

Baseline Assessment Summary (April 2016)
Jamaica / Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)



TECHNICAL EXPERTISE REQUEST:
Baseline Assessment in the field of
Return, Integration and Reintegration of Involuntary Returned Migrants

Jamaica has a long history of migration, which has contributed to define the characteristics of the country itself. Migration is recognised as a positive contributor to national development due to the benefits derived from remittances, diaspora contributions and human capital transfer, among others. However, despite the gains achieved, migration is also associated to certain challenges if not adequately monitored and managed.

According to the Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica (ESSJ, 2014) between 1996 and 2014, **50,710 persons** were involuntary returned (deported) to Jamaica, with an average of 2,750.3 people per year since 2005. Most of the deported persons return with limited or no financial support, nor family or social ties to assist them with their own (re) integration. Both the perception of the receiving community and the difficulties to engage and be self-sustained, drive them into marginalization and discrimination, often leaving them with no other option but to engage in criminal activities, drug abuse and displacement when no homelessness.

Reasons of the request:

The Government of Jamaica (GoJ) recognizes the need for the provision of assistance to all migrants and assume the challenges related to the real socio-economic integration of forced returnees, the issues related to security and criminalization, the generalized stereotype of the deported persons as criminals, and the impact on their return in the country, society in general and host-communities in particular.

The request of the GoJ through its Planning Institute (PIOJ) for technical support in the development of a plan of action recognizes the need of forging partnerships with other governments, multilateral institutions and non-governmental associations. There is an awareness that the services available are inadequate and to a great extent ad-hoc. There is a need to mobilize resources and streamline service delivery in accordance with national, regional and global policies that pertain to migration management.

This intervention seeks to assist with the development of an inclusive and coordinated programme and plan of action towards the provision of services for integration, reintegration and rehabilitation of involuntary returned migrants at three stages: pre-arrival, arrival and resettlement. The technical assistance may provide valuable support in setting up the ground for a holistic approach that considers also the presence of International Organizations, their contribution, approach and interest of different donors, as well as the needs and fears of deported persons for a successful reintegration.

Learning from the Baseline Assessment (BA):

- Current barriers for (re) integration of forced returnees include the lack of community support networks / family ties; the stigmatization (despite levels of offences may not be the same, but the perception in the host community is equal to all); discrimination that create difficulties to access work, even if they may bring new skills; discrimination and victimisation that leads to marginalization and social dislocation and the lack of recognition of their vulnerabilities that require specific reintegration needs. Important to note is that the negative perception of forced returnees is present both at host communities and among the government officials with no specific effort in place to address vulnerabilities, except from cases related to children accompanying their parents in their return.
- Capacity building to the GoJ is required in several areas such as border management, biometrics and information systems; data management; human resources and equipment, as well as human rights. Their active participation and engagement on the (re) integration process is required to coordinate and ensure assistance to all deported persons, with particular attention to the most vulnerable cases.
- The current system lacks coordination and information sharing mechanisms among all actors. (Re)integration assistance is mainly addressed by NSAs that generally depend on charity and goodwill, without a shared protocol or referral system in coordination with the GoJ, nor do they have the capacity or the strength to lobby or advocate on behalf of forced returnees and their needs. Further, capacity building is advisable, particularly in management and human rights, coordinated reintegration support and assistance, resource mobilization, reporting, accountability and transparency.
- The technical assistance (TA) may contribute to build a bridge among Government agencies and between the GoJ and the rest of actors involved, including NSAs, International Organizations and Donors, as well as hosting communities. Particular attention should be paid to individual needs and vulnerabilities. Working on awareness raising to eliminate the stigma of forced returnees is only valid as long as measures are taken to ensure that they can be self-sustainable in a short-medium term.
- Sustainable reintegration requires a holistic approach, assessing the impact of the return within the receiving communities, the impact of the stigmatization, the vulnerabilities and the reintegration needs in a short, medium and long term. Mainstreaming migration and development issues into national development planning is key for the country, as it should align the national priorities in the country's first long-term development planning framework Vision 2030 (National Development Plan) with other efforts in place (UNCT Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development)
- The TA should advocate for the creation of a coordination mechanism that looks also at long-term community stabilization programmes that involve individual targeted assistance, building supporting networks and tailored assistance to the most vulnerable groups (Jamaicans non forced returnees and forced returnees, including children, women, elderly, disabled, in-prison, and those who left at a young age that have returned after 15 years or more and do not have any knowledge of the country). This also includes developing vulnerability criteria that goes beyond children and when possible, promote family reunification. Once the forced returnee's transition is finalized they should be part of the "other vulnerable groups" in country receiving the same type of support for integration into society.
- It is also advisable to develop monitoring and research mechanisms to assess the impact of the return within the receiving communities, the impact of the stigmatization (lack of integration, difficulties to access jobs, lack of ties with families and networks for support), considering the differences between short, medium and long-term assistance needs. Assess Standard Operating Procedures and M&E tools developed to assess the coordination mechanism, info sharing and data sharing mechanisms. Analyse the percentage of successful reintegration and the return vs. assistance provided.