences in the scores between different age groups. As only one per cent of the respondents were 65 years or older, their results do not allow for a more detailed analysis or comparison with the two other age groups.

Table 9: Average reintegration scores and age

Age	Economic reintegration score	Social reintegration score	Psychosocial reintegration score	Composite reintegration score
18-34	0.42	0.54	0.55	0.51
35-64	0.39	0.54	0.53	0.50
65+	0.54	0.57	0.49	0.54
Grand Total	0.42	0.54	0.54	0.51

Respondents who had returned to their country of origin alone received in general higher reintegration scores than those who had returned together with their spouse or family, as is shown in Table 10. In particular, those who returned together with family members seemed to have more challenges economically, as their average economic reintegration score was only 0.38 vs. 0.43 among those who returned as single returnees. As an example, only one of the interviewees who had returned with family members had stated to be satisfied with their economic situation, and all others were less satisfied. A similar difference is noticeable concerning the social reintegration score (0.49 vs. 0.56).

Table 10: Average reintegration scores and family status at the time of return

	% of respondents	Economic reintegration score	Social reintegration score	Psychosocial reintegration score	Composite reintegration score
return as family/couple	20.5%	0.38	0.49	0.51	0.46
single returnee	79.5%	0.43	0.56	0.55	0.52
Grand Total	100.0%	0.42	0.54	0.54	0.51

Concerning the reintegration assistance received by respondents, some slight differences can be noted depending on the type and amount of the support (Table 11): Respondents who received reduced or regular cash assistance in the range of 750 to 1,500 EUR showed a slightly lower economic reintegration score (0.41) compared to those who had received increased cash support of 1,501-2,000 EUR (0.43). Furthermore, recipients of in-kind reintegration assistance with a value of 2,500 EUR had the highest scores with an average of 0.44.

Table 11: Average economic reintegration score and reintegration support type/amount

Reintegration support type/amount	Respondents	Economic reintegration score
(reduced) cash 750-1499 EUR	15	0.41
(regular) cash 1500 EUR	114	0.41
(increased) cash 1501-2000 EUR	54	0.43
in-kind (2500 EUR)	17	0.44
Grand Total	200	0.42

Selected individual questions

The dimensional and composite scores results presented above give a general picture of beneficiaries' reintegration levels. In addition to the scores, the following individual questions from the survey were chosen for closer observation in order to illustrate reintegration mechanisms and areas that appear to be essential for sustainable reintegration in light of the responses collected.

"How satisfied are you with your current economic situation?"

As shown in Table 12, only 11.5 per cent of respondents were (very) satisfied with their economic situation, while 26 per cent said the economic situation was fair, and 62.5 per cent were (very) dissatisfied with their economic situation. This correlates with the number of unemployed (61.5%) respondents. There were no major differences between male and female respondents.

However, and as one might expect, respondents who were working at the time of the interview showed considerably higher rates of satisfaction with their economic situation, with 23.3 per cent of them stating that they were (very) satisfied with their situation, and 35.6 per cent considering it "ok", while 41.1 per cent were nevertheless (very) dissatisfied. This contrasts strongly with the answers given by those not working, where only 4.9 per cent were (very) satisfied, 19.5 per cent "ok" and the remaining 75.6 per cent (very) dissatisfied.

Table 12: Satisfaction with economic situation (N=200)

Satisfaction with economic situation	% of respondents
(very) dissatisfied	62.5%
OK	26.0%
(very) satisfied	11.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

"Would you wish to receive specialized psychological support?"

Out of all the interviewees 52.0 per cent did not express a wish to receive specialized psychological support, whereas 36.0 per cent wanted to receive it. The difference between male and female respondents was noteworthy: more than half of the female respondents (51.5%) expressed their wish to receive such support vs. one third (33.9%) of the male respondents. 12.0 per cent were hesitant or did not want to answer (Table 13). It is difficult to know the exact reason for the difference, but it could be assumed that this is a gender-sensitive issue and socially more acceptable for women than men to express a desire for psychological support.

Table 13: Wish to receive specialized psychological support (N=200)

	female	male	Grand Total
I don't know/wish to answer	12.1%	12.0%	12.0%
no	36.4%	55.1%	52.0%
yes	51.5%	32.9%	36.0%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

"How physically safe do you feel for yourself and your family during everyday activities outside?"

When asked about the feeling of safety, approximately two thirds of the respondents stated to feel either neutral (34%) or (very) safe (29.5%), while 36.5 per cent responded that they feel (very) unsafe. Notably, men's scores were lower than women's: Out of the male respondents, 39.5 per cent expressed feeling (very) unsafe during outside activities. Among females, the percentage was somewhat lower at 21.2 per cent. Out of women, 78.8. per cent of the respondents expressed their

feeling of safety as neutral or (very) safe, whereas 60.4 percent of male respondents expressed the same (Table 14).

Table 14: Sense of physical security and sex (N=200)

Feeling of safety	female	male	Grand Total
unsafe or very unsafe	21.2%	39.5%	36.5%
neutral	42.4%	32.3%	34.0%
safe or very safe	36.4%	28.1%	29.5%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The feeling of physical security was also examined in view of respondents' community of return. Out of all interviewees, 36.5 per cent reported feeling physically (very) unsafe. However, not returning to one's own community of origin seems to have had a negative impact on the feeling of safety among the interviewees, as 46.9 per cent of those who did not return to their original community felt (very) unsafe (Table 15).

Table 15: Sense of physical security and community of return

Sense of physical security	Community the same as origin		
	No	Yes	Grand Total
unsafe or very unsafe	46.9%	33.1%	36.5%
neutral	24.5%	37.1%	34.0%
safe or very safe	28.6%	29.8%	29.5%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

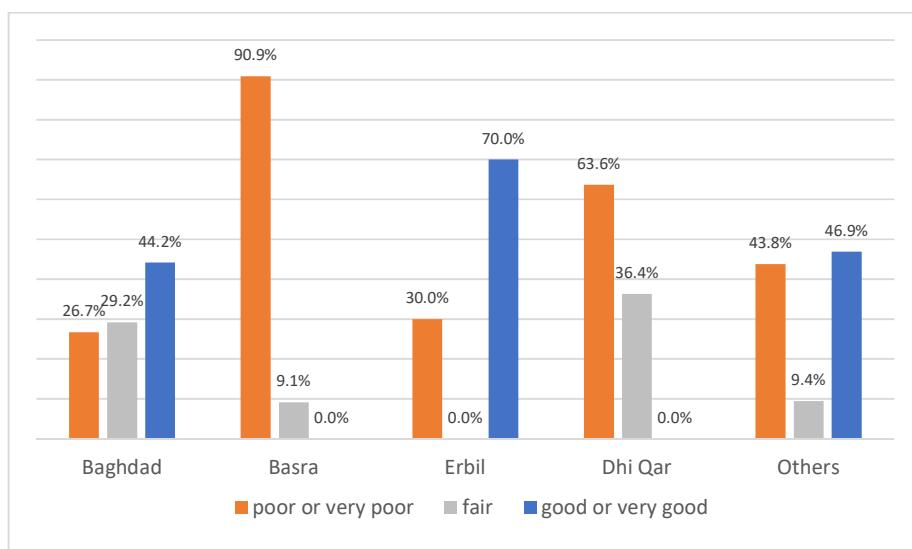
"How would you rate the access to safe drinking water in your community?"

Within the aspects of social reintegration, it was noticed in this survey that among Iraqi returnees, the lack of safe drinking water is alarming in Basra region (Figure 4/Table 16). The result shows that 90.9 per cent of the respondents from Basra area evaluated their access to safe drinking water (very) poor, and none as (very) good. Similarly, respondents from Dhi Qar region, which is a neighbouring region to Basra, did also evaluate their access to drinking water quite inadequate, as 63.6 per cent answered that it was (very) poor. These responses differed considerably from the average for Iraqi returnees in other cities/provinces, such as Erbil (70% neutral or (very) good access) or Baghdad (73.4% neutral or (very) good access).

Table 16: Access to safe drinking water in Iraq, by city/province (N=195)

	Baghdad	Basra	Erbil	Dhi Qar	Other	Grand Total
poor or very poor	26.7%	90.9%	30.0%	63.6%	43.8%	39.0%
fair	29.2%	9.1%	0.0%	36.4%	9.4%	22.6%
good or very good	44.2%	0.0%	70.0%	0.0%	46.9%	38.5%
Number of respondents	120	22	10	11	32	100.0%

Figure 4: Access to safe drinking water in Iraq, by city/province (N=195)



"Do you feel that you are able to stay and live in this country?"

Respondents were asked to self-evaluate their ability to stay and live in their country of origin in the future (Table 17/Table 18). Out of all the 200 respondents, 108 (54%) answered they are not able to stay. All of them were from Iraq, which means that ca. 55 per cent of Iraqi respondents felt that they were not able to remain in Iraq, but they either need or wish to leave. Of these respondents, ca. 92 per cent answered that they *need* to leave because of their poor situation and living conditions, whereas only ca. eight per cent replied they merely *wish* to leave.

Table 17: Ability to stay in the country of origin (N=200)

	female	male	Grand Total
no	59.4%	62.2%	61.7%
yes	40.6%	37.8%	38.3%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 18: Need to leave vs. Wish to leave among those who consider that they cannot stay in Iraq (N=108)

Need to leave	91.7%
Wish to leave	8.3%
Grand Total	100.0%

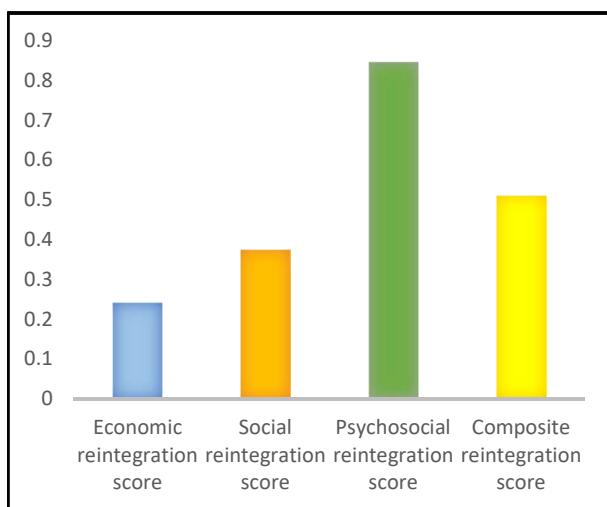
Case Examples

In order to further illustrate the varied reintegration needs AVRR beneficiaries may face, the following takes a closer look at three individual cases whose composite reintegration scores were close to each other (0.49-0.51), but who exhibit noteworthy differences in their dimensional scores. This shows that the beneficiaries have very different needs related to various dimensions of reintegration that point to the need for individual, tailor-made and needs-based support. Moreover, the case studies also reflect the need for community and structural level interventions.

Case 1, male, returned to Iraq (Basra)

This Iraqi man returned voluntarily from Finland together with his family members to Basra, after two years of absence from his country of origin. Basra was not their original community of origin. By the time of the return the respondent was 22 years old. He received EUR 1000 cash reintegration assistance. He struggles with economic issues (economic reintegration score is 0.24), and he is not satisfied with the access to public infrastructure services, such as housing, education, justice or health etc. (social reintegration score is 0.37). What is remarkable, however, is that his psychosocial reintegration score is as high as 0.878, and even though he feels unsafe most of the time, he also feels strongly that he is part of the society, that he can rely on his networks and he states that he wants to stay in Iraq (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Reintegration scores, Case 1

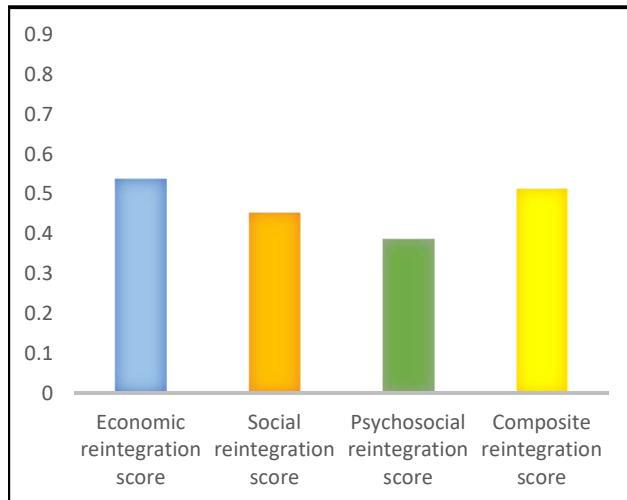


Case 2, male, returned to Iraq (Baghdad)

This Iraqi man returned voluntarily from Finland alone and reunited with his family in Baghdad, which was not his community of origin, after spending two years away from Iraq. He was 36 years old at the time of the return. With his in-kind reintegration support (EUR 2500) he had started a taxi business,

but due to debts, he sold it later. Despite of these particular economic challenges, he scored above the average in the economic reintegration scores (0.53). He is not very satisfied with the access to public services in the community or their quality (social reintegration score 0.45). He had not expressed a wish to receive psychological support, but he might have benefited from it, as he lacks a support network, feels very often physically unsafe, and does not feel like belonging to the community. His psychosocial reintegration score was rather low at 0.39 (Figure 6).

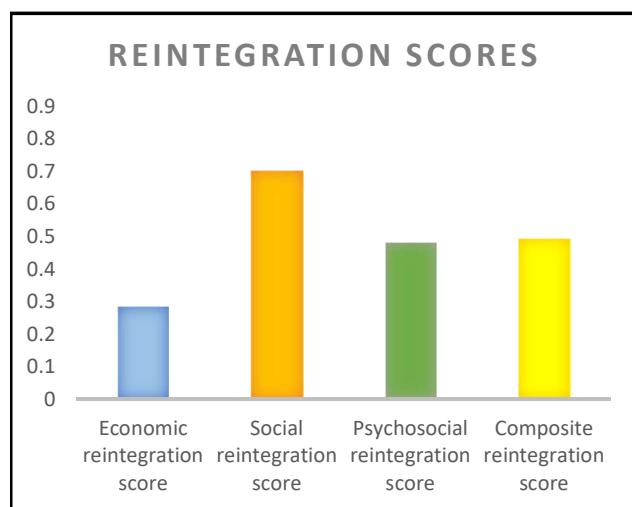
Figure 6: Reintegration scores, Case 2



Case 3, female, returned to Iraq (Erbil)

This young Iraqi woman voluntarily returned with her family from Finland to Erbil, after being away from Iraq for two and a half years. Erbil was not her community of origin. She is not doing now well economically, but she was quite satisfied with the increased reintegration cash grant she (and the rest of the family) received, as they could cover the rent of the apartment with the grant. Unlike the two other case examples, she is scoring well regarding the social dimension. She feels sometimes discriminated due to the community's main language, which is not her mother tongue, but the reason for feeling the need to re-migrate is her and her family's economic struggle, lack of jobs and concerns over security (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Reintegration scores, Case 3



Open question

In addition to the reintegration sustainability monitoring questionnaire, the donor requested an additional question to be asked from the respondents. The question was an open one in two parts: “*What is your opinion on the quality of the reintegration support you received from Finland? Have you got any suggestions on how to improve it?*”

This question did not have an impact on the reintegration scores, as it was not part of the reintegration sustainability survey. Not all the interviewees replied to it, however, it gave them a possibility to comment on the reintegration support they received from the Government of Finland and make suggestions for the provision of assistance in the future.

The following is a sample of answers to the open question.

- Ca. 43 per cent of the respondents commented that the amount of the support was too small and suggested to increase it;
- Approximately 45 per cent of the interviewees wished that IOM could help them to get work/start an own business, or to assist them to get their old jobs back in the governmental sector. Some respondents also suggested that IOM would coordinate with the private sector to create jobs for returnees;
- Ca. 20 per cent of the respondents were of opinion that the quality of the support was good, but suggested to increase the amount, on the other hand, some were also content with the amount of the reintegration grant;
- Ca. 25 per cent of the interviewees thought that the cash support was fair;
- The support was seen by many respondents as sufficient to cover daily expenses *only during the initial period* following their voluntary return;
- A need for legal assistance in Iraq was mentioned, but the need was not specified any further;
- Many respondents suggested that vocational training should be included in the support, especially for female beneficiaries returning alone or as a single parent;
- Psychological support was suggested to be included in the reintegration assistance;
- Some returnees wished to receive some cash support shortly after the return, and, in addition to that, more individually tailored support according to their needs later on, after following up on their situation;
- Several respondents shared information on how they had used their in-kind reintegration assistance and the outcomes thereof:
 - o In total 15 persons had received in-kind support in Iraq in order to establish a business, and quite many of them had not succeeded well with their entrepreneurship: Six persons out of fifteen had had to sell their business quite soon after initiating it. Especially taxi businesses seemed to have been challenging, with

four persons having bought a taxi in Baghdad who had sold the car because of financial difficulties, some of them within a few weeks after purchasing it.¹⁴ One person continued to work as a taxi driver but told in the interview that the business provided only a limited income.

- Two persons expressed gratefulness for the in-kind housing allowance they had received, while one person commented that the housing allowance was not sufficient.

¹⁴ In-kind support in Iraq was implemented by European Technology and Training Centre (ETTC) through the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN). In general, IOM does not recommend or support establishing new taxi businesses in Iraq, especially in Baghdad, as it is challenging to make one's living as a taxi driver in the local context, due to vast competition.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this pilot monitoring project, 200 voluntary returnees from Finland to Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia were interviewed, to learn to which extent migrants assisted with AVRR reintegrated in a sustainable manner in the communities to which they returned, and to identify the main factors that affected the sustainability of the returnees' reintegration. The interviewees were assisted in their voluntary return by the Finnish Immigration Service and IOM under the project *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for Asylum Seekers and Other Migrant Groups in Finland* (AVRR-FI). The level of reintegration was assessed in three different dimensions: *economic, social and psychosocial*.

The analysis showed that the average composite reintegration score among respondents was 0.51 (with the highest possible score being 1, and the lowest 0). Overall, respondents received lowest reintegration scores in the economic dimension (0.42), which suggests that in this dimension their reintegration has not been fully successful, but returnees would rather be in need of further support. There were no major differences regarding respondents' sex, age or reintegration grant amount, which, however, may be due to the limited size of the sample of the survey conducted. On the other hand, there seemed to be an effect when respondents had not returned to their original community of origin. This difference appears to be due in particular to challenges faced in the social dimension of reintegration, among others, in accessing housing, justice and law enforcement, as well as health care.

It is important to note that the results of this survey cannot necessarily be generalised across all beneficiaries who voluntarily return(ed) from Finland to the three target countries of the AUDI project, and much less to other countries of origin not covered here. Nevertheless, this report's analysis and observations enable a range of conclusions and recommendations, which are presented in the following paragraphs.

The above analysis also illustrates that the reintegration sustainability survey is a useful tool to examine the reintegration of larger groups of returnees (e.g. through average reintegration scores) as well as of individual beneficiaries (e.g. through case examples). The latter could be particularly helpful when the survey is administered several times throughout the reintegration process, for example, to establish a first (baseline) reintegration score and assess needs shortly after the return during a first counselling session, to establish a midterm scoring after ca. 6-9 months in order to assess progress and, if required, adjust reintegration measures, as well as 12-18 months later for a final reintegration score.

Reaching the target group & Mainstreaming monitoring into AVRR programming

As described in the beginning of the report, the project's original target was to interview 25 returnees both in Afghanistan and Somalia, and 150 in Iraq. However, it turned out that it was impossible to find enough respondents in Afghanistan and Somalia. It proved challenging to get in touch with the returnees, as many had not provided any contact details in the country of origin to IOM, while others (according to family members or acquaintances reached by IOM) may have left the country again. Among those who could be reached, many were not willing to participate in the survey. In the end, it was possible to interview only one person in Afghanistan and four in Somalia, and the rest of the survey participants (195) were selected in Iraq.

Furthermore, out of all the *potential* interviewees, ca. 90 per cent were male and ca. 10 per cent female. However, the target in this survey was that 25 per cent of the interviewees would be women

and 75 per cent men, so that the possible differences in reintegration sustainability between the sexes could be more reliably analysed. The target was not quite reached as 16.5 per cent of the respondents were women vs. 83.5 per cent men. IOM went to considerable length to reach the target of 25 per cent by contacting 59 potential female interviewees. However, several were unreachable or had possibly re-migrated, while others declined participation in the survey. In the end, 32 Iraqi and one Somali woman participated in the survey.

Given that this monitoring initiative was not part of the regular AVRR assistance provided by IOM with Migri's funding, IOM was not able to inform beneficiaries before or upon their return of the intention to conduct monitoring 12-18 months later. This caused challenges in terms of contacting possible respondents, especially in Afghanistan and Somalia, as their contact details for monitoring purposes had not been collected or updated consistently. A further challenge in Afghanistan was that many returnees simply did not have phone numbers or email addresses to share at the time of their return. The situation in Iraq was fortunately somewhat better, as the local IOM office collects contact details from all returnees already upon arrival at the airport in connection with reception and reintegration assistance. Furthermore, a baseline measurement of the respondents' reintegration could not be established as the monitoring exercise was not planned at the time when they returned.

Recommendation I: Include monitoring as a standard component in AVRR programming to allow for advance planning and ensure reachability of the intended target group

Reaching a sufficient number (i.e. a representative sample) of returnees reflecting the diversity of the overall AVRR target group is a key factor for any monitoring exercise's success in view of obtaining comprehensive data for analysis. Ideally, for case management purposes, of course, all returnees would be monitored. It is therefore important to:

- a) inform beneficiaries already during their return process of the intention to conduct monitoring (and to seek their consent, as well as to build trust), and
- b) to gather and update as many contact details as possible throughout the return and reintegration process.

This can be most easily achieved when monitoring is included as a standard component in AVRR programming (rather than being done on an ad-hoc basis), in particular concerning monitoring taking place some time after the return, such as the reintegration sustainability survey applied in the project at hand. Furthermore, conducting monitoring consistently throughout AVRR programmes would also allow for an analysis over time and allow for comparison of returnees' experiences in a more comprehensive manner.¹⁵

Overall, mainstreaming standardised monitoring of returnees in AVRR programming will contribute to strong evidence-based policy and programme development in the future. This

¹⁵ For example, it would be instructive to compare the data collected through the current survey with that of beneficiaries who returned after January 2019, as the value of in-kind reintegration support to certain countries was increased from EUR 2,500 to EUR 5,000 based on a decree issued by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior.

is also reflected in a report on AVRR by the National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF)¹⁶ which in February 2019 recommended that monitoring ought to be included in Finland's AVRR programme.

Further supporting the sustainable reintegration of voluntary returnees in a targeted manner

As was explicated above, respondents in the survey at hand scored lowest in the economic dimension of reintegration. The average economic reintegration score of 0.42 suggests that a more sustainable reintegration could have been achieved through more – as well as more targeted and individualised – economic reintegration assistance. Several beneficiaries receiving in-kind assistance seem to have required more support and assistance (from the reintegration service provider) with their business plans to ensure feasibility and economic viability in the local context. As an example from the Iraqi context, it may not be advisable to start a taxi business in Iraq, due to existing competition in the local market. Several respondents also expressed in their answers to the 'open' question that they may have benefitted from further individual assistance in planning their reintegration.

However, also in the other two dimensions (social and psychosocial) respondents' average scores indicated that reintegration in these dimensions had been generally only slightly more sustainable than in the economic one (at 0.54).

Recommendation II: Further explore possibilities to assist returnees through targeted, context-specific reintegration assistance

IOM recommends linking reintegration assistance to the local context in countries of origin, especially when it is foreseen already in the planning phase of an AVRR project that a high percentage of the target group is likely to return to a specific country.

At the same time, as much as possible, determining the type and content of reintegration support should follow evidence and a needs-based approach and take into account all three dimensions: economic, social, and psychosocial. More effectively linking counselling at the pre-return and post-arrival stages and effective information provision would allow to best tailor the assistance to the specific situation of each returnee. Reintegration support should ideally allow a certain degree of flexibility and aim to empower returnees by creating an environment in which returnees take responsibility for their own reintegration process.

Reintegration beyond the individual level: Addressing community and structural factors

The above analysis also shows that low reintegration scores were related to issues that cannot necessarily be addressed through individual reintegration support alone. These include high unemployment rates in the country of origin, poor access to housing, justice and law enforcement, health care, as well as safe drinking water.

¹⁶ <https://www.vtv.fi/app/uploads/2019/02/11100657/VTV-Selvitys-2-2019-Vapaaehtoisen-paluun-jarjestelma.pdf>
(in Finnish, last accessed 21.10.2019)

Recommendation III: Address community and structural levels of reintegration, including through a “whole of government” approach

In order to improve the capacity of communities and countries of origin to receive returnees and support their sustainable reintegration, it appears necessary to look beyond individual reintegration support. This may entail, for example, community-based and capacity-building initiatives aimed at contributing to a more conducive environment for individual reintegration. As these topics are in most countries not covered by one individual (governmental) actor, it may be prudent to explore synergies between different interventions in the areas of humanitarian assistance, community stabilization, migration management and development cooperation.¹⁷ Such a *whole-of-government approach* to return and reintegration issues could enhance cooperation across different sectors and between relevant ministries (e.g. interior, foreign affairs, labour and social affairs) as well as non-state stakeholders to ensure effectiveness in the return countries’ context.

¹⁷ A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (IOM 2018).