

## Background Paper<sup>1</sup>

### Roundtable 2: Migration and Development through Multilateral and Bilateral Partnerships: Creating Perspectives for Inclusive Development

#### Roundtable Session 2.2

#### *Fostering the development impact of returning migrants*

##### 1. Introduction

Return, readmission and reintegration are essential elements of a comprehensive approach to migration governance, contributing to safe, humane and dignified migration. The topic of reintegration in the context of return management is embedded in the 19<sup>th</sup> September New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and will be part of the Global Compact for Migration (particularly under the sub-topic “*International cooperation and governance of migration in all its dimensions, including reintegration*”). It is as well embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – specifically, in sustainable development goal (SDG) 10 (targets 10.2 and 10.7) and SDG 17 (targets 17.17 and 17.9). The topic is similarly a central element in the 3 February 2017 Report of Mr. Peter Sutherland, the (former) Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration, and forms part of Recommendation 7: “develop global principles on return, readmission and reintegration”.

This paper focuses on the current debate around return and its impact on the development of both the country of origin and the host/transit country, and on migrants themselves. How does a migrant’s return contribute to the development of his or her country of origin? How can this country benefit of his or her skills and experience? There are challenges and benefits associated with returning migrants. Each returning migrant may be able to provide individual skills and financial or social capital to the country of origin, but may also face discrimination and employment challenges and/or put additional strain on already weak systems in the countries of origin. To foster the development impact of a returning migrant it is fundamental to targeting the skills acquired at individual, community, and policy levels in a sustainable outlook. Various return schemes such as reintegration of labour migrants, skills recognition programmes, voluntary returnees under Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, and temporary returns of qualified migrants may be applied according to return contexts and circumstances. In all these possible approaches, the impact of returning migrants on development is therefore to be seen through the prism of a key-word to this topic: reintegration. Reintegration schemes require joint approaches built on the expertise, experience, capacities and needs of the countries of origin, transit and host-countries as well as those of returned migrants.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper has been elaborated based on an outline of the **International Organization for Migration** in accordance with the discussions of, and based on written inputs by the **RT 2.2 co-chairs** *Nigeria* and *Switzerland* and **RT Government Team members** *Australia, Eritrea, France, Germany, Guatemala, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Arab Emirates* and **Non-state partners** *ICMPD, IFRC, ILO, OHCHR* and *UNCTAD*. This paper is intended to inform and stimulate discussion of Roundtable session 2.2. It is not exhaustive in its treatment of the session 2.2 theme and does not necessarily reflect the views of the GFMD organizers or the governments or international organizations involved in the GFMD process.

Reintegration of returning migrants in an international perspective can be effective through three general different scenarios based on the “willingness to return” and the “readiness to return”. First, the returning migrant decides to voluntarily go back to his/her country of origin without any interference regarding his/her legal status in the host country (nevertheless, the rationale for return may consist of compelling reasons, such as the end of a work contract, family disease, security/politic/economic crisis in the host country, climate change); second, the returning migrant decides to voluntarily go back to his/her country of origin but because he/she has no longer the legal rights to reside in the host country (“voluntary but unavoidable return”); third the returning migrant is forcibly readmitted to his or her country of origin because he/she no longer has legal rights to reside in the host country and did not take the opportunity to leave voluntarily. Regarding these three scenarios, the paper will not address the issue of reintegration under forced return, and will only contemplate the various aspects of reintegration for voluntary return. However, we suggest that this subject be addressed in a future GFMD roundtable. An important nexus exists between the readiness of host countries to welcome migrants and the readiness of countries of origin to readmit forcibly returned migrants.

Regarding the two general voluntary return scenarios, this paper will focus on the development impact of voluntary returning migrants in an irregular situation in the host country, and seek synergies with existing policies and programmes for the return of migrant workers in a regular situation. Indeed, the latter category is meant to have the greatest impact on development as it often brings back individuals with newly acquired skills that may have generated savings during their time in the host country. However, this kind of return has already been brought to the attention of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in the last decade. Whilst the long-term impact of return of migrants in an irregular situation is a largely new field of study that would benefit from a comparative approach and from identifying similarities as well as differences with regard to the field of return of migrant workers in a regular situation.

## **2. Key issues: most important aspects for policy debate**

### **✓ Development**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines development as the process of “creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests... [and] expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value”. Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities. The most basic capabilities for human development are to live healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible. This vision is different from the strict emphasis on economic development measured by growth or income indicators and encompasses the human dimension of the process. This is very visible in the context of return and reintegration, as returning migrants can be the catalyst of the socio-economic development of their communities. However, returning migrants can also be challenging for development and unsuccessful reintegration efforts can hamper development processes. When return migration is not well managed and where capacities for integration are insufficient, returning migrants can be perceived as a burden or a threat to social cohesion in receiving communities. This highlights the importance of including reintegration into policy development or reform.

### **✓ Voluntary return**

Voluntary return is defined as the assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee. There should be a distinction between measures for voluntary and involuntary returns, since there is an important incentive system in the context of irregular migration. Furthermore, voluntary return is more likely to result in positive reintegration processes and able to contribute to development, since voluntary return implies a deeper commitment to the return and reintegration process, not only the act of return., in particular of those

residing in the host/transit country in an irregular manner. The profile of the migrants in this situation may vary significantly, although it can be generally assumed that these migrants mostly need to start with very modest resources upon their return in their countries of origin, and would therefore need a stronger support to maximize sustained reintegration and minimize the risk of economic and social exclusion.

✓ **Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)**

Reintegration assistance is a key factor to ensuring sustained returns. Since the inception of AVRR, related assistance has enjoyed considerable evolution, from basic pocket money handed to the returnee in the host country to a more inclusive and phased approach including pre-departure counselling, as well as in-kind funding for the purchase of income-generating equipment for use in the country of origin. The objective is to guarantee migrants' rights, ensure their protection and well-being, and contribute to the local development, while enhancing their reintegration and developing activities. This would potentially contribute to minimizing the risk of irregular and unsafe remigration decisions made out of necessity as it helps consolidate the returnee's position in the society.

Assisted return activities are part of a comprehensive approach to migration governance, which includes timely asylum adjudication, supporting efforts to reduce irregular migration and enhance regular migration opportunities and provide accurate public information on those options. The successful implementation of AVRR programmes requires the cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including the migrants, civil society and the governments in host countries and countries of origin and/or transit. Partnerships involving a diverse range of national and international stakeholders are essential to the effective implementation of AVRRs – from the pre-return to the reintegration stages. For migrants who need to return home but lack the means to do so, AVRR programmes may often be the only solution to their plight. The consequences of not returning such migrants in a safe way can place heavy socio-economic burdens on host and transit countries' asylum and social welfare systems.

✓ **Sustainable Reintegration**

Reintegration is typically the re-establishment of a person into a group or process; for example, the re-establishment of a migrant in his or her country of return. As part of this process, the migrant is able to (re)activate social networks and engage in income generating activities and to re-participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his/her country of origin. It is a social process which affects and requires efforts from multiple sites: the returning migrant, the country of origin and/or transit, the country of destination and the receiving society in the country of origin. In order for successful reintegration to occur, three key conditions need to be fulfilled on the individual level: (a) economic self-sufficiency, (b) access to social services (health, education, and housing, to be provided by the government), as well as (c) social networks and psychosocial well-being (peer acceptance, sense of belonging and safety). Without access to income-generating activities that allow returnees to meet their basic needs, it is difficult for reintegration to be successful. Social networks form another important element, as these contacts can accompany returnees through the reintegration process by welcoming them back in the community, providing them with information and social capital, and assisting them in difficult situations through safety nets. These networks will also provide emotional support, which is linked to psychological health. Migrant's return might be accompanied by feelings of loss, failure, anxiety and stress, which will hinder the reintegration process. Poor economic prospects and security concerns will further destabilize the psychosocial well-being of the returnee. Finally, reintegration measures should not privilege returnees at the expense of members of the communities to which they return. Therefore, reintegration measures should always include the latter according to the "do no harm" principle and construct an area-based approach embedded in local development. This approach aims to ensure that communities are not negatively affected by the return. Political and other correlated factors such as governance, corruption, values and lifestyle are also important.

Another key element in the success of sustainable reintegration of returning migrants is the robust and meaningful engagement of the government of the country of return through appropriate policy frameworks and programmes that maximise the development impact of return migration. In this context,

consideration should also be given to the role and influence of other national stakeholders, including private sector actors, public employment agencies, workers' and employers' and civil society organizations and international development organizations where relevant.

Facilitating sustainable reintegration is a crucial element of migration related assistance to returning migrants, and a vital part of policy formulation and coherence by governments. Reintegration will likely be more sustainable if the decision to return is informed and voluntary and supported by appropriate and target-group specific reintegration assistance. The return may also be part of a work contract and therefore planned (e.g. temporary labour migration or circular migration schemes). This automatically links the return component with the origin country's labour migration policy, which in turn also reinforces sustainability. While sustainable reintegration may address the necessity of re-migration for economic reasons, a freely taken and well-informed decision to re-migrate using regular channels should also be considered as a sustainable outcome. Reintegration is closely linked to the protection of migrants' rights and the development of opportunities in the country of origin, particularly those that address the root causes of irregular migration. For example, reintegration can be more sustainable when it is linked to assistance that contributes to the creation of socioeconomic opportunities in the country of origin. Additionally, it can and should be linked to a strategy ensuring that non-migrant local communities are not disadvantaged by returning migrants. Sustainability is also based on the returnee's social reintegration into society, and the ability to enjoy safety and rights in the country of origin.

- **Existing approaches**

- ✓ Skills assessment, recognition of qualifications and certifications between the host country and the country of origin
- ✓ Engaging Public Employment Services to assist access to decent work, including through Job Placement initiatives in the country of origin
- ✓ Micro-business support and credit in the country of origin
- ✓ Enhancing the capacities and referral mechanisms of institutions responsible for supporting returning migrants in the host country and the country of origin
- ✓ Developing and implementing comprehensive information orientation programmes for returning migrants

If a returnee cannot meet his or her basic needs, financial assistance combined with capacity-building and possibly a small grant to start a business can be an efficient solution. Microcredits may be an adequate instrument, along with job placement and vocational training that can help increase the likelihood of a sustained return and contribute to longer-term stability. Ministries of labour often promote vocational training courses, support the search for employment, manage job placement programmes, provide access to micro-credit and advice on opening a business.

### 3. Challenges

- ***Lack of data to assess reintegration sustainability and impact of return on development***

More information is required on how countries of origin can better facilitate the sustainable reintegration of the various categories of returning migrants, whether this be through individual support, community-based initiatives and policy development. Furthermore, there is much more information and evaluation needed on preparation and counselling measures in the pre-return phase. More extensive research is required in order to develop measurable indicators of sustainable reintegration. Apart from the need to define key indicators, there must be adequate understanding of the perspective and situation of the various categories of migrants for reintegration policies and programmes to be effective. Previous studies involving returned migrants have highlighted a number of methodological obstacles and sampling limitations, including returnees' reservations about participation and their unavailability for future assessments, sometimes as a result of lacking infrastructure for analysis and tracking in countries of origin. Indeed, the reluctance of returnees to maintain contact with the country that managed the return,

and the lack of means/funding for monitoring exercises are some of the main reasons explaining the lack of data. The availability of such data would be further enhanced if appropriate national return and reintegration policies and programmes were in place, addressing the importance of data collection and analysis.

- ***Addressing the needs and concerns of communities, including structural factors***

While conventional reintegration programmes are primarily designed for returning individual migrants and families, they should also address structural issues in the countries of return, specifically in returnees' local communities, that drive risky and irregular migration. This could help prevent returnees from being viewed as a burden instead of people with valuable skills, knowledge and talents who can contribute to local development. Especially if return takes place in high numbers, returning migrants also risk putting a strain on the community of return and their social network. Tension can develop between local populations who persevered through poverty, conflict or crisis and returning migrants who had left in search of better living and economic conditions. Competition for social services can also increase tensions between local populations and returnees receiving financial reintegration assistance. All related activities should be anchored in the humanitarian-development principle of “Do no harm”. By connecting reintegration projects to existing local development initiatives, the risk of one group being favoured over others – thereby creating conflict between the local community and the returnees – is likely to be reduced. Creating opportunities in the local community benefits returnees, as well as their communities of return by increasing employment and social opportunities. This reduces the burden placed on communities of return that may need to support returned migrants and may lose the benefit of remittances from abroad.

The widely differing conditions among countries of origin require creativity in programme development. It is necessary for donors to be flexible and allow the implementation of programmes to be managed in-country, with reintegration options based on local knowledge and catering to local needs. Individual interventions and support should be linked to broader programmes on the national and local level, as these can provide opportunities for returnees to reintegrate economically.

Group reintegration projects and the establishment of returnee networks greatly contribute to the social reintegration of returnees. Group reintegration projects not only contribute to the economic betterment of returnees and the surrounding community, but also provide a necessary social support structure. It is also important that they integrate into the wider community and do not stay too insular.

- ***Providing effective support to enhance employment and self-employment opportunities***

Creating a sustainable livelihood can be difficult in the country of origin as a result of structural challenges (e.g. high unemployment). Returning migrants might face discrimination in terms of access to decent work and other income-generating activities, such as enterprise development. Economic empowerment of returning migrants incorporates a range of issues, including skills assessment and enhancement, recognition of prior learning, upgrading and certification, engaging public employment services, promoting decent working conditions and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, engaging key stakeholders including trade unions and employers, supporting access to social protection and other key public services, promoting entrepreneurship and business development services as well as access to financial services (e.g. microfinance, savings, accounts, loans and insurance) and financial literacy trainings. Placing these and other related issues into a broader framework of a comprehensive labour migration policy will contribute significantly to addressing drivers of all forms of migration and, hence, remigration.

#### **4. Ideas for action**

- ***Recognize which structural factors may affect sustained reintegration***

Labour markets may be underdeveloped in communities of return, and economic opportunities may be low for the population as a whole, not just for returnees. Furthermore, a lack of or weak local capacities for an adequate medical (psychological or physical) follow-up of returning migrants may also be a challenge. Therefore, reintegration programmes should recognize the structural factors in the country of origin, and acknowledge them in the reintegration plan of the returning migrant as far as possible. Lack of employment opportunities or lack of governance can barely be addressed by return programmes alone, but it is necessary to implement measures to ensure the equal enjoyment of rights by all returning migrants, including with regard to social protection, health care, an adequate standard of living, education and decent work. One further aspect is access to human rights as a prerequisite for successful reintegration. This is hampered when local capacities in developing countries are not well developed. Policies targeting return and reintegration should include an awareness of local access to human and social rights.

- ***Enhancing cooperation via a whole-of-government approach to return migration***

Well-functioning coordination mechanisms are key for a cohesive and cross-sectoral approach to migration policy development. Yet, effective coordination is becoming increasingly difficult as new national structures focused on specific migration-related issues, such as ministries or agencies of diaspora affairs, start emerging. Migration is an issue relevant to many policy domains and is increasingly visible in a wide range of government portfolios such as labour, international trade and investment, health, education, social welfare, environment and emergencies. Parliaments and courts are similarly becoming more active in framing policy decisions and developing practical mechanisms for addressing specific challenges. This relates directly to concerns expressed in SDGs, most notably in goal 17. In addition, return and (re-)integration policies between host countries and countries of origin need to be linked in order to achieve coherence. Host countries might be interested in linking their return and/or reintegration projects to local development measures in the country of origin.

- ***Foster exchanges of information, best practices, and cooperation between all involved stakeholders to ensure coordination, complementarity and coherence across activities implemented by different stakeholders***

Where relevant, joint projects with other development actors would help avoid duplication of activities and provide a more comprehensive approach. It also provides a better response to the needs of the different target populations. Additionally, information-sharing is useful to better tailor projects and programmes, local, national and international, to the needs on the ground. Many governments, especially those of countries of origin, have implemented cooperation mechanisms with local actors, including migrants. These cooperation initiatives between policymakers and local actors frequently involve pilot projects, combined with access to funding schemes, capacity-building, networking and knowledge-sharing, decentralized cooperation (for example, twinning cities and co-development projects) and consultations with local actors.

Data sharing on migrant workers between host countries and countries of origin can be beneficial in enabling better programme responses and the allocation of resources. For example, there is the possibility of host countries compiling data on migrants whose contracts are due to expire within a three or six-month time period, which can then be shared with countries of origin to enable them to plan for those migrants' return. However, there is a need to introduce effective data protection mechanisms.

Local development initiatives based on the needs of the local community are more likely to address the needs of returnees. Linking reintegration projects to these development initiatives will also enhance their effectiveness and at the same time avoid duplication of activities. Parallel structures are more expensive and can also endanger the success of a project when they compete for the same resources. Cooperation with local actors during the design phase of the reintegration project, including members of the returnee community, helps ensure that the project responds to the needs on the ground and that different activities are feasible and efficient.

A participative approach may solve challenges, too. When migrants and local governments participate in the design of a project, they are likely to initiate project ideas based on their interests and capacities. Governments in the country of origin could provide guidance to find suitable projects for the region in order for the returnees to contribute to local development. In addition, a participative approach to project design can help empower the returnees and develop a sense of common ownership with the local government and hence mitigate potential conflicts and contribute to social cohesion.

As a partner, the private sector is increasingly playing an important role in reintegration, especially when large groups of migrants return to a specific country or a specific city/region within a country. The private sector has a significant and valuable role to play in realizing the positive benefits of migration and in minimizing its costs. As the private sector is usually the most important employment provider, partnerships may help returnees to obtain work and/or training, for example, through apprenticeship and mentoring programmes.

- ***Remove limitations on circular migration***

Removing temporary or permanent restrictions on re-emigration will keep options open for failed returns. Comprehensive return policies should therefore be linked with migration policies (e.g. circular migration schemes). Nevertheless, the concerns of countries of transit and destination need to be considered when addressing the possibility of recurrent journeys. This “idea for action” can however only work in a system in which return of migrants in an irregular situation is effective, and legal ways of migration are promoted and possible.

- ***Incorporate preparedness for return through orientation programmes and recognition/certification of skills gained in country of destination.***

For many migrants (esp. in an irregular situation), the concept of return can be daunting. Yet it is important for an individual or family to decide and plan for their return back to their country of origin. Reintegration starts with the readiness of the individuals to return. The pre-return stage is an opportunity to empower returnees and increase the likelihood of sustainable reintegration. It is crucial for return counselling to be comprehensive, linked with post-arrival counselling and to be provided prior to the return.

Returnees also need reliable information on the overall situation in the country of origin, especially on the labour market and how to access it. Promoting skills certification, including recognition of prior learning, can also have multiple benefits for destination and origin countries. For origin countries, it can support the reintegration in the workforce through relevant recognition and accreditation processes. For host countries, it can encourage returnees to upskill with the aspiration of being able to access a better job back in their home country. Cooperation on the mutual recognition and certification of skills gained in countries of destination can improve employment prospects for migrants returning home.

- ***Prepare reintegration and its development impact before return through diaspora engagement and providing remittances- and savings-related options***

In addition to promote positive development impacts from return migrants in need of assistance, it is also important to consider the development potential of migrants sending remittances and return migrants that do not need financial assistance and have savings derived from their migratory experience, preparing reintegration before the actual return. This is relevant as remittances and these savings can be mainly spent in household consumption. If funds are not leveraged, dependency is created. Linking remittances to financial services, together with models of investment, may incentivize channeling these funds to productive activities, social services and infrastructure, maximizing the impact in the local and national economy. It is important to keep in mind that remittances are private funds and the focus should be in providing migrants, return migrants and their families with financial options and tools. These may

comprise diaspora funds and diaspora bonds. Financial education and counselling could also help and tax and credit incentives can induce migrants and diaspora to invest in their home countries.

Diaspora engagement provides important channels to contribute to the returnees' reintegration, i.e. for the transmission of skills, technology, know-how and information on work, business and education opportunities, thereby creating new conduits for trade and investment. Linking diaspora initiatives not only to financial but also to human and social capital, enables to address the most pertinent topics: remittance flows and investment, brain drain and return of qualified nationals, grassroots initiatives and the differences between first generation nostalgia and second generation rising active involvement.

- ***Promote evidence-based programming***

Review mechanisms analysing the different aspects of reintegration should be included as an essential part of each project. Determining which factors improve returnees' wellbeing will contribute to future policy, programme and project design to best serve returnees. Moreover, more comparative research exercises are needed to analyse the differences in the outcomes of the reintegration process between different categories of returning migrants. In addition, it is recommended that longer-term evaluations be carried out in order to analyse the different steps of the reintegration process, identify possible gaps and actions to address these. These evaluations should be carried out in countries of destination, origin and transit. While evaluation is an essential tool to improve practices, it is also a crucial element in identifying gaps in research. For example, there is not enough evidence on the role of the migrants themselves in ensuring the success and sustainability of reintegration.

The perspectives of the countries of origin (as expressed by government and non-governmental actors) are also important for better research and evaluation in this field to ultimately identify measures to promote the sustainability of reintegration.

Technology can provide migrants with relevant and current information. For example, programmes and projects seeking feedback from returnees through their own "Stories of Return" seem to be an effective strategy. Migrants provide their own photos and videos relating their experience of return. The videos and pictures associated with these stories of return offer balanced, first-hand accounts of their points of experiences along the return process. These can contribute greatly to migrants' decision-making processes, for example when considering applying for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. This promotes dialogue between migrants interested in return with those who have already returned, for example, phone conversations or video conferencing. The latter methodology, in particular, allows returnees to pass on first-hand information about their return and reintegration experiences in a specific country of origin to a larger group of migrants still in the host country yet interested in return.

Technology may also help in measuring the impact of an intervention and in identifying gaps, for example, when beneficiaries are asked to provide feedback via SMS. Incentives may include free mobile credit in exchange for information provided. This technology has already been used during emergency operations, in particular through community response maps, which analyse information received via SMS and phone calls, allowing for the mapping of affected populations, assessment of further needs and evaluation of the progress of projects.

## **5. Guiding questions for RT-debate**

- ✓ ***How could synergies be leveraged between return and reintegration programmes and development-oriented actions in the countries of origin, to integrate reintegration dynamics in sustainable national development plans and relevant policies?***

Developing migrant return and reintegration policies should be linked with existing policies and programmes of governments, national and international partners, such as those promoting employment, education, training, social protection and development, to identify and leverage potential synergies.



Return and reintegration is a necessary topic to address on the political level. The critical role of return migrants and the potential development impact for countries of origin, should be included in national development policies and in dialogue with international partners, including donors. Optimising the development impact also requires stronger and more focused policy dialogue between host countries, transit countries and countries of origin and strong migration governance frameworks so that forward planning of returns can also inform development needs.

- ✓ ***How to find a right balance between the support to returnees and communities of origin and how to better identify the needs of the community of origin?***

AVRR programmes should not be regarded as a pull-factor. Indeed, people living with scarce resources may decide to leave to benefit from reintegration assistance upon return. On the other hand, AVRR is unlikely to ever cover the financial and human costs of irregular migration. Nevertheless, host countries should coordinate to ensure a certain homogeneity in the provision of reintegration assistance to avoid “AVRR shopping”.

In many countries of origin there is a need to balance between the assistance provided to returning migrants (some of them may not even have reached the intended country of destination) and the needs of origin communities, in particular with regard to those people who may also engage in irregular migration.

- ✓ ***How can migration policy address returning migrants’ pre-departure and post-departure needs, taking into account both the challenges of the specific status of the migrants and the possible interconnectivity of measures?***

This paper highlighted the different status returning migrants can have, and focussed on one specific scenario. This differentiation, or silo thinking, is necessary in order to comply with the international obligation of states regarding return, but bridges can be built between the different silos. Indeed, once back in their countries of origin, returnees may be confronted to similar challenges and exchange of experiences and best practices could strengthen the reintegration, and thus development, dynamics. A key challenge is to ensure whole-of-government and whole-of-society response frameworks that also incorporate other national and international partners.

- ✓ ***How to facilitate cooperation between host countries and countries of origin?***

Migration partnerships may be an appropriate instrument of bilateral cooperation on migration between host countries and countries of origin. Migration partnerships could be a flexible and individually adjustable set of initiatives put in place in order to mutually address the needs and interests of partner countries in all migration-related topics on a long term basis. This kind of interest-based cooperation can contribute to a holistic approach to migration, in which return and reintegration are seen as an elementary component of bilateral cooperation with a focus on human rights, dignity and common search for solutions.