



## **External Evaluation for the Project**

# **"Strengthening Holistic and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia"**

**Final report**  
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## Acronyms

Acronym	Full name
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CBR	Community-Based Reintegration
CRR	Central River Region
DoL	Department of Labour
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FMP	Flow Monitoring Point
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
LRR	Lower River Region
MaM	Migrants as Messengers
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MNCH	Maternal Neonatal and Children Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MPSG	Migrants' Peer Support Group
NBR	North Bank Region
NCE	No Cost Extension

<b>NCM</b>	National Coordination Mechanism on Migration
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NMHSF</b>	National Mental Health Strategic Framework
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
<b>OVP</b>	Office of the Vice President
<b>PBF</b>	Peace Building Fund
<b>PFA</b>	Psychological First Aid
<b>PRF</b>	Peace and Recovery Facility
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>PTC</b>	Project Technical Committee
<b>RCCE</b>	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
<b>RUNO</b>	Recipient UN Organisation
<b>TTPU</b>	Tanka-Tanka Psychiatry Unit
<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>UEFA</b>	Union of European Football Associations
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNPFA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>URR</b>	Upper River Region
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committees
<b>WCR</b>	West Coast Region
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>YAIM</b>	Youth Against Irregular Migration

## Executive Summary

"*Strengthening Holistic and Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia*" is a USD 2.3 million project financed by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. It was implemented between December 2018 – March 2022 and managed by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as the convening agency, International Trade Centre (ITC) and United Nations Fund for Population Fund (UNFPA). The project aimed at facilitating sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia, in order to promote increased social cohesion, youth engagement, economic empowerment as well as community stabilisation and development, thus contributing to peacebuilding by providing services to returnees and their communities. The project focused on achieving three key outcomes:

- Outcome 1 - Gambian society has a balanced and positive perception of return migration.
- Outcome 2 - The Government of The Gambia demonstrates strengthened capacity to facilitate sustainable reintegration contributing to enhanced social cohesion and inclusion.
- Outcome 3 - Returnees enjoy enhanced access to psychological, political, social and economic reintegration services.

This final evaluation was conducted in May and June of 2022.

## Key Findings

The intervention showed strong capacity to adapt to the challenging situation of The Gambia, to provide a suitable response to its people's needs and to achieve the expected results in a cost-efficient manner. The project demonstrated effectiveness while the sustainability aspect still greatly depends on available external support. The project management was able to positively adapt the project to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and to introduce new pertinent activities. The project had catalytic effect through securing additional funds.

In terms of the OECD/DAC main evaluation criteria, the evaluation has reached the following conclusion:

**Relevance.** The project was conceived together with GoTG representatives and presents a very good alignment with the priorities set in the National Development Plan and the political, social and economic needs of Gambians. From a more general perspective, the relevance is also in relation with the support to the national authorities' leadership, which has been progressively strengthened.

**Coherence.** The project under evaluation contributed to strengthening peace within the communities. It created positive post-return opportunities for returnees; it strengthened their potential to be agents of change and stimulated their willingness and built their capacities to contribute to positive change regarding development and peacebuilding. At the same time, the project accompanied the Gambian society to modify its own perception towards forced and voluntary returnees, to join forces with them and to improve services addressed to all citizens. In other words, the project successfully improved returnees' socio-economic reintegration and coexistence in their communities. The project has clear complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with other programmes that have similar objectives, most notably - the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) Joint Initiative for Migrant



Protection and Reintegration project, of which several interventions analysed for this evaluation were funded under.

**Effectiveness.** Despite the impact of COVID-19 on social relations, the intervention has achieved almost all Log frame output target values, such as the establishment of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) and its eight Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) to ensure a whole-of-government approach to migration governance and the launch of Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) to track and monitor population mobility. The refurbishment of Tanka-Tanka psychiatric facility with additional bed-increase provided safe spaces for dignified mental health and psychosocial support services for migrants and communities, and the establishment of community-based reintegration increased access to livelihood opportunities for returnees and communities, and foster social cohesion. In some cases, results largely exceeded the expected results. Their quality was usually outstanding, but with some limitations in the case of the Community-Based Reintegration initiatives due their early stages of implementation.

**Efficiency.** The Project employed nearly 100% of the budget and was cost-effective. The overall management of the project was timely and efficient and the potential overlapping between the three Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs) prevented. The internal monitoring mechanism changed substantially between the first and the second phase and ensured a greater involvement of national authorities, other UN agencies, UN Peacebuilding Secretariat, agencies and the donor.

**Impact.** The project has directly and indirectly contributed to strengthening the foundations for peacebuilding in The Gambia, by implementing a holistic approach, not just at the thematic level but also by targeting a large array of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The project has contributed to a change in community members' perception as stigmatisation of returnees has greatly reduced, largely a result of returnee involvement in community decision-making processes and local businesses. At the same time, the project developed the capacity of the Government of The Gambia to ensure a whole-of-government approach on migration governance. However, some challenges such as the persistence of certain forms of stigma and the need for additional support, have affected the impact of the project for final beneficiaries.

**Catalytic effect.** It has been significant, and the additional funds further enhanced the number of young people who benefited from sport activities. The project indirectly helped to leverage \$ 200,000 from a non-PBF funding support - the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Foundation for Children.

**Sustainability.** The sustainability of the project is generally weak since many activities rely mainly on donors' engagement to allocate additional resources to continue and further extend the project activities. This is particularly evident when interventions provide external services, or technical support (i.e. training, coaching and job placement). Some other activities are more sustainable as they are based on groups or communities' willingness to organise activities (i.e. moonlight story-telling). In this regard, the uncertainties about future funding availability, are a matter of concern.

## Main Conclusions

Nearly all the project results have been achieved and have contributed towards the general objective: to strengthen the reintegration of returnees in The Gambia with a holistic approach to contribute to a more peaceful, caring, and integrated society that supports the sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees. Although returnees' reintegration is also more sustainable, it is still subject to the Gambian socio-economic context. Reducing the stigma affecting returnees was the main cross-cutting objective of the intervention and it was achieved in its more direct expressions, but still permeates Gambian society in subtler and indirect ways.

The Government of The Gambia has improved its capacity to nationally plan for policies that address migration thanks to an improved coordination among all the relevant actors, better data collection and training provision. The GoTG is also in the condition to speak with one voice about migration.

The reinforcement of the capacities dedicated to the whole MHPSS structure has improved the quality of the project regardless of the severity of the users' phenomena. At the same time, communities are more sensitised about this issue and more capable to deal with it. The project radically improved the landscape of MHPSS in the country in all of the three levels of intervention and is increasingly integrated into primary health care services.

The conception of the Community Based Reintegration (CBR) initiatives is culturally relevant for the beneficiaries, responding to the specific weaknesses of individuals and to the lack of public interventions. The reinforcement of social relations is an appropriate response to these gaps and is also in line with the peacebuilding principles. The CBR initiatives follow this logic, and in the case of the businesses, the communities are directly committed to them. However, many of the initiatives visited are suffering serious bottlenecks due to their early stage of implementation and the reduced supervision after the end of the project.

Social cohesion has been targeted and enhanced by national campaigns, community dialogues and events that consistently reduced direct stigma towards returnees. Concerts, tournaments, exhibitions of traditional singers are considered the activities which had the highest impact in terms of peacebuilding, since they restored relations within communities, and created a benevolent framework for discussions about migration and stigma.

The response that the project provided to the COVID-19 pandemic was pertinent; on the one side, assisting the GoTG National Covid response through training sessions, community surveillance and contact tracing, and on the other, involving returnees in soap production.

## Introduction: background information

The Gambia population is young with over a third (38.5%) of its people between the ages of 15 and 34. This reveals a high dependency factor in society and has serious implications for development programmes including social protection. Poverty levels remain almost unchanged from 2010 to 2015 - with the percentage of households living below the poverty line of \$1.25/day increasing from 48.4% to 48.65% - and unemployment for young people being estimated around 45%.<sup>1</sup>

There is a rising rural poverty - even though rural areas account for 42.2% of the country's total population, they hold 60 % of its poor people - and a growing gap between rural and urban Gambia when it comes to access to public services such as health, education and other basic services. While the proportion of households living below the poverty line is 31.6% in urban areas, it rises dramatically to 69.5% in rural Gambia<sup>2</sup>. In 2016, after the transition to a new democratic coalition government, Gambians enjoyed more freedom, but changes have not yet translated into increased gains for most of the population, despite some economic progress<sup>3</sup>. These few data, together with socio-cultural determinants supporting migration, contextualise the reason why according to the last available data (2018), youth unemployment, stands at 41.5%<sup>4</sup>. The Gambia has the highest migration rate per capita on the continent<sup>5</sup>.

The dramatic situation that these figures evidence, has to be contextualised with Gambian socio-cultural determinants, like the cultural importance that migration has for the access to the adulthood, the role of the male as "bread winner" in the local traditional and patriarchal society, the social status that migrants have in their families and communities.

At the time of the transition to a democratic government, new actors and inter-governmental organisations entered the national scene and started to target prospective migrants and returnees to implement interventions.

These new actors contributed to addressing several threats that affected the country, among them are the challenges connected to the question of the 'Back Way': at least, IOM assisted nearly 7,000 stranded migrants in Libya, Niger and other parts of Africa and Europe to home between 2017 and 2022<sup>6</sup>. These numbers, together with the strong opposition against returnees by the local population, triggered social and economic pressure on the of The Gambia's transition process.

For this reason, migration, return and reintegration, have been recognized as peacebuilding concerns<sup>7</sup> for The Gambia. In 2017 the mass influx of returning migrants in a country in transition and lacking basic services, besides not having the government structures able to absorb all returnees and support their reintegration, was perceived as a highly potential destabilising factor.

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<sup>1</sup> Gambia National Development Plan 2018-2021

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. The World Bank in The Gambia. Overview. (2019).

<sup>4</sup> The Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS 2018), <https://www.gbosdata.org/downloads-file/the-gambia-labour-force-survey-glfs-2018>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.migrantsasmessengers.org/gambia#:~:text=With%20a%20population%20of%20over,Europe%20Returned%20home%20The%20Gambia.>

<sup>6</sup> Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration: The Gambia Summary of Returns Eligible Under JI June 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Conflict and Development Analysis 2019

It is crucial for the stability and peace of The Gambia to take appropriate measures to reintegrate young Gambian migrants. After returning to The Gambia, many returnees often find their economic situation worse than it was before they emigrated, especially if they sold assets or even went into debt to finance their migration journeys. What is more, many among the returnees have also suffered abuse during their journey, and they face stigma when they come back home.

A significant number of “Back Way returnees” experienced violence and trauma during their journeys northward, and they keep suffering from the effects of trauma as they seldom have the proper tools and capacities to efficiently manage psychological issues or related vulnerabilities. As a whole, The Gambia is significantly underprepared, when it comes to professional and infrastructural capacities, to deal with effects of such trauma proactively or even reactively.

Considering these different factors, economic reintegration interlinks with psychosocial and social dimensions: it involves Families and communities of origin that tend to stigmatise and exclude the returnees, who then find it difficult to be hired, to marry and to be involved in their own community. Sometimes these communities face a great number of simultaneous returns, and due to a lack of local infrastructures, opportunities, and resources, they usually do not have the capacities to provide an environment conducive to a successful reintegration.

A significant part of the returnees stranded in Libya, Niger or other African countries have been supported by Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR); under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection & Reintegration, IOM The Gambia provides tailored Reintegration Assistance (RA) to returnees in three categories, namely: Individual (assistance provided to individual returning migrants), Collective (assistance provided to several returning migrants as a group) and Community-Based (individual or collective reintegration assistance directly involving local communities and/ or directly addressing their needs)<sup>8</sup> - returnees can select any of the components as their reintegration assistance. The assistance improves community networks and conditions for sustainable reintegration and consists of various services, ranging from traditional in-kind support and help when starting a small business, to psychosocial counselling, mentoring and community engagement to fight prejudice against returnees.

There is a growing consensus on the importance of tailoring activities<sup>9</sup> to the profiles and specific needs of returnees, as well as on accounting for specific vulnerabilities when delivering reintegration assistance. However, in general terms, little is known about what is really needed, which activities work best and where<sup>10</sup> they should take place. In this regard many countries of origin have adjusted their policies concerning returning migrants to facilitate their reintegration, to improve their situation and to connect reintegration efforts to local and national development plans. However, AVRR programmes sometimes fail to entirely fulfil their goal due to returnees’ difficulties to find jobs with a stable and sufficient income, partly because of migrants’ lack of professional networks and skills required in the communities they return to, but also because of the local economy which provides limited job opportunities. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative AVRR scheme reaches a large number of total returnees to The Gambia (eligible beneficiaries are returnees who have returned with IOM support

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8 Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (2019)

<sup>9</sup> European Commission. Comparative Study on Best Practices to Interlink Pre-Departure Reintegration Measures Carried out in Member States with Short- and Long-Term Reintegration Measures in the Countries of Return. (2012).

<sup>10</sup> Migration Policy Institute. Putting migrant reintegration programmes to the test. A road map to a monitoring system. (2022).

since January 1, 2017)<sup>11</sup> - a few returnees return without IOM support and are not eligible for AVRR assistance (the exact number of ineligible returnees is unquantifiable).

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<sup>11</sup> The eligible beneficiaries are returnees who have returned with IOM support to The Gambia since January 1, 2017, essentially from Libya, Niger, Morocco and Mali. For more information: Assistance to voluntary and humanitarian return 2017-2021 Profiles of migrants assisted to return to their country of origin - West and Central Africa (2022)

## The project

The Gambia became eligible as a recipient of UN Peacebuilding Fund's Peace and Recovery Facility (PRF) in September 2018, based on a submission from the Government of The Gambia summarising the current conflict and development situation and highlighting the need to address conflict drivers and sustain peace in The Gambia with concrete and supportive interventions. This was preceded by PBF's support to Gambia in 2017, under the Immediate Response Facility, which started the funding for the Transitional Justice and Human Rights project, the initial UN Security Sector Reform project and support to the Department of Strategy, Policy and Delivery under Office of the President.

In this framework, the project "Strengthening Sustainable and Holistic Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia" was managed by three direct recipient UN organisations (RUNO): International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as the convening agency, International Trade Centre (ITC) and United Nations Fund for Population Fund (UNFPA).

The project under evaluation was aimed at facilitating sustainable and holistic reintegration of returnees in The Gambia, in order to promote increased social cohesion, youth engagement, economic empowerment as well as community stabilisation and development, thus contributing to peacebuilding by providing services to returnees and their communities; moreover, this project planned to build capacity for government stakeholders, at national and local levels, and to promote dialogue and awareness-raising in communities of origin.

The project was based on a partnership with relevant partners within the Government of the Gambia (GoTG), including the Office of the Vice President (OVP), Ministry of Interior (MOI), Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare and Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs, all of them being key stakeholders in migration governance.

The project under evaluation contributes to SDG 10.7 and seeks to support the strategic priorities of The Gambia's National Development Plan as well as the UNDAF strategic results 1 and 22. It intends to achieve the following results/outcomes:

- Outcome 1 - Gambian society has a balanced and positive perception of return migration.
- Outcome 2 - The Government of The Gambia demonstrates strengthened capacity to facilitate sustainable reintegration contributing to enhanced social cohesion and inclusion.
- Outcome 3 - Returnees enjoy enhanced access to psychological, political, social and economic reintegration services.

In total, the nine (9) deliverables resulting from project activities revolved around services to returnees and their communities, capacity building for government stakeholders at national and local levels, as well as promoting dialogue and awareness-raising in communities of origin were:

- a) Output 1.1 – Enhanced understanding of irregular migration, return and reintegration and implications for peacebuilding
- b) Output 1.2 – Communication on migration, return and reintegration is coordinated by the government (OVP)
- c) Output 2.1 – National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCMM) is established and operational and returnees are successfully referred to different services to assist in their positive reintegration

- d) Output 2.2 – Economic empowerment of returnees is facilitated by the establishment and operationalization of a coordinated referral mechanism
- e) Output 2.3 – MHPSS is integrated into primary health care services through development of guidelines and framework with specific focus on return and reintegration
- f) Output 2.4 – National and local actors have enhanced capacity to deliver mental health services to returnees
- g) Output 3.1 – Enhanced quality and reach of MHPSS services is available through community outreach health teams amongst communities of high return
- h) Output 3.2 – Youth centres are enabled to provide comprehensive information, referral and counselling services to returnees
- i) Output 3.3 – Community linkages are strengthened facilitating social inclusion and reintegration of returnees

First phase: started on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 with a new end date on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 due to its 6-months-no cost extension (NCE) mostly due to COVID-19 but also due to the political turmoil that compelled to put social gatherings on hold at the end of 2019.

The budget of the first phase was \$1.300.000.

Second phase: started on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and ended on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2022. The budget of the second phase was \$1.000.000. The three direct recipient UN organisations (RUNO) received the following amounts:

**Table no.1:**

RUNO	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total Amount
International Organisation for Migration	\$ 700.000	\$ 500.000	\$ 1,200,000.00
International Trade Centre	\$ 300.000	\$ 250.000	\$ 550,000.00
United Nations Population Fund	\$ 300.000	\$ 250.000	\$ 550,000.00
Total:	\$ 1.300.000	\$ 1.000.000	\$ 2,300,000.00

## 2. The Evaluation

### 2.1 Objectives and methodology

The main purpose of the final external evaluation is to assess the attainment of the project's intended objectives, to measure its outcomes and impacts and to formulate evidence-based recommendations to inform future programmes. More specifically, the objectives of the evaluation are listed as follow:

- To assess the relevance of the project's model and its response to the needs of targeted populations;
- To review the project's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its intended results;
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, results framework and implementation process and to come up with concrete lessons learnt and recommendations;
- To assess the project's impact, its challenges and the sustainability of its realised results;

The results and the findings of the final evaluation will be used by:

- The project's management team to derive lessons learnt on its implementation approach and processes;
- IOM, ITC and UNFPA to validate the relevance of the project's model and use the evaluation best practices and recommendations for future programmes;
- The project's funder (PBF) to assess the project's relevance, coherence and implementation approach;
- Any relevant partners interested in the thematic area to use the evaluation findings and recommendations in their programmes and implementation.

The evaluation methodology followed and operationalised a multi-sited and multi-actor approach, by matching the need of reliable information with the geographical, thematic and professional backgrounds of the stakeholders.

The evaluation process was structured according to the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria - i.e. relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. In addition, in a later stage of the evaluation process the criteria of catalytic impact was also requested by the PBF and therefore included in the evaluation report.

Qualitative data were obtained through individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key informants and focus group discussions (FGDs). Key informants for IDIs were identified within the target population across the country.

Specific questions were designed for each target group, thus allowing to conduct tailored semi-structured interview guides for each one of them.

The evaluation process consisted of three main phases:

- Phase 1: desk review and analysis of the project documents,
- Phase 2: fieldwork activity,
- Phase 3. analysis and reporting.

*Phase 1. Desk review and analysis of the project documents.* An in-depth review and analysis of the project documentation received from IOM. Relevant documents were shared with the consultant.



*Phase 2. Fieldwork activity.* It combined remote and face-to-face interviews based on semi-structured/in depth interview guides designed and tailored for each target group. Online and face-to-face visits during the 20 day-fieldwork conducted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Originally the fieldwork was to be conducted sooner, but the Ramadan celebrations and the Assembly elections held at the end of April convinced the parties to postpone it. More than 120 stakeholders were involved, usually in face-to-face interviews, but also in small groups between 3 and 9 participants and in very big groups in the case of two visits to villages. Whenever possible, final beneficiaries' participation was promoted as well as women and people of different ages and ethnicity.

Due to the multi-sited nature of the project, the evaluation targeted the following districts: Banjul, WCR (Bundung, Brikama and Serekunda, Kanifing Kairaba), LRR (Kwinella, Soma, Tinkinjo), URR (Basse, Tambasansang, Firdawsi), NBR (Barra, Essau, and Berending).

The fieldwork itself was composed of three phases. The first days (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of May) were dedicated to sessions with RUNOs members. The following 14 days (from the 4<sup>th</sup> till the 17<sup>th</sup> of May) were spent visiting the main stakeholders of the project, paying a special attention to the following locations: Kombo, Soma, Basse Santa Su and Barra/Essau. The three remaining days from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> were spent conducting online interviews and preparing the de-briefing meeting.

Stakeholders from ministries were available to a limited extent; therefore, tailored questionnaires were sent by email. In case of youth organisations such as Peace Ambassadors Gambia (PAG), National Youth Council (NYC) or Starfish, the interviewees were the representatives from the headquarter, while for National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) the focal point in Barra. In the case of Activista both the headquarter and the focal point in Basse were interviewed. Activista provided a list with some communities where they organised the "moonlight storytelling" and some of them were visited during the fieldwork, sampling them according to the diversity of their ethnic background. The rest of youth organisations were contacted by telephone and sent a questionnaire by email, but just a few of them replied.

Many of the CBR initiatives created by the project were visited, (7 out of 10) and one reached over Whatsapp; their selection was based on the urban (bakeries, taxi, beauty shops) and rural (323 animal fattening) criterion, together with geographic and gender criteria. In addition, the two youth centres refurbished were visited, being those of Bundung also considered a CBR initiative.

Concerning the health domain, all the levels were targeted: grassroots, regional and national, including the Ministry of Health (MoH).

*Phase 3. Analysis and reporting.* Data collected through phases 1 and 2 were triangulated, analysed and structured in the final report. In some occasions, stakeholders were contacted over telephone or WhatsApp in order to clarify certain information provided that was not online with other informants. In several occasions, RUNOs provided additional information and relevant guidance, in particular during the revision of the final report. This was especially the case of the CBR initiatives, that evidenced serious bottlenecks. IOM and ITC, that were involved in their implementation, were contacted and they provided clarifications.

## 2.2 Target groups

Given the holistic focus of the project, the table below lists the different stakeholders which were involved<sup>12</sup> and the main focus(es) concerning them:

Table no.2:

Stakeholder	Main focus(es) of the interview/focus group
<b>Communities</b>	Moonlight storytelling, intervention of the mobile health teams, returnees' reintegration, contextual information
<b>Departments (DoL)</b>	Referral systems
<b>Donor</b>	Overall assessment of the project
<b>Health professionals</b>	Training received, integration of the MHPPS into the primary health referral systems
<b>Ministries</b>	Involvement in the National Coordination Mechanism, Thematic Working Groups, and the results achieved
<b>Other NGOs</b>	Information about the activities conducted, contextual information
<b>People involved in the Community based reintegration</b>	Situation of the projects, strengths, weaknesses, and sustainability
<b>Returnees</b>	Stigma suffered, degree of reintegration, access to information
<b>RUNOs</b>	Clarify and deepen crucial aspects of the project
<b>Youth Centres</b>	Impact of the refurbishments, functioning of the structure and of the Youth Information Centres
<b>Youth organisations</b>	Overall approach of their interventions, contact with the regional focal points, contextual information

## 2.3 Limitations of the evaluation exercise

Overall, the evaluation exercise was carried out smoothly, but it did encounter some limitations.

**Large number of stakeholders:** The project engaged several stakeholders belonging to different typologies and spread across the whole country. As it was not possible to meet every single one of them, a sample was designed to ensure the information' representativeness, in terms of geographical coverage, stakeholders' profiles, when possible, gender and activities implemented by the project.

**Ministries and departments were hard to reach:** Despite the repeated efforts made by the consultant and the IOM, only the Office of the Vice President, The Ministry of Health (MoH), the Department of

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<sup>12</sup> For more information about the interviewees, see Annex 1

Labour (DoL) and Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) actively participated in the fieldwork. It is very likely that the Gambian parliamentary elections held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 were the main reasons behind the low response from the institutions.

**Fieldwork conditions:** It was carried out across the country and extreme weather conditions as well as villages located in remote areas sometimes limited its efficiency.

**Access to stakeholders in the case of subcontracted and decentralised activities:** For activities under the output 3.3 (Community linkages are strengthened facilitating social inclusion and reintegration of returnees), regional focal points from the nation-wide organisations did not have the complete list of the communities targeted under this output. Their regional focal points had partial information and sometimes it differed from those provided by the national-wide level.

### 3. Relevance

The project was conceived together with GoTG representatives and presents a very good alignment with the priorities set in the National Development Plan and the political, social and economic needs of Gambians. In addition to contents, the relevance also relates to the expected leadership, which has been progressively achieved during the second phase of intervention.

#### 3.1 Alignment of the project with national priorities

The current project evidences a good alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP) (2018-2021)<sup>13</sup> which is the programmatic document setting the main development guidelines of the country.

The table below compares two out of the eight strategic priorities<sup>14</sup>, the most relevant outputs of the NDP which are in line with the outputs of the project.

Table no.3:

NDP Strategic priorities	Corresponding project outputs
<p><b>4. Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society;</b></p> <p><b>4.8: The Poor and most Vulnerable benefit from Social Safety Nets and Social Security as an integral part of a Sustainable, Affordable, and Effective Social and Child Protection Systems</b></p> <p><b>“Other programmes under this theme will focus on child rights focus on child rights advocacy/ awareness programmes against child abuse, child labour, as well as youth programmes to mitigate irregular migration, unemployment, criminality, and drug and alcohol addiction.”</b></p>	<p>Output 3.2 Youth centres enabled</p>
<p><b>7. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth;</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Gainful employment opportunities</b></p>	<p>Output 2.2</p>

<sup>13</sup> <https://gambia.un.org/en/98394-national-development-plan-2018-2021>

<sup>14</sup> The full list of priorities is:

1. Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance
2. Stabilizing our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy
3. Modernizing our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction
4. Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society
5. Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy
6. Promoting an inclusive and culture-centered tourism for sustainable growth
7. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth
8. Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation

<p><b>created and entrepreneurial skills developed for Gambian youth</b></p> <p><b>“In line with multilateral discussions about combating the root causes of irregular migration, and creating legal and regular pathways, the government will support the activities of social enterprise recruitment agencies, which operate on the best practice standards set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).”</b></p> <p><b>“Interesting initiatives, such as the creation of the Association of Youth Against Irregular Migration are flourishing in The Gambia. This Association is composed of Gambian men that have returned to The Gambia after spending several months in Libya. Such harsh experience has motivated them to speak out to their peers to raise awareness against the perils of irregular migration (taking “the back way”). The Government of The Gambia would support such type of participatory initiatives in which youth themselves act as a role model and a motor of behavioural change.”</b></p> <p><b>“A communication strategy will be developed and implemented to boost effective and efficient promotion of youth empowerment initiatives.”</b></p> <p><b>7.2 Physical, mental, social wellbeing, sexual and reproductive health and rights are improved for young people, including persons with disabilities in The Gambia</b></p> <p><b>7.3 Harmonized rights-based policies</b></p>	<p>Economic empowerment of returnees</p> <p>Output 1.2 Communication on migration, return and reintegration is coordinated by the government</p> <p>Output 3.3 Community linkages are strengthened</p> <p>Output 1.2 Communication on migration, return and reintegration is coordinated by the government</p> <p>Output 2.3 MHPSS integrated into primary health sectors</p> <p>Output 2.4 Enhanced capacity of local and national actors to deliver MHPSS services to returnees</p> <p>Output 3.1 Enhanced quality and reach of MHPSS Services</p> <p>Output 3.3 Community linkages are strengthened</p>
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<p><b>and improved coordination of programmes and interventions related to youth and sports</b></p>	
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Migration does not represent a priority *per se* but it is transversally addressed taking into account the opportunities and threats that brings about; in this way, employment and migration were among the urgent 7 priorities<sup>15</sup> that were followed during the first two years of the plan period: f) Tackling the crisis in youth employment to stem the flow of irregular migration and provide hope to the country's young people.

Alignment with national priorities can be understood not just in terms of the subjects to be addressed but also *in the way* the project responded to the GoTG in general and the OVP in particular, which requested to take a leading role in the monitoring. In other words, the analysis of the criterion of relevance focuses not just on “what” has to be achieved but also on “how”. In this sense, there was an evident change from the first to the second phase, from a monitoring conducted by the three RUNOs to the introduction of the Project Technical Committee, which included different ministries, the donor and other UN agencies. The initial complexity of the management of this body was balanced by a greater technical and organisational pertinence. During the second phase, quarterly meetings took place, and an internal monitoring visit was conducted, as well as a specific visit across the country by the OVP.

### 3.2 Lessons learnt from other relevant projects in returnee reintegration

The main lessons learnt from the project listed in section 3.1 can be summarised as follow:

- The alignment of the programme with the priorities and modalities of implementation expressed by the GoTG, as well as its involvement in the implementation follow-up, are key to achieve the expected results. If on the one side RUNOs have a clear commitment to support the national government and assist them to set up the priorities and frameworks of intervention, on the other side governments' involvement are usually formal which do not contribute to their appropriation of the project outputs.
- Launched in December 2016 with funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration is the first comprehensive

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<sup>15</sup> The full list of prioritised priorities is:

- a) Governance reform which will be underpinned by constitutional, judicial and legal reforms, and Transitional justice;
- b) Security sector reforms and creating a security apparatus fully subordinate to civilian authority, respectful of human rights and attuned to international standards and conventions;
- c) Macroeconomic reforms to stabilize the macroeconomic situation to spur growth, employment, and economic revitalization;
- d) An agriculture-led rural transformation agenda that will address rural poverty, inequitable access to services;
- e) Addressing the acute crisis related to energy which is not only undermining the wellbeing of Gambians, but whose lack is a serious impediment to economic revitalization;
- f) Tackling the crisis in youth employment to stem the flow of illegal migration and provide hope to the country's young people; and
- g) Addressing priorities related to health and education sectors.

programme to save lives, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. The EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection & Reintegration project defined clear eligibility criteria for returnees, who had to have previously been supported to return to The Gambia by IOM in the framework of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme. As a result, a minority of returnees who had not received return assistance outside The Gambia are not eligible for reintegration assistance under this project.

- The EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection & Reintegration funded interventions targeting individuals in its first years of implementation (2017) and progressively introduced Community Based Reintegration (CBR) initiatives.

### **3.3 Response of the project to the political, social and economic needs and priorities of returnees in The Gambia**

Migration in The Gambia is driven by economic reasons, mainly due to poverty and unemployment, which prevent especially young people from sustaining the extended families they belong to. The need to find a job does not only respond to the survival logic but it is the best way to show the returnees' usefulness, that they have a place in the society, reduce the stigma they may suffer and improve their mental wellness. In this sense, the project responded by promoting the Community-Based Reintegration (CBR) initiatives as well as paid jobs.

At the same time, the project provided a well-grounded response developing a structural improvement of the MHPSS for all the Gambians. A more general social reintegration was also perceived as an issue, but it was evident that it could not be individually addressed; for this reason, the project rightly introduced a panoply of activities to strengthen social linkages at community level. Aside from these specific areas, what is considered extremely important are the connections that have been built to make these improvements available. This is the case of the free-toll number, youth information centres, mobile health teams and communication campaigns, whose usefulness can be understood only in the light of the above-mentioned services.

The project does not clearly give a response to the limited youth participation into politics in The Gambia, especially at national level. As it matters one stakeholder involved in the fieldwork made a clear stance to convert returnees' organisations into a lobby able to represent their interests in The Gambia; however, the conditions to see the creation of such a political tool are far from being met, given the limited support to overcome the limitations that returnees suffer in terms of skills but also the lack of funding to support a coordination office.

## 4. Coherence

The project under evaluation contributed to strengthen peace within the communities. It created positive post-return opportunities for returnees, it strengthened their potential to be agents of change, it stimulated their willingness and built their capacities to contribute to positive change regarding development and peacebuilding. At the same time, the project accompanied The Gambian society to modify its own perception towards forced and voluntary returnees, to join forces with them and to improve services addressed to all citizens. In other words, the project successfully improved returnees' socio-economic reintegration and coexistence in their communities. This section details the most salient linkages between peacebuilding and the project under evaluation.

### 4.1 Income generation activities

The project contributed to the economic empowerment of returnees, through the establishment of coordinated referral mechanisms for employment opportunities and skills building. Under output 2.2, through mapping of job placement opportunities, the intervention "Returnees integration enhancing through coaching and job placement (RESTART)" implemented by the company Gamjobs promoted access to formal employment for a significant number of returnees (57) providing coaching and job placement to 152 of them, increasing their reintegration, self-respect and peaceful coexistence within their communities. Still, under output 2.2, there were community-based reintegration interventions and there also the bond between returnees and communities progressively strengthened. The active participation of Village Development Committees (VDC) and Alkalos in the conception, definition and implementation of these programmes ensured wealth and more sustainable outcomes for the whole communities, which eventually transformed society's perception of returnees from negative to a positive appreciation of their roles. The visits to 7 CBR initiatives proved that they are in a very early stage of implementation and even if are promising initiatives, none of them are generating sufficient incomes, which is a matter of concern<sup>16</sup>. In this regard, the involvement of communities is very positive since in many cases, they are ready to back up the projects with needed support (i.e., grass for sheep in Barra), and some even gave up their share of the profits (i.e. Electric Tuk Tuk in Banjul) to support the project.

### 4.2 Improving GoTG capacities in the labour market

An increased number of partnerships between government institutions and private actors (20) was an innovative experience that contributed to expertise gathering to set up converging objectives, and in the long term it has the potential to raise the network's capacity to create more jobs. The partner-driven efforts in implementing activities have had a positive influence on programme activities: it strengthened inter-institutional cooperation and collaboration, and it also promoted ideas about peacebuilding since more successful job matching leads to income opportunities and skills development.

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<sup>16</sup> Two projects (bakeries) were not operational during fieldwork therefore had not started income generation.



### 4.3 Dialogue reflection and leisure

The different kinds of dialogue sessions contributed to strengthen social cohesion, especially at local level. Shared learning sessions and intergenerational dialogues have positively changed the dominant and negative narratives around returnees. As a result, communities have been more and more welcoming towards returnees and now, instead of being stigmatised, excluded and marginalised, they are part of the behaviour change process. Returnees' direct engagement has helped to mitigate potential social fragmentation within the communities, and it has brought people together. Communities' positive commitment to returnees has reduced the likelihood of instability and promoted inclusion values.

Likewise, the programme dialogue forums have contributed to peacebuilding through platforms in which people can listen to returnees' real stories, but also interact, socialise and discuss their way forward and opportunities. Again, these sessions have changed the narrative about returnees and reduced stigmatisation within their own communities. The forums were a source of learning for young people, for challenging misconceptions about the "Back Way", their transitions to the adulthood like their roles and responsibilities in the communities. The interactions in the communities around the theme of returnees have created a space for tolerance, acceptance, inclusion and peace at community level.

Intergenerational dialogues (town hall meetings) between community leaders, returnees' parents, youth and returnees themselves have created a strong and meaningful civic awareness. Within the communities, variations in age groups are critical: community leaders such as Alkalos, Imams, Village Development Committee members and other influential members are trusted and respected by both returnees and the overall youth. Therefore, high participation of these leaders has been very significant to influence other community members. These intergenerational dialogue sessions proved effective at the local level, leading to changes in community structures and improvement in economic status of returnees. To sum it up, these sessions have reduced the gap between young and old people. Youths are often perceived as too eager or impatient due to young adults' willingness to be seen as capable and responsible members of the group, while community leaders can be perceived as disconnected to reality, too much attached to traditions and to a strict interpretation of religion. So, the communication tools implemented helped to increase mutual understanding.

The youth cultural and recreational activities, like the football tournament involving conflicting groups, like journalists and police units, rebels and community members, taxi drivers and police units, supported by the programme, provided both a platform and an opportunity to bring together groups usually opposed, to leave tensions aside to share a good experience and learn from each other; these tournaments contributed to create a peaceful environment in the communities. The Hope Basketball Academy is another example of a leisure activity that has the capacity to both attract the youth and to develop methodologies to discuss irregular migration and self-fulfilment.

Following the same logic, the two refurbished youth centres facilitate interaction between young and adults and at the same time they involve different kinds of profiles around leisure and social activities. They represent safe and neutral spaces in which people with different ideologies, ethnic belonging, social classes and interests, can build bridges and enjoy mutual understanding.

During the dialogue forums, shared spaces for open and respectful discussions were dedicated to women in general and women returnees in particular. They were also involved as traditional singers, an extremely important contribution since it allows them to spread messages in a very understandable and enjoyable way - for less educated community members.

## 4.4 MHPSS acceptance

Clear improvement of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) produced tangible results at grassroots level, notably when Migrant Peer Support Groups (MPSGs), health nurses and social workers, were trained, as that has improved their perception of the problems and actively facilitated early detection of mental health problems, provided the first assistance and if required referred the cases at regional level. As a result, people suffering from mental health issues are more and more understood and accepted in their families and in the community, and they feel less stigmatised.

Services for MHPSS have significantly improved returnees' and other vulnerable groups' mental health and psychosocial well-being. During their irregular migration journeys, returnees were often exposed to tragic events and dreadful experiences which traumatised them and posed significant risks for their mental health. Moreover, these risks are often exacerbated by stigmatisation, isolation and other anti-social behaviours which can lead to violence and social exclusion. These risks can also result into families', societies' or communities' disintegration. To avert or at least mitigate these risks, the programme provided MHPSS training to mental health nurses and social workers to address returnees' needs and to rebuild the social fabric of the Gambian communities. These nurses and social workers provided services to identify traumas and keep stress levels under control, and in doing so they also helped to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and reintegration of returnees and other vulnerable groups in The Gambia. So, MHPSS services contributed to reduce returnees' stress levels and they countered possible separation between communities and returnees, generally improving their mental health and well-being. These services also directly strengthened beneficiaries' mental capacities to build coping mechanisms, to peacefully interact with community members and to feel involved in their communities.

Training and empowering nurses and social workers allowed the decentralisation at grass-root level of MHPSS services in remote rural communities. The diminution of psychological distress observed among returnees has triggered positive recognition in society and communities, thus enhancing social cohesion during activities. Many returnees who were previously experiencing some levels of suffering from psychosocial distress have now benefitted from the project addressing their psychosocial needs, recognising them as survivors, counselling them and providing trauma relief have had positive psychosocial consequences and thus fostered peacebuilding in The Gambia.

Mental health nurses and social workers were empowered to promote best practices on psychosocial services, social dialogue and behaviour evolution among returnees. Local communities have recognised and welcomed these efforts for social cohesion and acceptance of people with mental health issues. For instance, at Tanka-Tanka Psychiatry Unit (TTPU), - Gambia's only psychiatric facility – was entirely refurbished and equipped. The works ended in March 2022, and bed capacity increased from 100 to 150, thanks to the construction of a new wing. Another relevant change occurred in the space setting, with two newly created separated areas: one for stabilised patients, and a second one for acute patients who can be dangerous for themselves and others. In addition to infrastructure's improvement, the facility received new furnishings, beds and medicines. Consequently, the living conditions are now better, spaces can be adjusted to fit different situations and the facility is no longer overcrowded. At the same time, its staff was trained on MHPSS and all together, the project has improved service delivery to people with mental health problems at the clinic and contribute to reducing the stigma associated with hospitalisations at the facility.

As another dimension of the programme, psychosocial interventions have increased returnees' interest and ability to participate in important community activities to connect to others and, in a way, to develop a new sense of hope.

Within institutions, the capacity building interventions offered to government staff at the MoH have allowed acquisition and retention of knowledge: the knowledge gain is sustainable and could be passed on to others within or outside these institutions, especially to stakeholders on migration matters. Here too, training sessions were highly interactive learning processes which encouraged participation, created mutual respect and strengthened partnerships for joint approaches to migration governance.

Overall, migrant returnees and host communities benefited from improved access to psychosocial support services and reduced stigma as a result of social inclusive support services. Psychosocial training sessions and practices have also improved nurses and social workers' socio-relational skills, , enabling them to interact more effectively in communities and societies where returnees were mostly represented.

#### 4.5 Coherence with other programmes

As this project took place, several other interventions were already being implemented essentially to empower youth and to develop income generating activities, two objectives in line with the project priorities. In addition, all the interventions implemented until March 2022, when this programme ended, were implemented by at least one of the same RUNOs of this very programme (IOM or ITC), which has increased the linkages between these interventions. Actually, these linkages were not only about complementarities, but also derived in mutual benefitting collaborations.

Several of the interventions analysed in this section have been funded by the same instrument, the EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF). Since January 2017, it has adopted a two-fold approach to migration, where prevention - through awareness-raising in order to better inform about the risks of irregular migration - is completed by migrant protection, including return and reintegration facilitation and institutional capacity building for migration management. In parallel, the Trust Fund is targeting the root causes of irregular migration through the development of employment opportunities for the youth. It has financed country-wide interventions, i.e. the "Make it in The Gambia-Tekki Fii", "Strengthening the management and governance of migration and the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in The Gambia" and Youth Empowerment Project (YEP).

Here below are described the most relevant projects.

- The EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Sahel and Lake Chad region was launched in April 2017 and implemented in 13 countries, among them The Gambia. The programme aims to save lives and make migration safer, more informed and better governed for both migrants and their communities. With the support of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the programme allows migrants who decide to return to their countries of origin to do so in a safe and dignified way, and to restart their lives through an integrated approach that has the potential to complement local development and mitigate some of the drivers of irregular migration. Its pillars of intervention are: migration management and capacity development, protection and voluntary return assistance, reintegration support, awareness raising, community stabilisation, and data collection and analysis<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.migrationjointinitiative.org/>

- The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP)<sup>18</sup> provides skills-training for those who wish to develop professionally in relevant local industry. Through the EUTF, YEP has offered training sessions in: Basse, Bansang, Julangel, Janjanbureh, Farafenni, Soma, and other locations. The YEP is derived from a market-led approach and it aims at strengthening existing youth development systems, structures and services to create more employment opportunities. It does so by scaling up skills among youth in the workforce to fit market demands. The project under evaluation offers various possibilities for young people interested in economic fields such as commercial agriculture, service business or tourism. Implemented by the International Trade Center (ITC), it is funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.
- The “Make it in The Gambia-Tekki Fii”<sup>19</sup> programme’s goal is to improve economic development and prospects for The Gambia’s youth, including returning migrants by promoting attractive employment and income opportunities. Moreover, its objective is to support the GoTG to boost economic development, focusing on generating training, entrepreneurship, employment and credit opportunities for Gambians. The Tekki Fii campaign is a movement by Gambians, for Gambians. It is about helping young people in the country to see the benefits of choosing to ‘make it’ at home. Implemented by the Germany Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), The Belgian Agency for International Cooperation (Enabel) and the International Trade Center (ITC), it is funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

In addition, other projects have to be considered for their complementarities, namely:

- The Migrants as Messengers project (MaM) project<sup>20</sup>, which was conceived to test a new approach to relay information to potential migrants through peer-to-peer messaging. The novelty of the MaM project was that it did not rely on a top-down approach in which information is provided by the government or a non-governmental organisation (NGO). Instead, IOM worked with returned migrants - volunteers - who experienced the perils of the journey first hand, and told their stories to peers and potential migrants, through video recordings or in person. MaM project relied on authentic first-person testimonies that aimed at achieving change through emotional identification rather than merely through information forwarded. It stems from the idea that potential migrants may emotionally identify with the personal experiences that they are being told, which then initiate an internal process where their own perception on migration is revisited. Implemented by IOM, it is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The Resilience of Organisations for Transformative Smallholder Agriculture Project (ROOTS)<sup>21</sup> was launched on the 09<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, followed by regional launching in March 2021. ROOTS main goal is to improve food security, nutrition and resilience to climate change for smallholder farmers in The Gambia. Its development objective is to increase agricultural productivity and access to markets for enhanced food security and nutrition, and for the resilience of family farms and farming organisations. To achieve its objectives, ROOTS will support targeted investments in

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.yep.gm/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.tekkifii.gm/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.migrantsasmessengers.org/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://rootsproject.gm/>

infrastructure and the technical and organisational capacities training of farmers' organisations, particularly in the case of young people and women. It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the OPEC fund for the international Development (OFID), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the GoTG.

## 5. Effectiveness

The project has achieved almost all the Log frame target values, and in some cases, it even largely exceeded them<sup>22</sup>. If from a formal standpoint the expected outcomes<sup>23</sup> are well met, sometimes there is a lack of feedback to inform about the real extent of the effectiveness of activities.

The project was based on two phases. **The first phase** (17<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 - 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020) was intended to achieve a better understanding of returnees' situation for peace building, to promote institutional coordination, to define a framework of intervention, to build capacities and to inform on the alternatives of the "Back Way" to Europe.

**The second phase** (17<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 - 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2022) continued many of the above-mentioned activities and introduced a new focus on communities, in terms of income generation activities, information and awareness-raising initiatives.

These two phases were also characterised by overarching interventions, like the support to 116 survivors of a shipwreck in Mauritania in December 2019, or the modification of the budget to fund activities aligned with GoTG's response to COVID-19. Both activities were in line with both phases, especially the second, since shipwreck survivors received MHPSS and could rebuild their lives with CBR initiatives, which were already foreseen. Concerning the response to COVID-19, it addressed the socio-economic needs of youths and returnees, since they participated in livelihood (soap-making) activities and were recruited as contact tracers, which represented an income-generation activity and at the same time made them to feel important for their communities, which facilitated their reintegration.

The focus shifts from the first to the second phase were not only the consequence of strategy, but also resulted from a deeper involvement in the project management and monitoring of members of the GoTG, as well as World Health Organisation (WHO) and the donor. Their increased participation and influence were the direct result of the creation of the Project Technical Committee (PTC)<sup>24</sup>, a steering body whose aims were: to coordinate the implementation of the project activities through quarterly meetings for reviews and updates, to provide oversight support to monitor project progress through field visits to project sites, to make strategic and technical recommendations for the project implementation, including suggestions to address ongoing challenges, to serve as a technical arm and decision-making body for the conceptualisation and development of management processes, tools and documents, to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders (state actors, civil society, other partners involved), to facilitate the technical and operational activities specified as part of the project, and to review and validate biannual and annual work plans. As a result, on top of the quarterly meetings three field monitoring visits were made. The PTC blurred the lines between donors, beneficiaries and implementing organisations, involving all of them in the project monitoring. Despite

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<sup>22</sup> For more detailed information on the performance of each activity, see the updated Log frame in Annex 3

<sup>23</sup> The three outcomes are: 1. Gambian society has a balanced and positive perception of return migration, 2. The GOTG demonstrates strengthened capacity to facilitate sustainable reintegration contributing to enhanced social cohesion and inclusion and 3. Returnees enjoy enhanced access to psychological, political, social and economic reintegration services.

<sup>24</sup> The PTC was co-chaired by the OVP and the Head of Lead UN Agency (IOM) and it was composed by a representative from the OVP, the Peace Building Fund Secretariat, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure, IOM, ITC, UNFPA, WHO, the Director of Coordination and other members deemed necessary by the PTC. See the Efficiency section for further detail.

the initial difficulties in coordinating so many actors, the project benefited from this change, reducing the distance among them, which resulted in mutual better knowledge and in the identification of specific interventions like the internal monitoring conducted between May 28, 2021 and May 31, 2021, or the joint identification of the CBR initiatives conducted by an ad hoc commission including some of the PTC members together with external stakeholders.

In terms of achievements, as per Log frame outputs, they are clearly positive. However, a closer look at the indicators shows that some of them only inform about the delivery of certain products or services (outputs), which have to do with milestones' achievement by larger and complementary interventions going beyond the project assessed - i.e. the functioning of the job's referral mechanism (Output 2.2). In other situations, the indicator does not capture the complexity of the output - i.e. the integration of MHPSS into primary health care services (Output 2.3) or the real extent of the project, as it focused on the number of agencies involved in the NCM (Output 2.1) instead of on its meaningful achievements.

This means that despite the good results of the project, after their delivery recipients were not always in the condition to sustain them. In this regard, it is of the utmost importance to strengthen the transition phase and ensure the recipients' capacities. To this end, it has to be welcomed the above-mentioned PTC, but in the evaluator's opinion the possibility of a more stable and strategic partnership with the GoTG (see section about sustainability) should be explored.

### **5.1 The DTM, shedding some light to the mobility**

To support the Government of The Gambia (GoTG) to track the flow of migrants and displaced people, the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was launched in November 2020. This was designed together with the GBoS to capture, process, and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of the mobile population regularly and systematically. Through regional consultations led by The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) and in coordination with Department of Community Development (DCD) and regional authorities, in January and February 2021, high mobility location assessments were done hence identifying key points of transits where data are collected by local enumerators. Four key Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) were identified namely: North Bank Region, (Farafenni and Barra), West Coast Region (Brikama) and Upper River Region (Basse).

To ensure a more community-driven approach and ownership of the process, Flow Monitoring (FM) activities were conducted with local partners and so far, nine monthly Flow Monitoring Reports (FMR) and two quarterly Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) have been published from June 2021 to February 2022. Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) captures key data on the magnitude, provenance, destination and mode of travel of mobility flows, while the Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS), gathers detailed individual travellers' information, profiles, migration experience and intentions of migrants via surveys. The FMR and FMP have generated data for discussions on migration at NCM level (Internal Migration, Migration Data, Policy and Legislation TWGs) and for regular consultations with government partners on migration related issues.

## 5.2. Reinforcing the leadership National Coordination Mechanism on migration issues.

The project has responded to the need for effective coordination of migration-related programmes by supporting the establishment of the NCM and supporting the creation of 8 sectoral coordination structures, the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs).

These two levels of participation, one at the Highest Political Level and another one at the Senior Technical Level are intertwined as follows:

1. The Political Level meets bi-annually to examine annual reports on activities of the TWGs and give direction for future engagements. The project has also helped to provide both institutional and individual capacity strengthening by offering training opportunities and equipment to ensure better programme outcomes. Through the NCM, the GoTG was able to reach and coordinate sectoral and community support for a smooth reintegration of returnees.

2. The TWGs meet quarterly to share information and discuss emerging migration issues at present, the NCM is composed of 23 ministries, and national agencies, and is still receiving technical support from IOM in the drafting of the strategic documents, from the secretariat.

Each TWG is led by the Ministry/ies with the technical expertise/mandate in the specific domain, for instance Ministry of Trade, Integration and Employment lead the TWG about Labour Migration. With the exception of the cross-cutting issues, the rest of the TWG has its own yearly work plan approved.

The NCM has been able to work on relevant framework documents, such as the Migration Governance indicators (MGIs), the National Migration Policy (NMP) 2020-2030, or the National Communication Strategy (NCS). The latter is the result of the joint collaboration of several public authorities under the Communications Platform which validated the communication strategy, the action plan and its implementation with the first government TV and radio programmes. The media outreach (TV and Radio) hosted by the Ministry of Information and Communication (MOICI) have contributed to awareness-raising on return and reintegration.

What is considered of importance is the platform's capacity to modify the communication strategy, depending on the country's situation. More in detail, the message currently spread is to "promote the returnees' acceptance by the Gambian society and to valorise their contribution, as the President Adama Barrow was also a returnee and could contribute to the development of The Gambia".

The table below shows the progress for each TWGs based on the most important milestones outputs for each TWG.

Table n.:5

TWG	Lead	Date of Establishment	Key Achievement(s)
Border Management	Gambia Immigration Department	July 2020	Rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on informal female cross-border traders
Communication and Advocacy	Department of Information Services	March 2020	Migration Communications Strategy of The Gambia



Cross-Cutting Issues	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare; Ministry of Justice	April 2021	National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for Protection of Vulnerable Migrants, including Victims of Trafficking
Data, Policy and Legislation	Gambia Bureau of Statistics	July 2020	Migration mainstreamed into ECOWAS data collection tools
Internal Migration	Ministry of Local Government and Lands	June 2021	TOR and workplan developed
Labour Migration	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment	March 2020	Labour Migration Strategy of The Gambia; Ethical Recruitment Guidelines; Pre-Departure Training Manual
Migration and Development	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad	July 2020	Diaspora website and portal
Return and Reintegration	Ministry of Interior	July 2020	Strategic discussions to inform policies on return, readmission and reintegration

It must be also mentioned that two voluntary national reviews of The Gambia Global Compact on Migration implementation progress were conducted within the framework of the NCM in 2021 and 2022.

Eventually, in July 2021 the programme assisted the GoTG in reducing the gap with the Gambian society, by supporting the OVP in on a nationwide tour to directly engage returnees, community leaders and local government authorities on the topic "Irregular migration and social cohesion".

### 5.3 Income generating activities

The establishment of Community-Based Reintegration (CBR) initiatives is one of the most relevant activities and it has provided income-generation opportunities to groups of returnees and to young people. The whole process to set the methodology, to identify the best proposals, the work with communities, to train them and the adjustment of economic activities to the “market” has been outstanding.

The communities were supported since their initial idea until the starting up of the CBR initiative, involving political and technical actors in the process, like local Councillors or the Department of Livestock under the Ministry of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture. In this case, it provided support to the animal husbandry initiatives in the NBR, delivering training and advising on the kind of animals to be acquired and their keeping.

However, even if beneficiaries considered that sheep were very good specimens, the animals were coming from Mauritania and were used to a different climate and feeding, which were considered to be the cause of their slow fattening and high mortality.

It must be stressed that the initiatives have started their activities very recently and in the case of the two bakeries, they were not still operational at the time of the fieldwork (mid May 2022), having the project under evaluation ended the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. In one of them, the cause of the delay was in the finalisation of the bakery itself, and in the other on repeated tests focusing on the production and the prices of the loafs.

The initiatives' supervision ended on 30<sup>th</sup> of March and starting from this moment all seven - out of ten – interventions visited during the fieldwork presented some bottlenecks that become more acute after the end of the project. Due to the seriousness of the situation of certain projects in the NBR, their representatives were contacted on the 3 and 4 of July to have an update.

The table below synthetises the most important ones.

**Table no.6:**

Project	Location	Bottleneck(s) detected during the fieldwork
Sheep Fattening (IOM)	Barra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The kind of sheep provided are not used to the Gambian climate and to food provided (updated 03/07).</li> <li>• Sheep fatten slowly than expected and are exposed to illnesses<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• 9 out of 35 sheep died (updated 03/07).</li> <li>• Additional hay was purchased at the end of the project, but it was a kind of groundnut hay that is not appropriated for sheep.</li> <li>• For this reason, just 2-3 animals are ready to be sold for the celebration of Tobaski (updated 03/07).</li> <li>• The people trained in sheep keeping are no longer involved in the project.</li> <li>• A small number of workers compared with the number of people involved in the project (6 out of 30), which produces tensions and difficulties in the project management and in sharing revenues.</li> </ul>
Sheep Fattening (IOM)	Essau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The kind of sheep provided are not used to the Gambia climate and to food provided (updated 03/07).</li> <li>• Sheep fatten slower than expected and are exposed to illnesses.</li> <li>• Additional hay was purchased at the end of the project, but it was a kind of groundnut hay that is not appropriated for sheep.</li> <li>• None of the animals are ready to be sold for the celebration of Tobaski.</li> <li>• Due to the lack of money for the treatments, 24 rams died and the other 12 are still sick. No support from the community is provided (updated 03/07).</li> <li>• A small number of workers compared with the number of people involved in the project (22 out of 35), but there is a general agreement on how to share the revenues</li> </ul>

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<sup>25</sup> Since inception, the Department of Livestock provided district livestock assistance under the Ministry of Agriculture, including technical training, and guiding the quantity of feed to be purchased. As per the advice from the experts at the time of planning, sufficient feed had been purchased to keep the animals going up to the time of sale. Additional feed was purchased to make sure there is no shortage of feed.

3 project components: .Fashion .Cosmetics .Tailoring (IOM)	Barra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small number of workers compared with the number of people involved in the project (2 out of 9-10 females).</li> <li>• Training provided in group dynamics and group management in the inception phase, did not prevent the bad relation among the members of the project. The two members active want to run individual projects.</li> <li>• The situation has not improved since the field visit (updated 03/07).</li> </ul>
Bakery (ITC)	Brikama Gidda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The oven provided has limited capacity compared with the potentialities of the business. There is a risk of overuse and of a short lifespan.</li> <li>• Project not operational yet.</li> </ul>
Tuk Tuk Electric tricycle (ITC)	Banjul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of batteries to ensure 7h autonomy and lack of spare parts. Because of this, only 4 out of 8 Tuk Tuk are operational. Both spare parts and second batteries for all electric tricycles, were ordered by ITC at the end of 2021 but not delivered yet.</li> <li>• Problems with the police because vehicles have no insurance. As a result of this, A vehicle was immobilised.</li> </ul>
Community Bakery (ITC)	Tinkijo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The persons trained in the project management are no longer involved in the project. There are uncertainties about the decisions to be taken. ITC proposed more training if needed.</li> <li>• Lack of a vehicle with the capacity to transport more than 100 loaf of bread to the villages nearby.</li> <li>• Building finished and equipment provided, but the project is not operational yet.</li> </ul>
Youth Centre (ITC)	Bakau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of the project is essentially social, while the income generation activity is residual and applied only to those users who can afford to pay.</li> <li>• There is a lack of chairs that prevent organising big gatherings.</li> </ul>

RUNOs involved in the CBR initiatives, IOM and ITC, ensured that supervision will be maintained after the end of the project and specific support will be provided i.e. in terms of new training and technical support.

A similar situation was experienced in the village of Kiang Kwinella, where the economic empowerment initiative was held to dynamize the local youth centre. Six-month training (sessions were held on weekends within these six months) on livelihood initiatives (soap making, tie and die, batik with basic English literacy) was implemented by the NGO Starfish International, and addressed to returnees (2), widows of irregular migration victims and community members. Overall, 65 persons attended the sessions and 35 participants completed the programme (3 men, 32 women). At the end of the training period, some participants claimed the earnings from their products sold to the implementing organisation, but it was unclear if there had been any agreement on that matter. Despite the provision of the seed capital, the number of persons still active drastically reduced (8-10). The local youth centre funded by the Mansakonko Area Council is still not used, since potential entrepreneurs prefer to run activities from home. As a result of the preliminary evidence of the evaluation, ITC together with Starfish International, will provide support in the marketization of the products.

Under the realm of income generating activities, it would have been important to track how many of the 152 persons who received coaching and job placement by GAMBJOBS in the framework of the Restart project<sup>26</sup>, actually got a job, and how many of the 57 who did have a job position were still occupying it in the formal economy six months after the completion of the activity, in March 2020.

Finally, the Youth Centre in Bundung is quite different from the rest of interventions: it has essentially a social character and is addressed to people with low available budgets, especially for leisure activities. The approach for generating incomes was to target more affluent groups, offering services unavailable in the city, like spaces for photo sessions or social gatherings, the long-term goal being to become a self-sustained centre.

#### 5.4. Integrated but unfinished approach on MHPSS

The intervention radically improved the way MHPSS is treated in the country, and it supported the creation of the National MHPSS framework (2020-2025), together with the World Health Organisation (WHO), which developed the Training Curriculum on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service for Migrants - IOM provided administrative support while WHO provided technical and strategic guidance through initiating and guiding the development of a national MHPSS strategic framework and MHPSS Curriculum in line with WHO guidelines, facilitating printing and distribution of WHO guidelines on the management of stress and promotion of mental health during COVID-19, facilitating review and adaptation of WHO Mental Health Gap Treatment Guidelines, and training of health care workers on the use of the guidelines.<sup>27</sup>

The development of MHPSS strategic framework has allowed the MoH to identify priorities, to produce an action plan in this domain and to move forward in the integration of mental health into health services delivery at all levels of care in The Gambia. At the operational level, it must be mentioned that the action plan is structured around eight areas, among them migration and mental health, and for any of them, a strategy, activities, targets and indicators are set. In this way, it is easier for the MoH to monitor the implementation of its components and for donors and international organisations to identify specific areas of intervention. The adoption of the framework represents a solution to The Gambia Mental Health Bill whose approval is still pending and it gives more support and access to services to people in need.

The above-mentioned training curriculum has filled the gap of limited availability and lack of homogeneity of training materials for a tailored mental health delivery. Training modules are structured in two levels –basic and advanced- and each of them cover theory and practice. The course is designed for a vast range of health and non-health professionals working in/desiring to work in the field of MHPSS services. This includes but is not limited to nurses, midwives, doctors, social workers, psychologists, psychosocial support workers, counsellors, protection officers, lawyers, law enforcement officers working in both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

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<sup>26</sup> The main objective of the project was to support returnees in their efforts to reintegrate into society, through coaching, skills acquisition and job placement, enabling them to earn decent living and contribute to the socio-economic development of their communities.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr/country-story/2020/gambia>

Consecutively, the project helped to improve the three interconnected levels of the so called “pyramid of the MHPSS”: (1) the lower one at grassroots level, (2) the intermediate and specialised one at regional level, and (3) the higher level represented by the Tanka Tanka Psychiatric Unit (TTPU) that hosts the most serious cases.

Several activities were implemented directly in families to conduct awareness-raising and to ensure detection and supervision of already diagnosed MHPSS cases. Across all the regions, a total of 109 health and social care workers and 175 frontline workers from Quarantine Centres were trained, and 725 (392 male, 352 female) community health nurses, social workers and caregivers were trained in 2019 and 2020 delivering health assistance with 9 mobile health teams across the country (7 regions), and 3 migrant peer support groups (MPSG) received training as well as key individuals in some communities. Special attention must be paid to traditional healers: because of their presence and trustworthiness, they represent a valid alternative to the primary public health system. They have been sensitised to the programme’s objectives, and in the case of Soma some healers already collaborate and exchange information with the regional mental health focal point. This collaboration presents several advantages, such as the possibility to engage with long-lasting interventions by traditional healers, and the opportunity to have those interventions periodically supervised by the focal point.

The regional MHPSS focal points embody the intermediate level to whom MHPSS cases are referred to from grassroots level, and they have the responsibility to decide if one patient must be hospitalised at TTPU or not. These focal points are trained psychiatric nurses deployed by MoH. They are a part of an integrated health team at their health facilities which should facilitate the patients’ access, through people with MHPSS needs can come through the general health services, outpatient services, or via referrals from other health centres.

In practice, the integration and functioning of grassroots and intermediate levels depend not just on a global framework, as it is also the result of daily coordination and information sharing among professionals in health centres, to identify bottlenecks and find solutions collectively. For instance, a relevant number of nurses trained on MHPSS are no longer involved in the mobile health teams and therefore more professionals must be trained to sustain effectiveness.

Finally, concerning the TTPU, it was refurbished and equipped, increasing its capacity from 100 to 150 beds, thanks to the construction of a new wing, and improving the quality of the assistance in dignified and adapted conditions. Altogether, the intervention has enhanced service delivery to people with mental health problems at the facility and contribute to reduce the stigma associated with hospitalisations at the clinic.

According to health professionals and authorities, these major improvements on three different levels made health authorities and professionals aware of two new emerging needs that were not part of the interventions to be implemented by the project assessed. The first one is illicit substance abuse: it affects many young people, among them some returnees, and as the fieldwork evidenced, is a common temporary solution to handle stress. Its abuse can produce dangerous behaviours that are not really tackled by the current health system. To treat these cases, regional rehabilitation centres should be established and integrated into the primary health system. As for the second one, social reintegration of patients discharged from TTPU sometimes proves difficult, especially if those patients are no longer accepted by the community/family, or when the latter wrongly assumes that former patients will always need specific attention. In these cases, patients are allowed to stay longer at the hospital, even when they live outside the facility, so that they can get accommodation and food and be prevented from social exclusion. Both issues were not part of the current project and do not appear

in the MHPSS strategic framework for migrant returnees. In the opinion of the evaluator, this can be explained in terms of priorities, which first have to address widespread needs and then fill the gaps left.

In such two cases, the solution provided is to strengthen the connection between the top and the bottom sides of the “pyramid of MHPSS” and provide a smooth transition from the psychiatric facility to the communities. In practice, temporary accommodations should be introduced at the regional level and access be provided to standard living conditions and under special supervision.

#### **5.4.1 Support to Migrant Peer Support Groups**

As it matters, three Migrant Peer Support Groups (MPSGs) were formed in three regions affected by high return rates among other criteria: West Coast Region (WCR), Upper River Region (URR), and North Bank Region (NB) where some survivors arrived after the shipwreck that happened in Mauritania in 2019. MPSGs serve as a gathering point for returnees but also for the families of migrants who have died along the ‘Back way’. Endorsement from the respective communities was key to the formation of these groups. To this end, both local and regional key stakeholders were consulted during the implementation of the project on how to provide assistance to returnees, for them to psychologically recover, and on how to include them in community-led initiatives. These three groups (36 people - 24 males and 12 women) were supported by local Migration Information Centres (MICs). The migrant peer support groups progressively opened to their communities and started to organise different activities, such as home visits, tie and dye making, cooking competitions, visits to schools to talk about positive coping experiences, meetings and other psychosocial activities which have contributed to returnees’ reintegration. On top of basic counselling skills, these groups received additional training on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). In the last stages of the project, many group members were involved as witnesses in the project “Migrants as Messengers” (MaM), in order to spread messages putting in light opportunities in The Gambia. for young people and returnees.

### **5.5 The community-based approach**

Community-based reintegration assistance reinforces community networks and sets better conditions for sustainable reintegration. It is implemented using a participatory approach involving returnees and their communities of return to address wider needs and concerns. Community-based initiatives can increase support for reintegration among local actors. These kinds of initiatives are particularly useful when there is a large number of returnees to a specific community, because community-based integration can address tensions between returnees and local communities or serve as extra capacity when a community have made an effort to accommodate returnees’ needs<sup>28</sup>.

At the society level, dialogue sessions, moonlight storytelling, social media awareness creation and community town hall meetings between community leaders and migrant returnees, created avenues for returnees within the communities to share their stories with their peers and community members on the perils of the irregular migration, reintegration and how they can participate in decision making processes in their communities strengthened the community linkages and facilitated the social inclusion and reintegration of returnees. As a result of this, the perception of community members changed, stigmatisation of returnees reduced and their engagement in the community decision making processes improved, fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

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<sup>28</sup> IOM. Reintegration Handbook: Module 3: Reintegration assistance at the community level (2019)

Communities have largely appreciated the introduction of these activities, which are connected with traditional events that disappeared and offer the possibility to periodically discuss matters of general concern regardless of the political orientation, social status or education of the participants.

## 5.6 Focus on young people

Youth centres were found to be safe and fit to allow community members and returnees to conduct meetings, exchange ideas and discuss ways forward on issues relevant to strengthening peaceful communities and development. These centres provide a convenient venue to host both social events and specialised dedicated services, as referral and counselling services to returnees. For this reason, the NGO Youth Against Irregular Migration (YAIM) has a dedicated space in the Bundung Youth Centre.

After their refurbishment, both reopened their doors on March 2021, and during the period until mid-May 2022 they have organised activities like: symposiums of youth leaders, training on volunteer and volunteering, on Policy Document and Sexual Harassment (all of them organised by YAIM), consultation meetings with Councillors, youth meetings, social ceremonies for community initiatives, orientation of community volunteers on Community Based Surveillance (CBS) and rumour detection in communities in relation to COVID 19 pandemic.

As a milestone for its operational strategy, the Bundung Youth Centre is equipped with temporary accommodation for returnees, youth, vulnerable groups and communities in need. Young people, including returnees, who participated in the refurbishment process of the facility have indirectly built some working skills such as tiles laying, wall painting and basic plumbing and electric works. Acquisition of these skills might motivate the returnees and youth to continue this path and keep working in the construction field. Centres have been equipped with materials such as furniture, IT equipment, TVs, photography items (cameras, backdrops, tripod stands), screens, fans, etc. and others in general. As for Jarra Soma's Youth centre, it has two locations: one entire building dedicated to youth activities and a new structure in the sports facility area nearby.

The project received additional funding from the UEFA foundation (see section 6.1) and was thus allowed to train ten coaches in an intensive five-day TOT workshop which combines theoretical training about essential football-based life skills for employability and entrepreneurship using Life Skills Curriculum. The coaches rolled out the programme with selected schools and football teams attracting 213 participants.

Social events (24) were successfully organised; namely four regional football tournaments events, eight inter-regional cultural art fairs and four regional peace concerts with 3,300 (1,980 male and 1,320 female) persons being engaged through these activities.

Youth were informed via social media about the events in particular and about social inclusion and reintegration of returnees in general and 69,000 social media impressions were recorded.

What could be improved is the definition of a specific programme for each youth centre, where leisure activities should be planned according to specific methodologies to promote reflection about irregular migration and youth engagement in The Gambia.

## 5.7. Effective adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 had a worldwide impact, which also affected The Gambia, which introduced lockdown measures that restricted movement during the months of March and April 2020. The project suffered from these circumstances and had to suspend social gatherings and introduce social distancing measures. A portion of the funding of the project was redirected to support the government in the fight against the virus and it was done by introducing new specific activities bridging interventions about the virus prevention with those about returnee's reintegration. It initially purposely consisted of a consultancy to determine Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) in relation on how and who to target with information activities. It is considered particularly relevant to define with precision the strategy of intervention. At the same time, 80 young people, four of whom are returnee migrants (3 males and 1 female) were trained on COVID-19 prevention and response to serve as contact tracers of suspected cases of the virus.

An interesting activity implemented was about soap making, which involved 20 of the survivors of the shipwreck in Mauritania and their families. By means of this activity, different objectives were targeted simultaneously: to serve as an income generating activity, to promote hygiene and as a coping strategy to overcome the stress produced by the shipwreck. Survivors were encouraged to receive community-based MHPSS. As part of the soap making initiative, a series of group discussions and psychodrama sessions were incorporated to emphasise the importance of peer support and social networks.

## 5.8 Feed-back

The evaluation exercise evidenced that certain activities would have required more feedback to inform about their real pertinence, effectiveness, impact and identify potential loopholes to be addressed during the intervention or in the future. It must be clarified that if on the one side, the monitoring system in place had the sufficient information to purposely achieve the project targets, on the other a wider analysis of the project results would have provided a better understanding of its achievements. In the opinion of the evaluator, this is due to the fact that some activities of the project are conceived in terms of product delivery, and when it happens their performance is not no longer assessed.

Here below, some examples are reported.

The Youth Information Centres's referral system is designed to lead one user to the services he/she is looking for, but it is not conceived to inform about their capacity to really address this user's specific needs and to collect data about users' satisfaction in general.

The job referral system is currently in place (32 public and private organisations mapped and 20 actually shared information) and its capacity could substantially be Improved if the youth centres across the country, that are part of the referral system, were actually connected, which is not the case. This will be possible only after the renovation of some of them, that is currently ongoing. Very few jobseekers are currently registered in the DoL referral system (211 in 2021), and the overall number of contacts with organisations inside the network is still limited (57 referrals in 2021). No information at all is available about how many of them were recruited<sup>29</sup>. A public job centre was also equipped,

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<sup>29</sup> It must be clarified that a specific intervention, the "Restart" project was implemented by the company Gambjobs between July 2019 and March 2020. 152 participants were screened and trained and 57 were hired. Outside of this experience, there are no results of job seekers' employment.



and a communication campaign was launched. Eventually, when the evaluation was conducted, the DoL web page did not publish any job offer.

A similar situation can be seen about community dialogues. Some of the nation-wide organisations recruited by the project to deliver such activities rely on regional focal points and on some people, sometimes volunteers who deliver the sessions. The personnel in the headquarter of the organisations contacted, have little information about the details, about the locations, their selection criteria and about the activities conducted. This situation prevents from understanding whether the selection of the sessions was affected by some bias, and therefore makes it difficult to plan a long-term intervention strategy.

Regarding the installation and operation of the free toll Youth Help Line, it is currently operational which implies the achievement of the corresponding indicator (1.2.3), however, the number of monthly calls received remains very low (between 6 and 19, among them 0 returnees for most months in 2021). In this regard, it would have been important to create a mid-term plan of implementation and to collect data about its capacity to effectively deliver information and refer people to the most suitable services, which is currently low.

## 5.9 Modest Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE)

From the beginning gender was not at the heart of the intervention, as shown by the decision of the PBF to assign it Gender Marker Score 1, for projects that will in some way, but not significantly, contribute to gender equality. More specifically, the project does not foresee outcomes/outputs dedicated to GEWE, activities do not address barriers to improve GEWE, and women are mentioned among other groups with no specific criteria involved. Even though 15 – 30 % of the project's budget is allocated to GEWE, with some indicators disaggregated by sex, no gender-sensitive indicators were identified<sup>30</sup>.

This low-profile approach to GEWE has been going on during project implementation and given the little share of women within returnees, it is understandable. Nevertheless, more attention to GEWE could have been meaningful in certain aspects of the project, and for instance income generation activities could have tried to break the gendered division of labour and to make “masculinised” jobs also available for women. Actually, among the 7 CBR's visited, only one had female members and they worked in a beauty shop (see section 5.3). In the case of the “Restart project” (was implemented by the company Gambjobs and funded by this project), 31,2% of returnees provided with a job placement opportunity were women. Also, the high percentage of men employed through this project was partly due to most job opportunities being labour-intensive, to which women did not express interest in.

At MHPSS level, Migrants' Peer Support Groups (MPSGs) were trained on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), but no feedback was received about whether the skills acquired have been useful on some occasions. In the same vein, nurses and primary health professionals in general did not plan any intervention to address traumas specific to women and possible consequences on their health.

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<sup>30</sup> For more information about how PBF Gender Marker Scoring, please see: [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf\\_guidance\\_note\\_on\\_gender\\_marker\\_scoring\\_2019.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_guidance_note_on_gender_marker_scoring_2019.pdf)

## 6. Efficiency

The Project employed nearly 100% of the budget and was cost-effective. The overall management of the project was timely and efficient and the potential overlapping between the 3 RUNOs prevented. The internal monitoring mechanism changed substantially between the first and the second phase and ensured a greater involvement of national authorities, another UN agency and the donor.

### 6.1 Analysis of the budget

The intervention was funded by the PBF and implemented in two phases for a total amount of \$2,276,922.22, equal to 99% of the total budget assigned to the project (\$2.300.000).

The amount implemented relates to the last available figures produced during the preparation of the final report. Even if project co-financing was not required by the call of tender, project management was able to “catalyse” an additional \$200.000 from the UEFA Foundation for Children to co-finance a specific activity. It occurred in synergy with the current project, but financially speaking they were considered as two separated projects given that they were funded by two different donors.

In the case of Output 1 the communication (Activity 1.2.2: Awareness raising of civil society around Tekki Fii campaign “Make it here” and Activity 1.2.4: Produce communication materials to promote youth inclusion) could have been much more ambitious.

In the case of Outcome 3, the spread of the pandemic impacted on the organisation of social events and gatherings, which explains why these were the budget lines with the largest underspending (Activity 3.3.1: Organise a Dialogue forum/ service and Activity 3.3.6: provision for youths at Community Youth centres). The budget breakdown per outcome and per RUNO is presented below, as reported in the statement of expenditure to be included in the final report to be submitted at the end of June 2022.

Table no.7:

	IOM	ITC	UNPFA	TOTAL EXP.	AVAILABLE BUDGET	DIFF. BUDGET-EXP
<b>TOTAL \$ FOR OUTCOME 1:</b>	143,094.41	62,414.72	76,286.00	281,795.13	343,267.83	61,472.70
<b>TOTAL \$ FOR OUTCOME 2:</b>	276,352.02	266,039.60		542,391.62	560,782.62	18,391.00
<b>TOTAL \$ FOR OUTCOME 3:</b>	260,268.38	176,018.45	376,165.20	812,452.03	783,045.00	-29,407.03
<b>Project personnel costs if not included in outcomes above, Project operational costs if not included in</b>	441,779.91	-	49,546.00	491,325.91	462,438.00	-28,887.91

outcomes above, Project M&E budget						
Indirect support costs (7%):	78,504.63	35,313.09	35,139.80	148,957.53	150,467.34	1,509.81
	1,199,999.35	539,785.86	537,137.00			
			Total Expenses:	2,276,922.22	2,300,000.79	23,078.57

The information about expenditures shared with the consultant do not include categories of expenditure, like salaries and allowances, operating costs or consultancies; therefore, a detailed analysis is not possible. However, given the level of execution highlighted in the section Effectiveness, it can be stated that the project is cost-effective and that the financial resources were appropriately used according to the quality of the results achieved.

## 6.2 The management system

During the conception phase of the project, the three RUNOs involved clearly defined their own domains of intervention, so that overlapping could be avoided and also in order to simplify the monitoring of the project. Only on a few occasions the activities were combined, and the coordination team always facilitated collaboration, especially between ITC and UNFPA on the one hand, and between IOM and ITC on the other hand. In this last case (Output 2.2) the two RUNOs involved supported CBR initiatives in different regions.

As it matters, given the very low risk of overlapping between activities, the three RUNOs were implementing different activities simultaneously.

Table no.8:

Outputs	IOM	ITC	UNFPA
Output 1.1 Enhanced understanding of irregular migration, return and reintegration and implications for peacebuilding	x		x
Output 1.2 Communication on migration, return and reintegration is coordinated and accurate		x	x
Output 2.1 National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) is established and operational	x		
Output 2.2 Economic empowerment of returnees is facilitated through establishment and operationalization of a coordinated referral mechanism	x	x	
Output 2.3 MHPSS is integrated into primary health care services through development of guidelines and framework with specific focus on return and reintegration	x		
Output 2.4: National and local actors have enhanced capacity to deliver mental health services to returnees	x		

Output 3.1 Enhanced quality and reach of MHPSS services available through community outreach health teams amongst communities of high return	x		
Output 3.2 Youth Centres provide comprehensive information, referral and counselling services to returnee		X	
Output 3.3 Community linkages are strengthened facilitating social inclusion and reintegration of returnees			x

The monitoring system, which assessed the performance of the project activities, radically changed from the first to the second phase of the project, significantly increasing the number of actors involved. During the first phase it was limited to the three RUNOs that closely collaborated and steered implementation, whilst before the beginning of the second phase it was opened to new members: the Project Technical Committee was co-chaired by the OVP and the Lead UN Agency (IOM), and it was composed by a representative from the OVP, the PBF Secretariat, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Information and Communication Infrastructure, IOM, ITC, UNFPA, WHO, the DSPD (Director of Coordination), and any other members deemed necessary by the PTC.

The overall function of the PTC is to provide technical guidance for the implementation of the project. Thus, it had to:

- Coordinate implementation of project activities through quarterly meetings for reviews and updates;
- Provide oversight support to monitor progress in the implementation of the project through field visits to project sites;
- Make strategic and technical recommendations for the implementation of the project, including suggestions to address implementation challenges;
- Serve as a technical arm and decision-making body for the conceptualisation and development of management processes, tools and documents;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders (state actors, civil society, other partners involved) and facilitate the technical and operational activities specified as part of the project;
- Review and validate biannual and annual work plans;

The PTC examined the project on a quarterly basis. It could also convene in between in exceptional cases, such as the inception phase and the project closure.

Besides the PTC, in January 2021 a Community-Based Reintegration (CBR) task force was established to identify and develop ten viable business models across The Gambia. The organisations involved were selected based on their specialisation: Employment Directorate of the MoTIE was responsible for ventures labour and economic viability, while Department of Community Development (DCD) oversaw the coordination with identified communities, and Youth Against Irregular Migration (YAIM) supported returnees' mobilisation to participate in the consultation meetings. Biweekly meetings have been being conducted for proper coordination. The project selection was based on 1) community interest, 2) returnees' interest and willingness, 3) economic viability, 4) availability of resources and 5) sustainability.

### **6.3 Quality control and monitoring system**

The project was externally monitored on two occasions, covering the following periods: (1) January to October 2019, (2) June to October 2020. A third monitoring session was internally conducted, covering the period November 2020 to March 2021. In addition, the project team conducted three joint monitoring field visits with the PTC members during the reporting period. These visits were like a platform to interact with beneficiaries and exchange ideas, assess benefits and discuss strategies to ensure sustainable impacts for the various activities. They also reinforced the partnerships with government institutions and developed a holistic approach on migration, ensuring good practices, mapping out other strategic opportunities and increasing national ownership on migration governance in The Gambia.

Overall, the project was exhaustively monitored, and the quality of the analysis and recommendations served to understand the current level of implementation and to overcome shortcomings.

### **6.4 Delays and mitigation measures**

The project experienced a delay at the end of the first phase, mostly due to COVID-19 pandemic that compelled to put social gatherings on hold at the end of 2019. The mitigation measure introduced was a 6 month No Cost Extension (NCE), from the 17<sup>th</sup> of June to the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, to redesign interventions in line with the national Covid-19 response, and to introduce general preventive measures.

## 7. Impact

The project has directly and indirectly contributed to strengthening the foundations for peacebuilding in The Gambia, by implementing a holistic approach not just at the thematic level but also by targeting a large array of stakeholders and beneficiaries. The project has contributed to a change in community members' perception as stigmatization of returnees has greatly reduced, largely a result of returnee involvement in community decision-making processes and local businesses. At the same time, it developed the capacity of the Government of The Gambia to ensure a whole-of-government approach on migration governance. However, some challenges such as the persistence of stigma and the need for additional support, have affected the impact of the project for final beneficiaries.

### 7.1 Fighting stigma, the glass half full

The evaluation fieldwork showed that nowadays, returnees who were supported by the AVRR are less often subjected to negative perceptions than in the past, and young people are less exposed to the pressure to undertake the 'Back Way'; the decision to stay in The Gambia is no longer considered as shameful, and in some occasions comparison with friends/relatives who succeeded in their migration is less intense.

However, in other occasions, family and community members still consider migrants in Europe as successful social references, and their contributions in terms of remittances is highly valued in contrast with the meagre support that usually comes from returnees. Within families, social norms are still affected by the migration outcome of some of their own members. For instance, the hierarchy among brothers, traditionally based on the elderliness, which is challenged by successful migrants' economic power. The fieldwork evidenced cases in which when younger brothers come back from Europe to visit their family, the older ones may be expected to serve them, which is seen as shameful.

Marriage is one of the most important rites of passage to adulthood, and at that point men's socio-economic position is key to engage with the future bride. Fieldwork showed other cases in which migrants in Europe and in the US usually have more resources and a more prominent social status, compared to returnees and many of those who did not migrate, so their requests for marriage are much more likely to be accepted.

Another domain in which stigma indirectly discriminate against returnees is religion. Some respondents mentioned that during Friday's pray, many Imams still dedicate a specific prayer to community members living abroad, while people who stayed in The Gambia are seldom entitled to any specific prayer.

On some occasions, the returnees interviewed self-stigmatise and change their behaviour to avoid contact with other members of the community. For instance, they may spend large periods of time at home, or they would only get out at night.

As reported by the intervention "Returnees integration enhancing through coaching and job placement (RESTART)", implemented by the company Gamjobs and funded by this project, employers are usually reluctant to hire returnees since they are seen as less capable than average. From the returnees' point of view, they are not keen to accept jobs in sectors perceived as stigmatising or unsafe, for instance the security sector. Stigma associated to work can also affect returnees who received the reintegration package from IOM and started a business, which then failed, as they can carry the weight of a double failure: the return and the business.

To conclude, stigma still permeates returnees' mental health treatment, especially in the acutest cases. Some health professionals interviewed mention that the solution usually adopted by the relatives is to keep the returnees at home and reduce their social contacts. One health professional refers that families with a returnee in this situation are still warned by nurses that if they do not properly assist them, they will be enclosed in the psychiatric hospital of Tanka -Tanka Psychiatry Unit. On the one side this strategy improves the patient's care, but on the other it reinforces stigma for the families as a whole.

Overall, the fieldwork evidenced a significant change in community members' perception, and although there is room for improvement, stigmatization of returnees has greatly reduced, they are more often engaged in community decision-making processes and they run individual and collective businesses that foster socio-economic cohesion and peaceful coexistence. This result is also consistent with the Reintegration Sustainability Survey, conducted by IOM among returnees. In its last edition of November 2021, the 79% of the total sample surveyed showed in a large extent a positive reintegration in the society, being the economic dimension, the worst and the psycho-social the better dimension in terms of integration. Overall, the 'composite' reintegration score<sup>31</sup>, has reached 79%, quite above the target of 70%.

## 7.2 Improving capacities of the GoTG to sustain the impacts of the intervention

The capacity of the NCM to plan and direct a whole-of-government approach on migration governance is much improved, as shown by the successful national consultation and launch of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) review and by the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI). The communication campaigns organised by the platform on migration represent another significant achievement.

The project increased national and local actors' capacity to coordinate and facilitate access to MHPSS services, and to the information about jobs, training and funding, but not to the point of ensuring these services' continuity. Actually, the very ability to respond to users' needs depends on finding funds, training and technical support, and those resources themselves depend on external donors, on specific programmes that are usually limited to certain domains, to certain profiles and are time bound. Even if the programme's activities are fully aligned with the demands expressed by the GoTG, and closely monitored by it, there are limited capacities to maintain the achievements of the outputs, even during the execution of the project.

For instance, the TTPU and the MHPSS focal points are affected by frequent shortages of psychotropic drugs, and in some areas the integration of MHPSS into the primary health care services is still weak, despite the presence of the MHPSS framework. Another example is the limited activity and the gaps of the job referral platform managed by the Department of Labour (DoL), which require additional support. At the political level, the impact of the project was affected by the slowness in passing the bills of law, even though the Mental Health Act 2019 has been fully agreed on by the parties, they have not been enacted yet.

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<sup>31</sup> The composite reintegration scores "represent a numerical measure of overall reintegration sustainability. It is not a simple average of the three-dimensional scores: social, psycho-social and economic. It is derived using a different weighting system, which reflects the cross-cutting role (and therefore increased importance/weight) of certain indicators for overall sustainability of reintegration.

### **7.3 Opportunities for returnees, youth in general and communities**

The project did not only provide direct support to returnees but also to youth in general since it refurbished youth centres or organised awareness-raising activities and to the communities as they were involved in dialogues and in CBR initiatives. This approach reinforced the idea that no one was left behind - a challenge for some other interventions - and that everyone could benefit from the programme's activities. This approach was important to avoid triggering the feelings of unfair competition which can sometimes fuel tensions in groups and communities and affect peaceful living.

The project clearly contributed to social and economic resilience and promoted more peaceful communities. However, as it is stressed in other sections of this report, all the businesses are in early stages.

### **7.4 Impact over the MHPSS**

Access to MHPSS has been facilitated in all three levels of intervention (community, regional and national levels), providing a better response to stressful and painful situations for individuals and families. In this regard, it is important to stress the contribution of both the National MHPSS framework (2020-2025) and the Training Curriculum on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Service for Migrants, as they defined criteria and methodologies addressed to the returnees and to the rest of the population. Based on this training, the psychosocial assistance deployed through mobile health teams is beneficial to many people (1031 women, 687 men). The larger number of women beneficiaries compared to men, is mainly due to such service usually targeting diseases linked to Maternal Neonatal and Children Health (MNCH), which challenges the traditional patriarchal concept of masculinity, not prone to ask for any - health - assistance.

### **7.5 High impact of social events**

Social cohesion has also been targeted and enhanced by national campaigns, community dialogues and events that consistently reduced direct stigma towards returnees. Concerts, tournaments, exhibitions of traditional singers are considered the activities which had the highest impact in terms of peacebuilding, since they restored relations within communities, and created a benevolent framework for discussions about migration and stigma. But since those activities were implemented by subcontracted country-wide youth organisations through decentralised regional focal points, the selection criteria and the list of participants was not always available, despite repeated efforts made by the consultant to retrieve them. Leisure activities taking place in refurbished youth centres partly palliated the need for such events; as they were well valued by youth, they also allowed to reach drop out cohorts. The messages channelled during these gatherings effectively impacted participants' perception towards migration. The intervention received additional funding from the UEFA foundation (see section 9) and allowed to train ten coaches in an intensive five-day Training workshop which combines theoretical training about essential football-based with life skills for employability and entrepreneurship using Life Skills Curriculum. The coaches rolled out the programme with selected schools and football teams attracting 213 participants.



## 8. Catalytic effect

The catalytic effect of the project has been significant, and the additional funds further enhanced the number of young people who benefited from sport activities. As a matter of fact, the project indirectly helped to leverage \$ 200,000 from a non-PBF funding support - the UEFA Foundation for Children - which contributed to the development of an employability and entrepreneurship toolkit (“Kick4Trade” Programme), using soccer coaches to popularise the concept of sports for peace and development, and providing soccer equipment to selected communities for the roll out of the programme.

## 9. Sustainability

Due to the limitations of the country, the sustainability of the project is generally weak since many activities relies mainly on donors' engagement to allocate additional resources to continue and further extend the project activities. This is particularly evident when interventions provide external services, or technical support (i.e. training, coaching and job placement). Some other activities are more sustainable as they are based on groups or communities' willingness to organise activities (i.e. moonlight story-telling). In this regard, the uncertainties about future funding availability, are a matter of concern.

The structural fragility of The Gambia is obvious when it comes to the sustainability of the interventions, and the weak public capacities, the absence of savings, the limited access to credit, the lack of some decisive professional skills or a vibrant market, represent obstacles sometimes impossible to overcome. Furthermore, all activities that require financial inputs or key professional skills are at risk when their supervision is not properly foreseen (see Effectiveness section) or when the project comes to an end.

Interventions that received organisational support (i.e. creation or strengthening of organisations - or no key professional inputs - i.e. PSEA training for MPSGs) or infrastructures that do not require costly maintenance - i.e. Youth Centres - should be more sustainable.

Sometimes very little funding can be enough to ensure the sustainability of certain activities that are key for many others to take place, such as the budget line earmarked by the GoTG to fund logistical support for the NCM secretariat: the ability to organise sessions with all relevant actors and to harmonise migration policies has had a tremendous impact on Gambian society.

In terms of exit strategy and in the light of the above, it can be said that it has not been completely achieved, being the key elements: (1) the establishment of the NCM, (2) the capacity building of several actors, and (3) the synergy with other projects. At a more general level, the (4) change in the perception towards returnees was also considered an added element that reinforced the strategy.

Here below there is a more detailed analysis of the activities based on three levels of sustainability: limited, average and strong, that also shows that the elements of the exit strategy have been achieved to a medium and limited extent.

### 9.1 Limited sustainability

The main elements that present a limited sustainability are:

- Specific services provided by third parties and not transferable. This is the case of the DTM, which is funded by IOM with trained personnel selected by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS).
- Involvement of private employment agencies: The 'RESTART' initiative shows the potential of public-private collaborations, but it is unclear how they could be sustained in the future. The cost of job intermediation assumed by the project should be covered by companies, but this would only happen in limited cases of critical shortages of skilled profiles, and in any case very few returnees have such a profile.
- Mobile health teams and COVID-19 information campaigns: both activities are based on funding availability.

## 9.2 Average sustainability

The elements that present an average sustainability are:

- Technical support: in the case of the DoL, the capacity building has targeted the institution and staff of the Department, who are able to deliver job-search suggestions during their day-to-day assignment. However, the referral system still in progress is not sustainable yet, since the public employment agency still finds itself at an early stage of consolidation and requires more funding to be operationalized. In this vein, also the support provided by IOM to the NCM and TWGs is still important for its consolidation.
- CBR initiatives: As detailed in the section about Effectiveness, they are in early stages and suffer important bottlenecks, even if many of them have the potential to become sustainable in the medium run. External technical and in some cases, financial support is still crucial.
- Capacity building: Many professionals have substantially improved their capacities due to training sessions on MHPSS for instance, and they are better equipped to face inconvenient situations. However, new, and updated training sessions are necessary to cover staff's gaps.
- Referral systems: The project rightly relied on this mechanism to take advantage of the resources that were available but usually unknown at the local level (see the MHPSS pyramid of intervention or the Youth's Information Centres). To ensure their sustainability, better coordination must be set up, with all actors involved suitably skilled and committed to update the information and suitably address the users. Depending on the structures, this may require funding and staff that acquire tools.
- Infrastructures: The construction of new buildings, like stables or bakeries, may transform them into long-term businesses as long as their maintenance remains on time and is professional. At this stage, none of the businesses analysed was producing earnings so it was not possible to earmark funding for this purpose. A specific attempt was made with the youth centres, especially the ones in Bundung: in order to be economically self-sufficient, several tools for income generation activities were funded, but at this stage it is unclear if they will guarantee or not the sustainability of the structure. The same applies to the refurbished TTPU: the sustainability of the intervention depends on funding available for its maintenance.
- Leisure activities: Concerts, tournaments, sport events require proper management, funding, and technical support. In this case small formats can be more sustainable, especially if they can be organised in already existing facilities like youth centres.
- More in general, the change of public perception on returnees is progressively consolidating and creating the conditions for an inclusive environment for reintegration.

## 9.3 Strong sustainability (medium term)

Among the elements that present good sustainability, at least in the medium term, there are:

- The Migrants Peer Support Groups (MPSGs): The bonds that unite their members are stronger, and due to the training received during the recent years they are an important actor for sensitising and helping other migrants at local level. They do not need additional support for their organisation and functioning.
- Community-based activities: Activities like the moonlight storytelling or inter-generational dialogues have been very well received by community members, since they represent the traditional way to discuss the most important issues that affect the whole community. The capacities needed for the organisation and delivery can easily be assumed by the communities, which means that can be delivered free of cost.

## 10. Conclusions, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

### 10.1 Conclusions

#### 10.1.1 General conclusions

Nearly all the project results have been achieved and they are connected with its general objective: they strengthened the reintegration of returnees in The Gambia with a holistic approach that contributed to a more peaceful, caring, and integrated society that supports. Returnees' reintegration is also more sustainable but still subject to the Gambian socio-economic context.

Reducing the stigma affecting returnees was the main cross-cutting objective of the intervention and it was achieved in its more direct expressions, but it still permeates Gambian society in subtler and indirect ways.

The project does not specifically focused on gender equality and women empowerment, but their presence in the activities was promoted both at individual and at community level.

#### 10.1.2 Outcome 1. Gambian Society has a balanced and positive perception of return migration.

The GoTG is in the condition to speak with one voice about migration owing to the communication platform that has defined a strategy among all relevant stakeholders and has implemented it in the main Gambian media.

Gambian authorities and the Ministry of Interior in particular, can rely on the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) which shares evidence-based data on population mobility within and outside The Gambia, collected in four operational Flow Monitoring Points.

The Youth Help Line is an additional tool that returnees and young people in general have to receive reliable information and to access to specialised services.

#### 10.1.3 Outcome 2. The Government of The Gambia demonstrates strengthened capacity to facilitate sustainable reintegration contributing to enhanced social cohesion and inclusion

The GoTG has improved its capacity to nationally plan for policies that address migration thanks to the introduction of the National Coordination Mechanism and the Technical Working Groups, that have progressively coordinated all the public policies in relation with migration. At the same time, the project has improved the capability of the GoTG to conceive, monitor and implement specific interventions. This has been possible thanks to the creation and later due to its involvement in structures of coordination, the availability of better data (i.e. DTM), the training of professionals and the improvement of services.

The reinforcement of the capacities dedicated to the whole MHPSS structure is outstanding and improves the quality of the project regardless of the severity of the returnees' phenomena. At the same time, communities are more sensitised about this issue and more capable to deal with it. The

project radically improved the way MHPSS is treated in the country in all three levels of intervention and increasingly integrated into primary health care services.

The conception of the CBR is culturally relevant for the beneficiaries, responding to the specific weaknesses of individuals (i.e. lack of some key competences, entrepreneurial spirit or resources ) and to the lack of public interventions. The reinforcement of social relations is an appropriate response to these gaps and is also in line with the peacebuilding principles. The CBR initiatives follow this logic, and in the case of the businesses the communities are directly committed to them. However, many of the initiatives visited are suffering bottlenecks (see section 5.3) due to their early stage of implementation and the reduced supervision after the end of the project under evaluation.

Access to formal employment has been promoted to a limited extent and with mixed results due to local job market dysfunctionalities and the impact of the COVID-19 on the tourist sector.

#### **10.1.4 Outcome 3. Returnees enjoy enhanced access to psychosocial, political, social and economic reintegration services for increased community social cohesion**

Communities have largely appreciated the introduction of community-based approach activities, which connected with traditional events that have disappeared and offer the possibility to periodically discuss matters of general concern regardless of the political orientation, social status or education of the participants. As a result of this, the perception of community members changed, stigmatization of returnees reduced and their engagement in the community decision making processes improved, fostering social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Concerts, tournaments, exhibitions of traditional singers are considered the activities which had the highest impact in terms of peacebuilding in youth, since they restored relations within communities, and created a benevolent framework for discussions about migration and stigma.

The response that the project provided to the COVID-19 pandemic was really pertinent on the one side, assisting the GoTG in the community surveillance and contact tracing and on the other involving returnees in soap production.

Youth centres were found to be safe and fit to allow community members and returnees to conduct meetings, exchange ideas and discuss ways forward on issues relevant to strengthening peaceful communities and development. These centres provide a convenient venue to host both social events and specialised dedicated services, as referral and counselling services to returnees.

The improvement of the three levels of intervention of the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support area is one of the most relevant achievements of the project, reaching more users, defining and implement training curricula, and refurbishing the Tanka -Tanka Psychiatry Unit, all of them embedded in the National Mental Health Strategic Framework 2020-2025, another achievement of the project.

## 10.2 Recommendations

### 10.2.1. General recommendations

Some of the project outputs need to be further supported after the end of the project. In this sense, a more strategic vision is needed from the beginning of the project to create the conditions for local stakeholders to take ownership of the project results and ensure their capacities to follow through. In case this is not completely feasible, it is important to play a more proactive role in ensuring that other actors will continue to provide support.

The performance indicators adopted by the project are suitable to monitor the progress and the achievement of the outputs and the outcomes, however more relevant information could have been collected to have a clearer picture of the actual effectiveness of certain activities.

### 10.2.2 Outcome 1. Gambian Society has a balanced and positive perception of return migration.

The Displacement Tracking Matrix should assess its methodology, for instance at the end of the first year of implementation (October 2022), and verify if improvements can be introduced in order to address potential biases in the responses, and make data collected generalisable<sup>32</sup>

The National Communication Strategy is considered an important achievement per se, but also in terms of process, since it is a result of the consensus reached among all the actors involved in the Communication platform.

In the case of the free-toll line, even if the commitment of the project was just to deliver the operationalised line, it would have been important to collect data about its capacity to effectively deliver information and refer people to the most suitable services, which is currently low.

### 10.2.3 Outcome 2. The Government of The Gambia demonstrates strengthened capacity to facilitate sustainable reintegration contributing to enhanced social cohesion and inclusion

Citizens' trust in public authorities is of paramount importance to ensuring democracy and the rule of law, but it is very low in the case of The Gambia. In this light, it is a priority to enhance the capacity of the GoTG to deliver services, to be transparent and to communicate about these improvements to the society. At migration level, is therefore important to ensure the pivotal role of the NCM and TWGs to mastermind all the areas related to this domain.

To ensure access and equity in the delivery of project results, support should continue to be provided to the NCM and the TWGs to implement their work plans and action plans. The aim is to make the improvements available in all regions and to strengthen their presence in neglected areas. This will be possible through tight collaboration with civil society, including diaspora organisations that are

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<sup>32</sup> Generalisability in quantitative research refers to the extent to which we can generalise the findings from a sample to an entire population.

currently not present in the TWGs. In this regard, their capacities should be assessed to ensure a multilevel and multi actor approach to migration issues.

For those civil society organisations whose capacities were built by the project, it should be defined a scaling-up strategy to increase the number of peaceful and socially integrated organisations and communities. This strategy should enable them to share their knowledge, promote networking, improve their skills and support more actors, directly involving the beneficiaries themselves. At the MHPSS level, provide more training in psychological First Aid (PFA) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and explore how to improve collaboration with traditional healers.

The excellent results achieved in addressing structural MHPSS weaknesses, have led to new priorities for intervention that need to be refined with the MoH, namely the rehabilitation centres for illicit substance abuse drug addictions and transition housing for patients discharged from the Tanka -Tanka Psychiatry Unit.

Given the paramount importance of income-generation activities, special attention should be given to assisting the GoTG in improving the labour market from both a structural and interventional perspectives. In the first case, by defining national priorities, strategies and an action plan involving private companies and employment agencies. The objectives should be to boost the employability of young people and provide companies with suitable skilled workers. For this reason, services for job seekers should be decentralised and include a solid referral system, marketable skills development, counselling and vocational trainings reinforcing skills on high demand; for example, markets and off-farm sectors (processing, transport, storage, transformation). In the second case, at a more specific intervention level, returnees' skills should be better assessed to ensure effective referral to employment agencies. To this end, DoL's capacity to reach job seekers could be substantially improved if Youth centres were connected to the referral system, as originally planned; to this end, the completion of the renovation of youth centres throughout the country should be supported.

At gender level, it should be improved the link between migration and gender equality, for instance in case of income-generation activities, empowering and facilitating the access to occupations traditionally covered by men (i.e. taxi driver).

### **10.2.4 Outcome 3. Returnees enjoy enhanced access to psychosocial, political, social and economic reintegration services for increased community social cohesion**

The project informed about activities and spread information about returnees' reintegration through social media, which are quite widespread among youth. However, there is a significant share of them who have no frequent access or no access at all to social media, because of poverty, lack of electricity and/or poor mobile network coverage. This cohort of youth people should be better analysed to define the most suitable communication strategy to apply.

The wide range of awareness-raising activities has proven to be very adequate to address migration issues from different angles. However, it must be equally ensured that the profiles with the highest risk of resorting to irregular migration are prioritised. These include school dropouts, 12th grade students and youth from Koranic schools, in particular, the latter have not been reached by the project.

Gambian youth's strong demand for recreational activities is extremely important to spread messages about the irregular migration and the opportunities in the country. To this end, youth centres should plan events on a regular basis and rely on specific guidelines to ensure their impact.

The political participation of youth in local decision-making should be reinforced and access to national movements supported. This will result in greater attention to their demands, the promotion of equal opportunities and transparency, which have the potential to further enhance peacebuilding.

### 10.3 Lessons learnt

Decisions towards migration have a salience that goes well beyond the economic dimension, as they are also shaped by socio-cultural dimensions. Any strategy targeting the root causes of irregular migration and the local development, have to consider all of them.

The Gambia's low human development implies several limitations; certain public services can only be provided very rarely without external support, which affects the performance of interventions. Their sustainability and scaling up largely depends on the presence of an organised civil society or of other programs providing assistance, expertise and funding.

National capacity development must be central to peacebuilding strategies from the outset. Indeed, a core objective for peacebuilding is to reach the point as soon as possible where external assistance is no longer critical by ensuring that all initiatives support the development of national peacebuilding capacities.

The management of beneficiaries' expectations is a very sensitive matter, sometimes difficult to ensure and can make the difference in the final outcome of the interventions.

Community-level interventions have to involve and benefit both returnees and non-migrants, to avoid the perceptions that the two groups are competing or one of them is left behind.

Stigma against returnees and youth not willing to take the Back Way is declining but still present in the society and fuels irregular migration.

Adaptation of the interventions to changing circumstance and to beneficiaries' needs (i.e. COVID-19) has proven to be fundamental for ensuring better results and beneficiaries' appropriation.

Training programmes have improved professional and cross-cutting skills at many different levels, but they require to be continuously refreshed and improved to ensure that they have a meaningful impact.



## ANNEX 1 – List of Interviews

Date	Name and surname	Position	Organisation	Location
26/04/2022	Fatima Sonko	PBF Programme Manager	United Nations Population Fund	Online
27/04/2022	Babacar Sallah	Technical adviser	International Training Centre	Online
28/04/2022	Etienne Micaléff,  Evans Binan,  Muhammed Touray	Programme Manager AVRR  Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Officer  National Health Promotion Officer	IOM	Online
28/04/2022	Lamin Kanteh	Director	Gambia Bureau of Statistics	Online
03/05/2022	Etienne Micaléff,  Evans Binan,  Muhammed Touray	Programme Manager AVRR  Mental Health and Psychosocial support Officer  National Health Promotion Officer	IOM	Serrekunda
03/05/2022	Fatima Sonko	PBF Programme Manager	United Nations Population Fund	Capepoint UN House
04/05/2022	MaNyima Baby Sarr  Haddy Gaye  Awa Ceesay	Communications Director  ITC Coordinator  Health Coordinator	Starfish	Lamin
04/05/2022	Omar Danso	Director	Actvista	Serrekunda

05/05/2022	Momodou Juju Jallow	Programme manager	Peace Ambassadors Gambia (PAG)	Serrekunda
05/05/2022	Pa Ceesay	President	Electric cycles (Tuk Tuk) CBR initiative	Banjul
05/05/2022	Mustapha Sonko, Mohammed Bah		Youth Council	Serrekunda
06/05/2022	Omar Badjie	Director	Youth Centre	Bundung
06/05/2022	Mustapha Sallah	Representative	Youth against Irregular Migration (YAIM)	Bundung
09/05/2022	Ismael Diallo + 4 members of the project	Councillor	Modern bakery CBR initiative	Brikama - Gidda
09/05/2022	Mustapha Juwara	Representative	Migrant Peer Support Group	Brikama
09/05/2022	Omar Bojang	Director	Tanka-Tanka Psychiatry Unit	Brikama
10/05/2022	Ara Cisse Doudou Diba Serin Mane Alima Tabaly Fatu Demba Nato Mansagna Nyiuma Saane	Members of the group trained by Starfish international		Kwinella
10/05/2022	Binta Touray	Responsible	Migration Information Centre	Soma
10/05/2022	Alasana Drammeh	Responsible	Youth Centre	Soma
11/05/2022	Alieu Sowe	Regional Mental Health Focal Point		Soma
11/05/2022	Lamin Ceesay	Regional Health Administrator		Soma
11/05/2022	Muhammed Drammeh + 6 members of the community	Responsible	Traditional Bakery CBR	Tinkinjo
12/05/2022	Essa Drammeh	Responsible	Migration Information Centre	Basse

12/05/2022	Hamza Ceesay	former focal point	Activista	Basse
12/05/2022	Kelepha Kandeh-	head of the risk communication team	Regional Health Promotion Officer	Basse
13/05/2022	Ibrahima Bourindyaie, Aboubacar Diallo	Returnees		Basse
13/05/2022	Modibo Kruma,	Peer migrant support group	Director	Basse
13/05/2022	9 persons	Participants of the local moonlight storytelling	Members of the community	Tambasansang
14/05/2022	8 persons	Participants of the local moonlight storytelling	Members of the community	Firdawsi
15/05/2022	Ndey Fatou Jangum	member of a CBR (Fashion-beauty centre-tailoring Centre)		Barra
15/05/2022	Sagarr Cham	Member of the local peer support group and member of a CBR (beauty shop)		Barra
15/05/2022	41 people	Participants of the local moonlight storytelling	Members of the community	Berending
15/05/2022	Jason Sanyang	Focal point North Bank	National Council for Civic Education (NCCE)	Online
16/05/2022	Alphusainey Joof	Member	CBR Animal Husbandry	Barra
16/05/2022	Malick Manneh	Member	Sheep Fattening CBRP	Essau
16/05/2022	Binta Secka	Lead of team	IOM - DTM	Barra
16/05/2022	Muhammed Jim Njie	Founder	Hope Basketball Academy	Online
17/5/2022	Hayb Gaye	Responsible	Migration Information Centre in Barra	Online
18/5/2022	Bakari Sonko	National Mental Health Programme Manager	Ministry of health	Kanifing

18/5/2022	Prince Sunkanu	Head of the TWG about communication	Ministry of Information and Communication (MOICI)	Kairaba
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## ANNEX 2 - List of Project Documents

Name
01 PBF Project Document 2018.pdf
02 Joint Research-RETURN AND REINTEGRATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING IN THE GAMBIA.pdf
03 PBF Annual Report November 2019.pdf
04 Gambia_NCE_Strengthening sustainable & holistic reintegration may 2020.pdf
04 Project Monitoring Report - Nov 2019.pdf
04 Strengthening Reintegration of Returnees Report.pdf
05 PBF Semi-Annual Report June 2020.pdf
05 PBF Semi-Annual Report (Reintegration Project)- June 2020_Updated.docx
06 PBF Annual Report November 2020.pdf
07 PBF Project Document- Cost Extension - 2020.pdf
08 Project Monitoring Report - June- Nov 2020.pdf
09 Project Monitoring Report- Nov-Mar 2021.pdf
10 semi-Annual report PBF Reintegration Project November 2021.docx
10 SEMI-ANNUAL reports 2021.pdf
11 PBF Annual Report November 2021.pdf
12. Final PBF report June 2022_Paolo.docx
13. Restart Project Final Report.pdf
14. free toll intro.pdf
14. Report Toll Free Line.docx
15. Annex C Mid-Term ME PBF Project Report_Final.pdf
17. PBF Field Monitoring Report May 2021.docx
18. Third PBF Field Monitoring Report.docx
19. Budget_ Annual Report Nov 2021-29102021.xlsx
20. Joint Research-RETURN AND REINTEGRATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING IN THE GAMBIA.docx
21. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Towards COVID-19 - A Baseline Assessment.docx
34. Lists of NCM TWG focal points.docx
22. M&E Presentation - Final.pptx
23. OVP QUESTIONNAIRE.docx
24. PBF reintegration Semi Annual report 2021_ Final 061421.docx
25. pbf_guidelines_2018_english_210430.docx

<b>26. PRPROJECT COMPLETION REPORT ON PEACE BUILDING FUND COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS.docx</b>
<b>27. Stakeholder list- PBF.xlsx</b>
<b>28. TOR PTC PBF Migration Project.docx</b>
<b>29. IOM-ITC-UNFPA Workplan Final.xlsx</b>
<b>30. Semi-Annual Report (Reintegration Project)- June 2020_Updated.docx</b>
<b>31. Annual report PBF Reintegration Project November 2021.docx</b>
<b>32. The-Gambia-National-Development-Plan-2018-2021-Full-Version.pdf</b>
<b>33. UN Gambia Socio-Economic Response Plan.pdf</b>
<b>35. FINAL 2019 Updated CDA Report 18 July 2019.pdf</b>
<b>36. NDP-2018-2021-12.01.18.pdf</b>
<b>37. ANNEX 7_Reintegration programme satisfaction survey.docx</b>
<b>38. M&amp;E results - Econ, Social, PSS, &amp; Sustainability.xlsx</b>
<b>39. Reintegration programme satisfaction survey.xlsx</b>
<b>40. Sustainability survey report _11.9.docx</b>

### ANNEX 3 – Activities and implementing RUNOs

<p>Output 1.1 Enhanced understanding of irregular migration, return and reintegration and implications for peacebuilding</p>	1.1.1 Conduct research into linkages between migration, return and reintegration and peacebuilding	IOM
	1.1.2 Host research validation and dissemination workshop	
	1.1.3 MAPPING OF KEY FLOW MONITORING POINTS AND REGULAR DATA COLLECTION	
	1.1.4 SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF REMOTE DATA COLLECTION,	
	1.1.5 PREPARATION OF REGULAR FLOW MONITORING REPORTS	
<p>Output 1.2: Communication on migration, return and reintegration is coordinated and accurate</p>	1.2.1 Development of online platform to coordinate and disseminate messages and communication channels related to irregular migration	ITC
	1.2.2 Awareness raising of civil society around Tekki Fii campaign (“Make it here”)	ITC
	1.2.2 Installation of Youth Help Line FURTHER TO SUPPORT YOUTH HELP LINE (OPERATIONAL)	ITC
	1.2.4 Produce communication materials to promote youth inclusion	UNFPA
<p>Output 2.1 National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) is established and operational</p>	Organisation of interagency meetings	IOM
	Endorsement of NCCM	
<p>Output 2.2 Economic empowerment of returnees is facilitated through establishment and operationalization of a coordinated referral mechanism</p>	2.2.1 Mapping of job placement opportunities	ITC
	2.2.2 Capacity building of government partners including outreach to private sector	ITC
	2.2.3 Establishment of community-based reintegration programmes for returnees and their host communities in LRR, NBR and GBA	ITC

<p>Output 2.3 MHPSS is integrated into primary health care services through development of guidelines and framework with specific focus on return and reintegration</p>	<p>2.3.1 Development of training guidelines and regulatory frameworks)</p>	<p>IOM</p>
<p>Output 2.4 National and local actors have enhanced capacity to deliver mental health services to returnees</p>	<p>Development of a curriculum on MHPSS for health workers at all levels.</p>	
	<p>Capacity building of community mental health nurses and social workers</p>	
<p>Output 3.1 Enhanced quality and reach of MHPSS services available through community outreach health teams among communities of high return</p>	<p>3.1.1 Provision of direct financial and technical support to community-based health team</p>	<p>IOM</p>
	<p>3.1.2 Design and incorporate mental health information (instruction / procedure manuals, data collection forms) for use in the different health facilities</p>	
	<p>3.1.3 Outreach services (mentoring coaching and counselling) of community change agents and youth workers in the area of mental health at the primary health care level.</p>	
	<p>3.1.4 establishment of migrant peer groups</p>	
	<p>3.1.5 refurbishment of Tanka hospital</p>	
<p>Output 3.2 Youth centres enable to provide comprehensive information, referral and counselling services to returnees</p>	<p>3.2.1 Refurbishment of two Youth centres (GBA &amp; WCR)</p>	<p>ITC</p>
	<p>3.2.2 Financial and technical support to Youth Associations for outreach and reintegration activities</p>	
	<p>3.2.3 Support to sports associations for integration of returnees through sports activities</p>	
<p>Output 3.3 Community linkages are strengthened facilitating</p>	<p>3.3.1 Organise dialogue forums for youths in communities and Youth centres</p>	<p>UNFPA</p>



social inclusion and reintegration of returnees	3.3.2 Organise town hall meetings between (inter-generational dialogue) between community leaders and youth, integrating returnee migrants, to foster social cohesion	
	3.3.3 Organise community youth cultural and recreational activities to promote learning and experience sharing amongst youth and build quality relationships.	
	3.3.4 Raise awareness on youth inclusion using messaging through social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp).	
	3.3.5 community moonlight storytelling with migrants to enhance community reintegration	
	3.3.6 community reflection session with opinion leaders on migrant re-integration and support awareness creation on social media	
	3.3.7 training of trainers for community youth returnee volunteer on COVID 19 prevention and response	

## Annex 4. Questionnaires

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for Returnees and their families
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way you are involved/benefitted from the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?
2. Coherence	Are there other interventions for helping returnees to improve their lives?
3. Effectiveness	Do women benefit from the intervention? To which extent?
3. Effectiveness	Do the solutions provided by the intervention, reduced their inequality with men?
3. Effectiveness	Are there issues (/contexts/events/behaviours) that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
5. Impact	(families) Have you changed your opinion towards returnees? IF SO --> To what extent, the project contributed to this change?
5. Impact	Have you had any negative or positive experience from the intervention (check if didn't expect)
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements you notice have been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Are you satisfied with the GoTG services to support reintegration? (returnees)
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community/family have reduced? Does the intervention contribute to this result?

5. Impact	Returnees who RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE AND THEIR FAMILIES -- >Are you more confident in the future, in your/ capacities and in the others? Do you/(s)he think others have a better opinion of you? (avoid saying stigma)
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the support you received from the project, do you think that you will benefit of it also in the future? Why?

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Questions for Community members</b>
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way you are involved/benefitted from the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?
2. Coherence	Are there other interventions for helping returnees to improve their lives?
3. Effectiveness	Do women benefit from the intervention? To which extent?
3. Effectiveness	Do the solutions provided by the intervention, empowered women returnees and reduced their inequality with men?
3. Effectiveness	Are there issues (conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there issues conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
5. Impact	Have you changed your opinion towards returnees? IF SO --> To what extent, the project contributed to this change?

5. Impact	Have you had any negative or positive experience from the intervention (check if didn't expect)
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Are you satisfied with the GoTG services to support reintegration?
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider particularly important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community have reduced? Did the intervention contribute to this result?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for Ministries
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	To what extent are the project goals (better understanding by the Gambian society, strengthened capacity of the GotG, returnees' assistance) aligned with the GotG priorities towards reintegrating returnees?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from other projects that have been applied in this intervention? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?

1. Relevance	Have the communication platform improved the coordination and the coherence of the messages broadcasted. Are these messages suitable for the target audience?
1. Relevance	Is the NCM a suitable solution for providing a global and coordinated response to promote returnees' reintegration? And concerning sub-committees?
2. Coherence	To which extent the project has contributed to orientate the national policies towards returnees' reintegration?
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	Has the IOM, ITC and UNFPA partnership strategy been effective? What are the factors that contributed to its effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external issues (conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external issues (conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
3. Effectiveness	Does the network of public and private partners that provide employment opportunities is still active? Does it still provide effective labour solutions? In which way the referral system can be improved and better its capacity to match labour offer and demand?
3. Effectiveness	Do you consider that (ministries staff, health and social) professionals involved in the project acquired sufficient capacities, resources and knowledge to assist returnees and youths?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected its results?
5. Impact	Why are returnees are reporting low satisfaction on GoTG services to support reintegration?

5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?
6. Sustainability	Which aspects of the intervention (capacities, resources, refurbishment, ToT, ...) are more likely to have long-terms effects? Why?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for RUNOS
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?
1. Relevance	To what extent are the project goals (better understanding by the Gambian society, strengthened capacity of the GotG, returnees' assistance) aligned with the GotG priorities towards reintegrating returnees?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from other projects that have been applied in this intervention? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?

1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?
1. Relevance	To what extent has the Joint Research-RETURN AND REINTEGRATION contributed to improve the focus of the intervention ?
1. Relevance	Have the communication platform improved the coordination and the coherence of the messages broadcasted. Are these messages suitable for the target audience?
1. Relevance	Are Youth Centers providing suitable services to returnees or to potential migrants? (enquire information, referral and counselling services)
2. Coherence	To which extent the project has contributed to orientate the national policies towards returnees' reintegration
2. Coherence	JUST IOM. Are there synergies with other IOM interventions? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	Has the IOM, ITC and UNFPA partnership strategy been effective? What are the factors that contributed to its effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
3. Effectiveness	To which extent has the project adapted the interventions according to different genders' needs?
3. Effectiveness	Are there internal aspects of the project implementation (coordination, management, timely funding, ...) that you consider particularly effective? Are there aspects that are less effective (to achieve the project goals)?
3. Effectiveness	Do the solutions provided by the intervention, empowered women returnees and reduced their inequality with men?

3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
4. Efficiency	To what extent do the M&E systems used by ION, ITC and UNFPA ensure efficient and effective project management?
4. Efficiency	How efficient is the overall management of the project (e.g., project team composition, coordination modalities between partners, implementation processes)?
4. Efficiency	How cost-effective is the project? Were the financial resources used appropriate/proportionate to the quality of the results achieved?
4. Efficiency	Have you experienced challenges in monitoring the project implementation, and what improvements could be made?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected its results?
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?



6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?
6. Sustainability	Which aspects of the intervention (capacities, resources, refurbishment, ToT, ...) are more likely to have long-terms effects?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for GAMBJOBS/other companies
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there issues (conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that improved the results of job referral/job placement?
3. Effectiveness	Are there issues (conditions/contexts/events/behaviours) that worsened the results of job referral/job placement? How could they be overcome?
3. Effectiveness	Does the network of public and private partners that provide employment opportunities is still active? Does it still provide effective labour solutions? In which way the referral system can be improved and better its capacity to match labour offer and demand?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected its results?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for health/social care workers, trainers
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from other projects that have been applied in this intervention? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	To which extent has the project adapted the interventions according to different genders' needs?
3. Effectiveness	Do the solutions provided by the intervention, empowered women returnees and reduced their inequality with men?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific issues (conditions/context/events/behaviours) that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific issues (conditions/context/events/behaviours) that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
3. Effectiveness	Do you consider that (ministries staff, health and social) professionals involved in the project acquired sufficient capacities, resources and knowledge to assist returnees and youths?

5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected its results?
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Why are returnees are reporting low satisfaction on GoTG services to support reintegration? (others)
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider particularly important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community/family have reduced? Does the intervention contribute to this result?
5. Impact	PROFESSIONALS -->Are returnees who RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE more confident in the future, in their capacities and in the others? Do you think that they suffer less stigmatisation?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Questions for Local/regional authorities</b>
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0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected its results?

5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Why are returnees are reporting low satisfaction on GoTG services to support reintegration? (others)
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider particularly important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community/family have reduced? Does the intervention contribute to this result?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?
6. Sustainability	Which aspects of the intervention (capacities, resources, refurbishment, ToT, ...) are more likely to have long-terms effects?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for traditional leaders
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?

1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/contexts/events/behaviours that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?
5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider particularly important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community/family have reduced? Does the intervention contribute to this result?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?

Evaluation Criteria	Questions for CSOs (returnees, youths, ...)
0. General questions	Location
0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
1. Relevance	Do families and communities have been suitably engaged in the returnees' reintegration activities?
1. Relevance	Are there lessons learnt from this project that can be applied to future interventions? Which ones?
1. Relevance	Given the returnees' needs, to which extent the intervention has responded to them? Are there some needs that have been better addressed than others (political, psychological, social and economic) needs and priorities of returnees in the Gambia? Are there some returnees (i.e. women, elders, youth) who have specific needs that have not been completely addressed? Which ones? Are there regions that have not been sufficiently covered by the project?
1. Relevance	Are Youth Centers providing suitable services to returnees or to potential migrants? (enquire information, referral and counselling services)
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	Do women benefit from the intervention? To which extent?
3. Effectiveness	Do the solutions provided by the intervention, empowered women returnees and reduced their inequality with men?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/context/events/behaviours that improved the results of intervention?
3. Effectiveness	Are there specific external conditions/context/events/behaviours that worsened the results of intervention? How could they be overcome?
5. Impact	Are there unexpected impacts of the project that negatively/positively affected human rights? And in case of gender equality?

5. Impact	Given the Gambian society initial position towards the returnees' reintegration, to what extent the intervention produced a change in their opinion and behaviour?
5. Impact	Have you identified any negative/positive impact from the intervention that you/... didn't expect?
5. Impact	To which extent, have the improvements reported by returnees/families/communities been produced by the intervention? Are there other factors/interventions/events that contributed to this end?
5. Impact	Why are returnees are reporting low satisfaction on GoTG services to support reintegration?
5. Impact	Do you think that the intervention was useful to make life in the community more peaceful and improve coexistence? Which impacts do you consider particularly important to this end? Do you think that conflicts or tensions in your community/family have reduced? Does the intervention contribute to this result?
5. Impact	To which extent COVID 19 affected returnees' reintegration activities?
6. Sustainability	Given the results of the intervention, do you think that they will last after its end? Which factors could improve their duration? Which others could reduce their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there results that are likely to last for long-time? Are there other results that require of further interventions (financial, technical, psycho-social, political, ...) to ensure their duration?
6. Sustainability	Are there aspects of the intervention should be revised to improve the sustainability of its results?
6. Sustainability	Which aspects of the intervention (capacities, resources, refurbishment, ToT, ...) are more likely to have long-terms effects?

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Questions for Donors</b>
0. General questions	Location



0. General questions	Respondent's profile
0. General questions	In which way were you/your institution involved in the intervention?
2. Coherence	Are there synergies with other interventions led by other actors? How do you prevent overlapping with them?
3. Effectiveness	Has the IOM, ITC and UNFPA partnership strategy been effective? What are the factors that contributed to its effectiveness or ineffectiveness?