Managing Return Migration

Challenges and Opportunities
Return migration: secondary phenomenon?

**Perceptions**

- **Numbers**
  - Negligible, considerably smaller than outgoing migration

- **Character**
  - Final Reestablishment of natural order

- **Complexity/Challenges**
  - Less challenging than outgoing

**Reality**

- **Numbers**
  - Considerable

- **Character**
  - Temporary New Beginning

- **Complexity/Challenges**
  - Just as challenging
Return migration: a secondary phenomenon?

- Complex, dynamic, challenging aspect of migration
- Profound consequences for countries of origin, transit, destination and migrants themselves
- Considerable impact on development, trade, health, security, international relations, human rights
- One of the most interconnected types of migration

Return Migration: major component of international migration
Return: facilitating factors

- Ease of communication and transportation

- Migratory behaviour increasingly complex and diverse:
  - Shorter-term movement
  - Circular movement between two countries
  - Movement to multiple countries

- Return: important element of process for many types of migration
Return Contexts

- Spontaneous choice for economic, social and/or family-related reasons
- Part of labour migration arrangements: end of temporary period of work abroad
- Post-conflict/crisis situations, including voluntary repatriation of refugees, IDPs and/or prisoners of war
- Part of strategy to address irregular migration and secure national borders
  - Unsuccessful asylum seekers and other unauthorized migrants
- Potential returnees may belong to vulnerable groups: require special attention and consideration
  - Victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors
Return: phenomenon hard to quantify

- No accurate global estimations of return migration
  - Differences of definition among different data sets
  - General lack of data

- Much return migration initiated by migrant

- Undertaken without involvement of States or other national/ international actors

Not necessarily recorded
A comprehensive approach to return management

Return: related to all migration stages

Preparation to migrate

Transit

Entry

Stay

Integration and Reintegration

Preparation to migrate
A comprehensive approach to return management

- Development
- Security
- Health
- Human Rights
- Trade

Return Migration
Sovereignty & Human Rights

- Sovereign prerogative of each State to determine which non-nationals enter and remain on its territory, for what purposes, and under what conditions.
- Exercise of prerogative must be consistent with human rights standards.
- Considered in light of the right of each person to return to his/her own country.

Consensus on importance of human rights for return migration:
Different perspectives on best modalities to ensure protection.
A comprehensive approach to return management

Key issues for further thought:

- Policies relating to each stage: complementary and mutually supportive
- Anticipate and prepare for return, even in early phases such as preparation to migrate and entry
- Barriers to successful incorporation of return migration into overall migration policy frameworks and practices
Voluntary & Forced Return

Essential tools of migration management

Both necessary and legitimate

Strong link between them
Link Between Forced & Voluntary Return

If forced return not rapid and successful
Fewer people will choose to return voluntarily
Voluntary return less likely to be viable alternative

Key issues for further thought:

- Measures to ensure that forced return fully consistent with international, regional and national standards
- Making forced and voluntary return programmes complementary and mutually supportive
Voluntary Return

Greatest Convergence of Interests

Returnees
- Takes account of migrant’s decision
- Allows preparation for the return
- Ensures respect for human rights
- Avoids stigma of forced return and negative repercussions for reintegration
- Provides counselling, financial and/or logistical & reintegration support

Returning governments
- Generally more cost effective
- Administratively less cumbersome
- Helps avoid friction with national and international partners
- Opens way to genuine partnerships with countries of origin and implementing partners

Countries of origin
- Ensures the rights and dignity of their nationals
- May include reintegration assistance for individuals and/or their communities
- May provide future opportunities for legal migration

More sustainable
Voluntary return

Key issues for further thought:

- Specific and detailed information provided to potential returnees to make an informed decision

- Provider of return counselling: State agencies, NGOs, IOs?

- Additional measures to ensure that voluntary return is truly voluntary
Forced Return

- Combined with other measures: deterrent to irregular migration
- Clear message to traffickers and smugglers that governments are determined to combat irregular migration
- Can help preserve integrity of asylum and migration management systems
- Must be carried out in full respect of international law and human rights
Key issues for further thought:

- Measures to ensure that forced return fully consistent with international, regional and national standards
- Making forced and voluntary return programmes complementary and mutually supportive
- Monitoring of return operations: yes, no? by whom?
Sustainability of Return

Reintegration Support

- Return migration can pose serious challenges to the reception and integration capacities of countries of transit and origin.
- Return migration can be difficult for returnees.

Where push factors not addressed:

Substantial number of returnees will emigrate again.

Issues for further thought:

- Building adequate reception and integration facilities in countries of transit and origin.
- Measures to avoid the vicious circle of further irregular migration.
- Interventions to ensure that future migration is a matter of genuine choice and under legal migration schemes.
Sustainability of return

Assistance

Assistance for the economic, social and cultural reintegration of the returnee, including health care

- Cash grants, service referrals, vocational training, small business development
- Educational support and follow-up
- Assistance to the communities of return

Key issues for further thought:

- Stakeholders best situated to provide reintegration assistance
- Balance between cash and in-kind assistance
- Types of reintegration support to ensure sustainability of return without creating pull factors/incentives for irregular migration
- Post-return monitoring: how much, by whom?
- Additional research on sustainability of returns for policy makers
Countries of destination

- Provide adequate accommodation pending removal
- Issue travel documents
- Execute expulsion orders
- Implement voluntary return programmes
- Bring national legislation on return into compliance with relevant international and regional standards
Countries of origin and transit

- Difficulties in receiving returnees
  - In large numbers
  - In post-conflict situations
  - Situations involving significant environmental degradation
  - Situations involving vulnerable migrants

- Particular challenges in addressing situation of intercepted or stranded irregular migrants
Capacity issues

Countries of origin, transit and destination

- May lack capacity to manage their borders
- Ensure the security of identity and travel documents
- Establish identity where identity documents are missing or destroyed
- Adequately warn potential migrants of the risks of irregular migration
Tailoring return and reintegration assistance policies

One-size-fits-all approaches to managing return migration are not the most effective

Key issues for further thought:

- Tailoring return and reintegration programmes to country-specific circumstances
- Tailoring reintegration assistance to the needs of individual returnees
Tailoring return and reintegration assistance policies

Issues related to vulnerable groups:

- Victims and potential victims of trafficking
- Victims and potential victims of torture
- Refugees
- Unaccompanied minors
- Women
- Elderly people
- People with serious health conditions

Key issues for further thought:

- Limitations on ability of States to return these categories
- Adapting return and reintegration procedures to their special needs
- Types of special services and assistance needed upon return
Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Different perspectives and priorities

For most destination and transit countries
- Integrity of their national migration management systems
- Legal migration schemes and the institution of asylum

For many countries of origin and transit
- Large influxes of returning migrants challenge their capacity to “absorb” returnees and socio-economic stability

Countries of origin
- Re-gain talented nationals with new skills
- Reduction in remittances
Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Most successful return activities: most inclusive ones

Key Issues for further thought:

- Roles and possible contributions of countries of origin, transit and destination in return migration management

- At national level: inter-ministerial coordination
  - ways to best achieve it

- Roles and possible contributions of non-state actors

- Forms of partnerships to make effective return policies and practices possible
  - Bilateral cooperation between governments
  - Active engagement of local communities, diasporas, and civil society
NGOs, International Organizations

Important roles to play in return policy and practice

- Return counselling and information dissemination
- Help to ensure that voice of migrants is heard
- Help meet special needs of vulnerable persons
Informal consultation mechanisms

- 5 + 5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean
- Cluster Process initiative between the South Caucasus countries and several Western European countries
- Migration Dialogue for Western Africa (MIDWA) & Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA)
- Regional Conference on Migration in the Americas (Puebla Process)
- Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

Identified common interests
Joint actions taken
Towards a cooperative approach to return migration

Key issues for further thought:

- Bilateral or regional readmission agreements to facilitate safe, orderly, dignified and sustainable returns

- Cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination to assist in establishing identity and obtaining travel documents

- Assistance of returning governments to build capacity of countries of origin and transit to receive returnees, particularly in large numbers

Other types of support:

- Development assistance for education, health, infrastructure
- Visa facilitation for nationals of the country of origin
Concluding Remarks

- Return migration receiving more focused attention

- View of international community on return shifting
  - Recognition of centrality of return to effective migration management for countries of origin, transit and destination
  - Growing interest in temporary labour migration with its inherent return element
  - Impact on and relation with other areas of activity, in particular development
Concluding Remarks

Return migration: strong case for migration management

Security
Irregular migration
Human Rights
Bi-lateral and int. relations

Regular Migration
Skills Transfer
Development
Managing Return Migration

Challenges and Opportunities