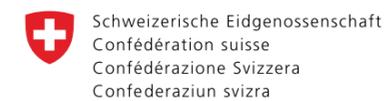


A Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration of International Labour Migrants from Bangladesh



**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**



**International
Labour
Organization**

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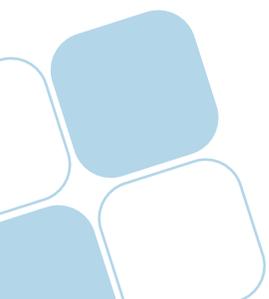
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A Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration of International Labour Migrants from Bangladesh

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Foreword from **WEWB**



The Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) is happy to know that the “A Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration” is developed which is a timely initiative. International migration is an ever-growing phenomenon and has an important development implication in Bangladesh. It has almost 12 million Bangladeshis working abroad, and catering services to this huge number of migrants is a constant challenge.

To this end, the services for migrants are oriented towards pre-departure information, awareness raising, and education schemes for children but the services for returnee migrants are limited. Thus, it is important to initiate provisioning for returnee migrants to gear towards sustainable reintegration and as well facilitate opportunities of re-migration. The framework will help to guide the relevant stakeholders to develop more targeted services and facilities for returnee migrant workers in a more comprehensive manner.

I would like to congratulate everyone who was involved in crafting this framework and acknowledge, in particular, the Refugee and Migratory Movements and Research Unit (RMMRU), the technical partners ILO and IOM as well as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for the financial support. I would like to thank the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) and the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) for their continuous support.

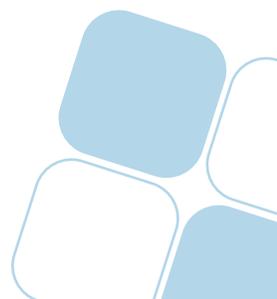
I believe the publication will prove useful to the stakeholders/service providers to develop more targeted services and facilities for returnee migrant workers.



Gazi Mohammad Julhash *ndc*

Director General (Additional Secretary)

Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB)



Foreword



Labour migration is a growing phenomenon and it plays a critical role in reducing the pressure of employment generation in the domestic labour market in Bangladesh. There are over 11 million Bangladeshis working overseas in different sectors. Recognizing the contribution of migration to the economy of the country, the Government of Bangladesh has taken progressive steps to establish institutions and mechanisms to manage migration. In 1990, the Government of Bangladesh established the 'Wages Earners' Welfare Fund' to extend welfare services to the migrant workers. However, most of the services are geared towards catering services at the pre-departure phases and limited services are available to the returnee migrants. Some of the services extended to the migrants upon return include providing support to the families of deceased migrant workers, assisting with scholarships for children of migrant workers and shelter support at the destination countries.

The ILO and IOM with the support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) assisted the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Wage Earners Welfare Board (WEWB) in particular to develop a framework of services for the returnee migrants. The proposed framework addresses the psychosocial, economic and social needs of returnee migrant workers in a more comprehensive manner and also focuses on the possibility of re-migration from Bangladesh. The framework of services is designed for the stakeholders/service providers who could cater to the needs of the returnee migrants in a more comprehensive and efficient way. We believe that this publication will guide the stakeholders to develop more targeted services and facilities for returning migrant workers.

The ILO and the IOM would like to express utmost appreciation to the team of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) including the co-authors Dr. Syeda Rozana Rashid and Dr. ASM Ali Ashraf who jointly prepared the framework. The ILO and IOM are grateful to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) for their unconditional support during the entire project period. The ILO and IOM would also like to extend the deepest gratitude to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for the financial and technical assistance in commencing the study. The last but not the least, appreciation goes to the joint efforts of the staff of ILO and IOM for the excellent collaboration, and partnership in producing the final publication.

In the end, we would like to express our commitment to work closely with WEWB and all related stakeholders in the implementation of the framework.



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Chief of Mission
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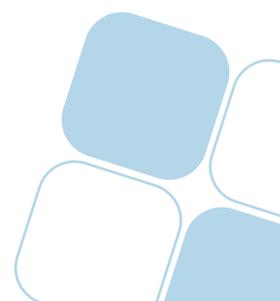
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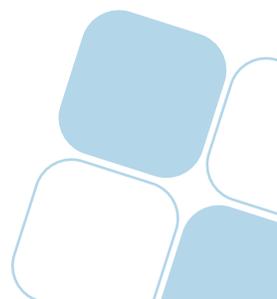
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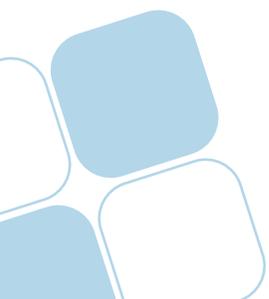


ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of international Recruiting Agencies
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOMSA	Bangladesh Ovhibashi Mohila Sramik Association
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CFO	Commission on Filipinos Overseas
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DoYD	Department of Youth Development
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries
GED	General Economics Division (Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Government of Bangladesh)
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
MIDAS	Micro Industries Development Assistance and Services
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs

MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MWIMS	Migrant Worker Information Management System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OKUP	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program
PKB	Probashi Kallyan Bank
REHAB	Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TTC	Technical Training Centre
UDC	Union Digital Centre
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARBE	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants
WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This paper presents a framework of services for the reintegration and remigration of international labour migrants from Bangladesh.¹ It is the product of an evidence-based research titled “The Mapping and Scoping of Services for the Migrant Workers of Bangladesh at Various Stages of Labour Migration Cycle”. Findings from the study suggests that the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) should assume the role of lead ministry for implementing the returnee services framework. WEWB, which operates under MoEWOE, has statutory responsibility for promoting the welfare of migrant workers, including returnees. WEWB works closely with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), the lead migration governance agency under MoEWOE, in delivering a wide range of welfare services to Bangladeshi migrant workers. Such services should focus on individual assistance, community-based support and structural interventions. A wide variety of government and private sector entities and CSOs, in collaboration with bilateral and multilateral development partners and intergovernmental institutions, should be involved in implementing the proposed returnee services framework.

The report has five chapters. The first chapter presents the rationales for returnee services, methodology, literature review and the global best practices. The second chapter provides a list of prerequisites for implementing a framework for returnee migrants. The third chapter identifies the components of a sustainable returnee services framework and examines the role of various implementing organizations. The fourth chapter develops an action plan for implementing the proposed framework. The fifth chapter discusses the risks and opportunities, and concludes with a note on building consensus on returnee services. The highlights of each chapter are presented below.

CHAPTER 1: This chapter begins with a discussion on why a framework of returnee services would not only address the needs of both regular and irregular migrants, but also the diaspora community. It would also comply with the commitment of Bangladesh to international human rights and development regimes. Existing literature provides useful ideas about returnee services in global and Bangladesh contexts. A few countries in the Global South – including Ghana, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka – have already adopted policies on reintegration, which are briefly mentioned.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter presents 11 prerequisites for developing a framework of returnee migrants. It finds that existing laws and policies regarding migration and development have included rehabilitation and reintegration of returnee migrants as a policy priority. Putting these policies into action requires legal and policy amendments, forming a coordinating mechanism, developing a returnee registration database, needs assessment of the returnees, developing a labour market information system, building public–private partnerships, funding reintegration schemes, capacity-building of implementing agencies, developing skills recognition and certification mechanism, supporting self-employment schemes, and adopting a monitoring and evaluation system.

¹ For the purpose of this study, a returnee is defined as a migrant worker who has returned to Bangladesh after completing at least one year of contractual job obligations in a country of destination.

CHAPTER 3: Following IOM's long-standing practices, this chapter presents three key components of a sustainable return framework, focusing on psychological well-being, economic reintegration and remigration opportunities, and social reintegration efforts which will be implemented at the individual, community and structural levels. Concerted efforts of the Government, the private sector, civil society and international development partners are needed to implement the returnee services framework.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter presents an action plan for returnee migrants' services. It suggests that, after registration and needs assessment, a returnee can receive psychosocial counselling before pursuing two alternative career options: economic reintegration and remigration. Those choosing integration will have two career paths: local employment or entrepreneurship development. Social integration supports will be provided as per the requirements of returnees.

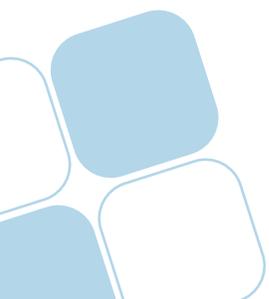
CHAPTER 5: This chapter identifies four potential risks – MoEWOE lacking support from other concerned ministries; lack of coordination among the public, private, and civil society actors; funding constraints; and inadequate human resources – in implementing a framework for returnee services. It also discusses existing solutions to address these risks: MoEWOE's leadership role as mandated by the existing laws and policies, strong commitment of the GOB, partial financing of reintegration programmes from WEWB's existing funds, and institutional support from ILO and IOM in developing human resources. In conclusion, this chapter calls for forging consensus among key stakeholders for addressing the needs of returnee migrants.

CHAPTER

01

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a discussion of why services for the returnee migrants matter. It then presents the research questions, research methodology and literature review before sharing some best practices in returnee reintegration. It closes with the structure of this paper.



1.1 Why Services for Returnees Matter

Services for returnee migrants represent a “missing dimension” in the migration governance system of Bangladesh. This is partly because the policy priority is focused more on promoting outmigration and less on reintegration. This is primarily due to two reasons: first, migrants are considered the lucky ones who should not be the beneficiaries of additional services; and second, it is feared that the adoption of reintegration services may encourage further returns which could result in low-skilled migrants becoming an economic burden.² This paper takes a different perspective and argues that there are at least five compelling reasons to justify why a framework of services for the reintegration and remigration of labour migrants from Bangladesh carries importance.³

First, Bangladesh is a major country of origin for regular migrants, and a framework of services for the returnees would complement existing facilities for the migrants at the pre-departure and post-arrival stages of the migration cycle. To elaborate, in 2017, more than 1 million Bangladeshis migrated out of the country using the formal channel (BMET, 2018). This included 12 per cent women migrant workers (BMET, 2018). Existing studies find that, although Bangladeshi migrants can avail themselves of services at the pre-departure and post-arrival stages, there is lack of an institutionalized system for return and reintegration services (Siddiqui and Abrar, 2002; Islam, 2010).⁴ In the absence of a framework of services, returnee migrant workers experience a wide variety of challenges affecting their abilities to reintegrate with the host communities, to cope with psychosocial trauma, and to find sustainable livelihood opportunities. Given that return is difficult, exploring global best practices in returnee migrants’ services, and developing a framework for Bangladesh in light of those practices, would be the first practical step in filling the gap in the prevailing migration governance system.

Second, a returnee services framework would not only address the needs of regular migrants, but also meet the priorities of irregular migrants and vulnerable groups including victims of trafficking and associated forms of exploitation and abuse and unaccompanied migrants children. This is a major concern for Bangladesh, which is a country of origin for 104,575 people, who were detained and found to be in irregular status in the European Union countries during the period of 2008–2016 (European Union, 2016; Eurostat, 2017). A large number of migrants also return to Bangladesh from the Persian Gulf and South-East Asia after completion of their contracts, while others returned after spending time as undocumented migrants. Many of them are victims of fraud and return empty-handed with huge debt burdens (Connell, 2017). They require additional support to overcome the psychological and financial burdens. Although BRAC, a Bangladeshi NGO with extensive global operations, is collaborating with the European Union and IOM in implementing a pilot project – “Bangladesh: Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance”, which focuses on returnee reintegration in Bangladesh – such efforts can be strengthened by a clearly designed framework that would address returned migrants from all over the world.

² This view is consistent with the neoclassical theory of migration, which argues that return migration indicates an individual migrant’s failure to integrate with the host country (Cassarino, 2004).

³ An optimist’s perspective on return migration can be found in Todaro (1969).

⁴ This study finds that at the pre-departure stage, Bangladeshi migrants receive information about overseas employment opportunities, and avail themselves of a host of migration processing services, such as obtaining passports, visas, work permits, travel documents, skills training and pre-departure orientation. At the post-arrival stage, migrants can access consular, legal, medical and remittance transfer services. For detained and deportees, post-arrival services also include opportunities for return and legal support.



Third, a returnee services framework would enable Bangladesh to tap the resourceful diaspora community, which can make huge contributions to development. This is an important topic, since Bangladesh is home to a sizeable diaspora community with an estimated 2 million people.⁵ A large number of the Bangladeshi diaspora is concentrated in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Members of this community also have a growing and visible presence in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and several Member States of the European Union. Evidence from the Global South suggests that members of the diaspora community acquire skills and resources and are in a position to contribute to their countries of origin only if there is a sound system of returnee reintegration (Islam, 2010). Although the Government of Bangladesh has several incentives for diaspora investment packages, in the absence of a comprehensive reintegration strategy, Bangladesh is yet to reap the full benefit of diaspora resources.

Fourth, returnee reintegration is consistent with the global human rights and development regimes. As a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 1990, and an active supporter of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Bangladesh is committed to promoting the rights of migrant men and women, and integrating them into the mainstream social protection system. The adoption of a framework of services for returnee migrants, with a central goal of returnee reintegration, would thus fulfil the global commitment of Bangladesh.

Fifth, a reintegration framework would provide returnees with opportunities to invest their skills and remittances in Bangladesh. It would make positive and spill over effects on both households and the national economy. A study on the mapping and scoping of services for outbound Bangladeshi migrant workers shows that, currently, very few skills recognition and investment opportunities are available for returnees (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). A framework of reintegration and remigration services would address this gap by expanding the scopes for tapping the resourceful migrant and diaspora communities.

1.2 Central Research Questions

Existing regulatory frameworks for managing labour migration from Bangladesh briefly refer to the adoption of services for the rehabilitation and reintegration of migrants. For instance, article 29 of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, article 1.8.6 of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, article 7 (h) of the Wage Earners' Welfare Rules 2002, and article 9 (t) of the proposed Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act 2017 mention a wide range of issues, including projects and programmes for the socioeconomic reintegration of returnees, and tapping the skills and resources of returnees and diaspora communities (MoEWOE, 2002, 2013, 2016, 2017). With the exception of a brief reference to returnee services in existing laws and policies, there is no well-articulated framework of reintegration services in Bangladesh to address the needs of returnees.

Against this backdrop, this paper asks four central questions:

- What are the prerequisites for a framework of returnee migrants services in the context of Bangladesh?
- What are the essential components of a returnee migrants services framework and which agencies can implement it?
- What would be the action plans for implementing a returnee migrants services framework in Bangladesh?
- What are the risks and opportunities in implementing the proposed returnee migrants services framework?

⁵ Interview with BMET officials and migration experts, 2018.

1.3 Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed method strategy that benefits from both quantitative and qualitative data. Major data sources consulted for this study are:

- Literature review;
- Field level surveys with 200 returnee households;
- Key informant interviews with 15 experts; and
- Expert meeting for validating initial findings.⁶

The next section of this chapter presents major themes covered in the literature. The survey was conducted with 200 returnee migrants⁷ and/or their families in four districts – Chattogram, Cumilla, Gazipur and Tangail – and relevant survey data are embedded throughout this paper. For each district, 50 returnees were chosen with a random sampling method. In order to ensure a gender-responsive methodology, one fourth of the survey respondents were women. Relevant findings from the survey are presented in chapter 3. While the surveys with returnee migrant households offered useful insights into the gaps in returnee services, the key informant interviews and the expert meeting generated useful ideas to address those gaps.

1.4 Literature Review

There is a growing body of literature on return migration, and the services for returnees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has come up with several principles and guidelines to protect and promote the human rights of returnees (OHCHR, 2014; OHCHR and Global Migration Group, 2017). More recently, ILO has commissioned several studies in the South Asian context (Rai, 2017; Kumar, 2018). Globally, IOM has been operating the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme for forty years, and there are more than 100 AVRR programmes in collaboration with both countries of origin and countries of destination. IOM works on dealing with both regular and irregular migrants (Fonseca et al., 2015). As a result, IOM has expertise and knowledge on returnee reintegration. IOM believes reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity (IOM, 2017a, 2017b).

⁶ The expert meeting was held on 1 April 2018 at the Wage Earners' Welfare Board conference room.

⁷ For the purpose of this study, a returnee is defined as a migrant worker, who has returned to Bangladesh after completing at least one year of contractual job obligations in a country of destination.



Table 1.1 Summary of major literature on reintegration services in the global context

Lead author(s)	Publisher/donor	Year of publication	Major themes
Van Schayk	IOM	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintegration of returnees with medical conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide psychosocial support; ○ Consider returnee migrant household as a unit; ○ Assist with medical care and welfare benefits; ○ Harmonize reintegration packages in countries of origin.
Fonseca et al.	IOM	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective approaches to reintegration; • Three dimensions of returnee reintegration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic reintegration; ○ Social reintegration; ○ Psychological reintegration.
Public Services International	ILO and the European Union	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return and reintegration of Filipino migrant health workers; • Prerequisites for successful reintegration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing returnees' aspirations and concerns; ○ Protection and promotion of migrants' rights; ○ Continuous assistance and counselling; ○ Access to employment, housing, health and education; ○ Recognition and utilization of returnees' skills.
IOM	IOM	2017a 2017b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of AVRR; • Returnee reintegration is linked to global human rights norms; • Reintegration is linked to several Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SDG Target 10.2: Social, economic and political inclusion of all; ○ SDG Target 10.7: Orderly, safe and regular migration; ○ SDG Target 17.7: Public, public-private and civil society partnership; ○ SDG Target 17.9: International support, especially North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation; • Integrated approach to reintegration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual level; ○ Community level; ○ Structural level.

Lead author(s)	Publisher/ donor	Year of publication	Major themes
Latek	European Parliamentary Research Service	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable return refers to absence of re-emigration and migrants' positive contribution to their communities in countries of origin; • Components of sustainable return: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic integration; o Social integration; o Social and psychological counselling; • IOM is a main actor in facilitating returnee reintegration through its AVRR programme; • Reintegration from the perspective of countries of destination.
OHCHR	OHCHR	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends three principles focusing on human rights, non-discrimination, and assistance and protection; • Offers guidelines for States including promotion and protection of human rights, building human rights capacity, immediate assistance, identification and referral, forced return and so on.
OHCHR	OHCHR and Global Migration Group	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and guidelines for States to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Comply with migrants' human rights during pre- and post-return stages; o Make legal and administrative policies to address the needs of returnees.
Rai	ILO	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of reintegration of returnees into national labour market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Lack of awareness about skills recognition, no differentiation in skills of returnee migrants, challenges in retaining returnee migrants, returnee migrants found to be more mobile, no demand data from employers.
Kumar	ILO	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges of reintegration of Indian returnees in construction sector of India: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No difference in employment, wage and work condition during pre-, and post-migration periods; preference for casual labour, employment through informal networks of contractors, family and co-workers; o Minimal role of government in supporting economic reintegration; o Desire for remigration due to uncertainty after return.

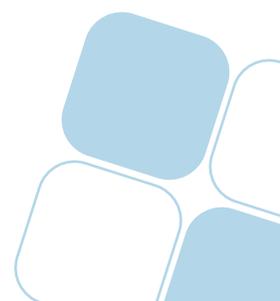
For the purpose of this study, the researchers identified two broad categories of literature on reintegration: one focuses on the global context, and the other on Bangladesh. The global literature (Table 1.1) shows the importance of returnee reintegration as a critical component of migration governance (Van Schayk, 2014). It also shows that reintegration can take three dimensions – economic, social, and psychological – and can be executed at three levels: individual, community and structural (Fonseca, et al., 2015). Others such as Latek (2017), who focused on the European Union host country concerns, have emphasized sustainability to ensure that returnees do not search for re-emigration and can make meaningful contributions to their home country. IOM (2017a) takes reintegration as a complex and multidimensional process which requires a need-based and holistic approach. For IOM, a sustainable reintegration can be facilitated through: individual assistance targeting the specific needs of returning migrants and households; community-based support to foster a participatory approach where families and communities are involved and their specific needs and concerns addressed; and structural interventions aiming at improving the provision of essential services for returnees and non-migrant population alike, and promoting overall good governance in migration. It also recommends a strong component of monitoring and evaluation for evidence-based policy and action as well as complementarity and collaboration between different actors (IOM, 2017a, 2017b).

In the context of Bangladesh, the major concern is what steps should be taken to develop a process of economic and social reintegration of returnees and how to address the needs of those seeking remigration (Table 1.2). Siddiqui and Abrar (2002) find a mismatch between returnees’ skills acquired in countries of destination and their post-return employment status, which is also evident in India and Nepal (Rai, 2017; Kumar, 2018). Although the study by Islam (2010) focuses on economic reintegration, it also refers to remigration as a potential thrust for Bangladeshi returnee migrants, a trend that was also observed by Siddiqui and Abrar (2002). This is in contrast to the European Union, which considers remigration to impede sustainable return and reintegration (Latek, 2017). With border enforcement and immigration policies in the industrialized countries increasingly becoming more restricted, return and reintegration is likely to draw more attention from academics and practitioners (IOM, 2015: 15).

Table 1.2 Summary of major literature on reintegration services in the context of Bangladesh

Lead author(s)	Publisher/donor	Year of publication	Major themes
Siddiqui and Abrar	IOM	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of returnee migrants in Bangladesh; • Returnees bring remittances, assets and skills; • Challenges to returnee reintegration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A large number of returnees engage in occupations that are irrelevant to the skills they acquired in countries of destination; ○ Returnee migrants lack confidence in law and order situation, and report inadequate business information and access to credit and technical assistance.

Lead author(s)	Publisher/ donor	Year of publication	Major themes
Kibria	Working Paper	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typology of migrant workers' return: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voluntary return; ○ Returning under duress: escape from abuse, returning due to illness, returned by employer, returning in anticipation of deportation; ○ Returned by the State: deportation.
Islam	ILO	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILO has existing programme on returnee reintegration; • Successful reintegration requires information on migrants especially on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Returnees' socioeconomic profile; ○ Patterns and use of remittances; ○ Counselling or financial assistance; • Important steps in returnee reintegration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Liaison with investment opportunities; ○ Access to bank loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); ○ Community-based training on cooperative basis to returnee women migrants; ○ Arrangement of remigration; ○ Basic training on employable trades; ○ Assistance in projects such as ICT, real estate.
Siddiqui and Bhuiyan	RSIS	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premature return and loss of work opportunity make it difficult for returnees to repay the loans used to finance the migration; • More than 90% of returnees from Libyan War aspired to remigrate; • Nearly 10% of returnees already started the process of remigration.



1.5 Best Practices in Returnee Services

Among countries in the Global South, the Philippines has a fairly strong return and reintegration service system for the migrants (Public Services International, 2015). The National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers provides a range of services related to psychological and financial needs assessment, psychosocial counselling and medical treatment, as well as support for economic and social integration. Under the office of the President of the Philippines, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) has developed a reintegration programme for returning overseas migrants by assisting them to attain financial stability through training and investment, and enabling them to utilize and transfer the skills they learned abroad upon their return (CFO, 2015: 21). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the Ministry of Labour, and the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers provide a wide range of support to implement reintegration of returnee migrants. They carry out these in collaboration with civil society, the private sector and donor agencies (Bachtiar and Prasetyo, 2017).

Among the South Asian States, India has long explored tapping the resources of diasporas and returnee migrants. This is evident in the emergence of a booming information technology sector in Bangalore and a thriving real estate sector in Hyderabad (Islam, 2010: 13–14). A study also shows that 80 per cent of Nepali migrants have successfully developed entrepreneurship after their return from the Republic of Korea (My Republica, 2015). Pakistan has set up a reintegration centre, and instituted special funds and loan schemes for promoting economic integration of returnees (Islam, 2010: 14). The Government of Sri Lanka has also initiated projects to promote housing schemes and welfare of migrants (Islam, 2010: 14). The Sri Lankan migrants received various psychological, economic and social assistance while they were taken back by IOM under its AVRR project during 2014–2016 (IOM, 2015). A National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant workers has already been endorsed by the Government of Sri Lanka to cover the economic, social and psychosocial needs of the returning migrant workers and their families.

Given the fact that migrants experience a wide variety of circumstances in countries of destination and choose to return for a number of reasons – including war in country of destination, family reunification, deportation, completion of employment tenure, experience of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking – reintegration processes need to take those issues into consideration. It is in this context that IOM and the Government of Japan have collaborated in developing a returnee reintegration programme in Ghana for those who needed to be repatriated from war-torn Libya (IOM, 2014). Several AVRR programmes of IOM have also made efforts to address the needs of irregular migrants returning from the European Union.

1.6 Structure of the Paper

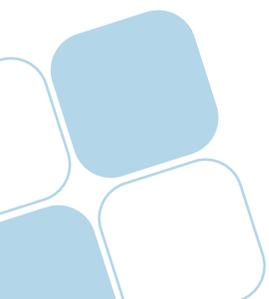
This paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the prerequisites for implementing a framework of services for returnee migrants. Chapter 3 has two sections: the first discusses psychological, economic, and social components of a sustainable framework for returnee services; and the second provides a mapping of the key agencies and ministries responsible for implementing the returnee services framework. Chapter 4 develops an action plan for the returnee services. The concluding chapter discusses the risks and opportunities in implementing the proposed framework of services for the returnee migrants.

CHAPTER

02

PREREQUISITES FOR IMPLEMENTING A FRAMEWORK OF SERVICES FOR RETURNEE MIGRANTS

This chapter suggests 11 pre-requisites for adopting a framework of services for the reintegration and remigration of returnee migrants in Bangladesh. It shows that these pre-requisites are well aligned with the migration laws & policies of Bangladesh.



Implementing a framework of services for the returnee migrants requires a well-grounded governance system (Islam, 2010; IOM, 2017a, 2017b). IOM proposes that a sustainable reintegration framework should be implemented across individual, community and structural levels (IOM, 2017a). In line with the approach, various government and private sector entities, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral development partners and intergovernmental organizations, who will provide the services for returnee migrants in Bangladesh, should design programmes and plans through individual assistance, community-based support and structural interventions. Against this backdrop this chapter identifies several prerequisites, starting from the legal and policy basis and coordination mechanism to creating a returnee database, data on return migration for needs assessment, and a labour market information system. The roles and responsibility of the private sector, and the bilateral and multilateral development partners, are duly recognized in the funding and capacity-building of key actors. The importance of developing a monitoring and evaluation system is also emphasized.

2.1 Adopting a Legal and Policy Basis

Among the major legal and policy documents governing labour migration in Bangladesh, the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, and the Wage Earners Welfare Fund Rules 2002 have defined the need for addressing the concerns of returnee migrants, especially the poor, distressed and women migrants, and those requiring legal aid and return supports (Table 2.1). The Overseas Employment Policy 2016 has not only emphasized the need for social and economic reintegration, but also called for tapping diaspora resources. The policy has also identified the roles of concerned government ministries and agencies in promoting services for the returnees. The Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) has also emphasized linking the diaspora with national development (GED, 2015: 211). In addition to the existing laws and policies, the proposed Wage Earner's Welfare Board Act 2017 has included the issue of social and economic reintegration of returnees (MoEWOE, 2017).

Although existing laws and policies define the reintegration needs of the returnees, they do not offer any detailed guidelines about various components of a reintegration strategy, the types of reintegration services to be offered, and what role concerned stakeholders can play in implementing a framework of services for returnee migrants. Expert opinion suggests that the existing legal and policy regime can be a starting point for developing a framework for returnee migrant services. However, in the meantime, there should be efforts to amend these laws and policies as an interim effort to include a service package for the returnees, as proposed in this framework. As a long-term measure, the Government of Bangladesh should work with the private sector, civil society and development partners to adopt a separate law and policy for returnee migrants which would complement existing migration laws and policies, including the draft welfare law for the migrants.⁸ Meanwhile, however, there should be efforts to amend these laws and policies as an interim effort to include minimum economic, social, health and psychological services for the returnees. For migration experts, adopting a separate law or amending existing laws will create a strong legal basis for providing a wide range of services to the returnee migrant workers.

⁸ Expert Meeting on Framework of Services for Returnee Migrants' Reintegration and Remigration, held on 1 April 2018 at the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, Dhaka, Bangladesh.



Table 2.1 Returnee migrants in legal and policy documents of Bangladesh

Legal and policy document	Relevant provisions/ chapter	Major themes
Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013	Article 2.1 Article 19 (3) Article 27 Article 28 Article 29 Article 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of “migrant worker”, includes not only those planning for migration or currently employed in a foreign country, but also those who have returned; • A computerized database be established for the purpose of recruitment of migrant workers; • Legal aid for the victims of fraud; • Right to civil suit for compensation; • Right to return home for those who are detained, stranded or in distress conditions; • Financial and welfare programmes for the migrants and their families.
Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016	1.5 1.8.5 1.8.6 2.3.9 2.5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of the poor and distressed returnee migrants; • Involvement of trade unions, private recruitment agencies and civil society organizations in integrating returnee migrants into development activities at the district and local levels; • Interministerial cooperation and coordination for promoting the welfare services of the migrant workers and their social rehabilitation or integration; • Action plan for the rehabilitation and integration of poor and distressed returnee migrants; • Establishing contacts with Bangladeshi diaspora for the utilization of their technological expertise and expert knowledge.
Wage Earners’ Welfare Fund Rules 2002	6 (c) 7 (h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare support for the migrants and their families; • Adoption of projects and financing in information centres, hospital, housing and employment of migrant workers.
Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016-2020)	2.6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of Bangladeshi diaspora in national development; • Rehabilitation loans for the migrants in destitute and vulnerable conditions.
Wage Earners’ Welfare Board Act 2017 (Proposed)	9 (f) 9 (m) 9 (n) 9 (o) 9 (t) 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding support for the welfare of migrants or their dependents; • Repatriation of deceased migrant workers’ bodies and financial support for their families; • Repatriation of migrant workers with illness, injury or disabilities, and giving them medical support; • Financial grants for the deceased migrant workers’ families; • Adoption of projects for the social and economic rehabilitation and reintegration of returnee migrants; • Addressing welfare needs of women migrants.

2.2 Forming a Coordination Mechanism

Experts and practitioners consulted for this study identify returnee reintegration and remigration as distinct areas of intervention and stress the need to form a coordination committee to pursue this matter. As an interim arrangement, the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) can review the proposed framework of services for returnee migrant workers and examine whether it can be part of a broader welfare policy for the migrant workers. WEWB can form a coordination committee with representatives from the Government of Bangladesh, civil society organizations (CSOs), intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector. Delegates from the public and private financial institutions need to be included as well. The coordinating committee should work on synchronizing the activities of various implementing organizations and concerned ministries to be involved in providing services for returnee migrants.⁹ It is suggested that through a series of meetings with various stakeholders and institutions – such as concerned ministries, private sector entities and CSOs – the coordination committee can facilitate the implementation of the proposed reintegration and remigration framework presented in this paper. If needed, is also suggested that the committee draft necessary legal provisions, which will eventually need to be presented for inter-ministerial consultations and coordination for inclusion of the reintegration provision within the law.¹⁰

The proposed coordinating committee at WEWB, responsible for monitoring the returnee reintegration framework, may report to and work in collaboration with two apex coordination bodies – the National Steering Committee and the National Labour Migration Forum – both of which are to be established as per article 2.6.8 of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 (MoEWOE, 2016).¹¹ Both of these committees are aimed at bringing good governance to the migration sector.

2.3 Developing a Returnee Registration Database

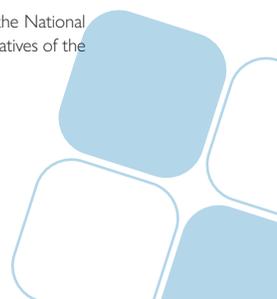
Currently, there is no systematic data collection on the number of returnee migrants, the skills they acquire in countries of destination, and their post return career plans. A realistic framework of services for returnee migrants must begin with detecting migrants upon return and bringing them under a user-friendly registration system (Islam, 2010). Detection can be done by the immigration officer with support from the migrant welfare desk at the international airports in Bangladesh. Immigration officers are required to receive special training by MoEWOE to detect returnee migrant workers.¹² In fact, the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 clearly notes that the immigration check posts, managed by the Special Branch of Bangladesh Police, may share information on returnee migrants with concerned agencies (MoEWOE, 2016: Annex 2). This would require migrants to either swipe the “smart card” issued by BMET to all registered migrants or use the passport number, which is linked to the smart card. In the next stage, the welfare desks at airports, Union Digital Centres (UDCs), District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOS) and Technical Training Centres (TTCs) can facilitate the registration. Furthermore, a mobile application can be developed by WEWB for returnees to do

⁹ See section 3.2 for a comprehensive list of various State, private sector and civil society actors.

¹⁰ Interministerial consultations and coordination are a standard policymaking and lawmaking practice in Bangladesh.

¹¹ According to the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, the National Steering Committee is to be chaired by the Prime Minister, and the National Labour Migration Forum is to be chaired by the MoEWOE Minister. Concerned ministers and secretaries are members of the Steering Committee, and representatives of the private sector and civil society are members of the Migration Forum.

¹² In the context of Bangladesh, immigration control services are provided by the Special Branch of Bangladesh Police.



self-registration, using a unique identifier such as passport number, national identity number or smart card info. This would allow returnees who have lost their smart cards or who failed to register their return at the airport immigration desks to enrol themselves for the returnee services package. The registration process can be overseen by BMET and WEWB, in collaboration with the Special Branch of the Bangladesh Police, which manages the immigration desks at international airports.

2.4 Vulnerability, Assets and Needs Assessment of Returnees

Almost all the legal and policy documents on labour migration have prioritized addressing the needs of vulnerable, destitute and distressed migrants (Table 2.1).¹³ Hence, data on the returnee migrants' vulnerabilities, assets, needs and skills should be assessed. The identification of this vulnerable returnee migrant workers can be done by the DEMOs and CSOs in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children, and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. A standard template for vulnerability, assets and needs assessment can be developed which will be accessible online. DEMOs would use this information to assess the psychosocial and economic status of the returnees concerned.¹⁴ Emphasis should be given to gender-sensitive assessment for women returnees. The aim is to understand the psychological, health, skills, knowledge and financial capacity of the migrants to be involved in the reintegration process.

Assessment should incorporate adequate sensitivities for those returned migrants who have experienced trauma due to torture and exploitation. Other returnees may only require assets, liabilities and skills assessment. IOM's mapping and scoping study on services for migrant workers in Bangladesh (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018) and the study on returned migrants following the Andaman Sea crisis (Connell, 2017) found that lack of capital and insurance discourages migrants from setting up businesses and hence many returnees invest money to remigrate or to facilitate the migration of their family members. The anxiety associated with debt was found to be a major obstacle to returnees' ability and willingness to reintegrate. The debt-related anxiety was also found to be a major contributor to desperate decisions such as migration attempt through irregular channels (Connell, 2017). In addition, there is social stigma in situations where the return is seen as a failed migration attempt. In light of the above discussions, the vulnerability, assets and needs assessment will try to address all three forms of need – social, psychological and economic – to ensure sustainable reintegration of returnees.

¹³ The list of vulnerable, destitute and distressed migrants includes those in extreme poverty or who have serious illness and injuries, and experienced human rights abuses in countries of destination.

¹⁴ Since UDCs have a much larger presence than DEMOs, UDCs can provide referral services to returnees, encouraging them to contact DEMOs for vulnerability, assets and needs assessment.

2.5 Labour Market Information System

Currently there is no comprehensive labour market information system (LMIS) in the country.¹⁴ It can be established by MoEWOE and hosted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning's General Economic Division and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. BMET can provide useful support to update the LMIS. The Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) should provide useful information on types of available employment opportunities, visa availability, skills requirements and cost of migration, etc., to update the LMIS. ILO has already taken an initiative to develop a comprehensive LMIS that will include a module on returnee migrants. It has also undertaken measures to establish an integrated Migrant Worker Information Management System (MWIMS) to be administered by the Government of Bangladesh and to be used by all stakeholders.¹⁶ Once established, the returnee migrants' database can be used for successful implementation of the returnee reintegration and remigration framework.

2.6 Public–Private Partnerships

Participants at the expert meeting agreed on the need for public–private partnerships to promote economic reintegration initiatives.¹⁷ Such partnerships would aim at giving skills training, loans or seed funding, financial literacy training, and job placement opportunities to returnees.¹⁸ While conducting a study on mapping and scoping of services for migrants from Bangladesh, the researchers learned that neither the public nor the private banks offered any special loans or matching grant facilities for returnees to set up their own businesses (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). The State-run and migration-focused Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB) offers a small-scale loan for returnee rehabilitation and reintegration. Bangladesh Bank can issue a circular or guidance to public and private banks for developing special deposit and loan schemes targeting the returnees.

DEMOs and UDCs may collect and share the employer database through their contacts with the local business and industrial communities. Online job portals such as bdjobs.com may have separate tabs for returnee migrants, who will look for potential employers from these sources. Job matching or job placement services can also be provided by establishing one-stop centres or strengthening the existing Migrant Resource Centres and Returnee Service Centres at the local level.¹⁹ Also, this would be an opportunity to partner with organizations that offer these services or similar services.

Men and women returnees may have sharply different career plans; hence, efforts should be taken to ensure returnees' prior skills, career plans and market demands are well aligned. It is also important to offer returnee migrant workers financial literacy training so that they are aware of various types of loan provisions and the terms and conditions attached to loans, and the means to avoid predatory loan providers (Connell, 2017). This will be important especially for those who may decide to be entrepreneurs or take loans from the proposed loan scheme. Financial literacy should comprise a part of the skills training for returnees.

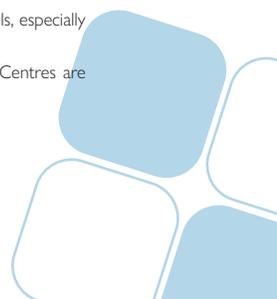
¹⁵ Article 2.6.12 of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 calls for the creation of an LMIS.

¹⁶ Both projects on LMIS and MWIMS databases are implemented by ILO, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, SDC and IOM.

¹⁷ The Expert Meeting on Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration, the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 has repeatedly emphasized the need for public–private partnerships in promoting safe labour migration from Bangladesh.

¹⁸ During a regional workshop in Sylhet, the ILO Dhaka Office found that the Sylhet business community was keen to recruit returnee migrants with certain skills, especially in the construction and restaurant sectors. This view was shared by a senior ILO official in Dhaka in April 2018.

¹⁹ Currently, several District Employment and Manpower Offices in Bangladesh have Migrant Resource Centres, established by IOM. The Returnee Service Centres are managed by BRAC, leading NGO.



2.7 Funding for Returnee Reintegration Schemes

As per the provisions of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund Rules 2002 (articles 6 (c) and 7 (h)), funds for returnee reintegration may be generated from WEWB. This can be done by allocating a portion of the service fee charged to migrants prior to their departure. In addition, a portion of the welfare fund managed by WEWB may be invested in the capital market or as fixed deposits in commercial banks to utilize the interest for returnee reintegration purposes.²⁰ Such investment decisions would require predicting and assessing the volatility in the capital and financial markets. Civil society representatives stress that returnees whose contracts and terms are violated at countries of destination can be compensated from the welfare fund. Most of the experts consulted for this study opine that PKB can allocate up to 25 per cent of funds for reintegration purposes. PKB may adopt a four-year master plan, in which annual disbursement of reintegration funds are gradually increased, from 10 per cent of total loans in the first year, to 15 per cent of total loans in the second year, to 20 per cent of total loans in the third year, and finally to 25 per cent of total loans in the fourth year. Commercial banks need to be encouraged to invest in returnee reintegration schemes.²¹

2.8 Capacity-Building of Implementing Agencies

At present, no government agency is devoted to the reintegration of returnees. CSO activities are also geographically limited, as they lack operations in the north-western, north-eastern, and south-eastern areas of Bangladesh. Officials from various government agencies and CSOs need sensitization and capacity-building in returnee migrants' reintegration and remigration framework. There is also a need to develop human resources and infrastructures of the implementing agencies. Multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies and development partners are ideally suited to provide funding and technical support for capacity-building of implementing actors (Islam, 2010: 27–34). This can start with providing training of trainers to a selected group of participants from the Wage Earners Welfare Board, private business associations and CSOs. Subsequent efforts should target on-the-job training, funding and technical support to start a few pilot projects on reintegration programmes and develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for ensuring smooth functioning of the reintegration projects.

²⁰ This was proposed by a few participants during the Expert Meeting on Framework of Services for Returnee Migrants' Reintegration and Remigration, held on 1 April 2018 at the Wage Earners' Welfare Board Conference Room.

²¹ Delegates from the private bank and Probashi Kallyan Bank strongly suggested this view. The Government of Bangladesh and CSO delegates attending the expert meeting also agreed.

2.9 Developing Skills Recognition and Certification Mechanisms

The study on the mapping and scoping of services for migrants found that, since 2013, the Ministry of Education introduced the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme to recognize the skills and knowledge acquired and provide enhanced pathways into further education and training (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). Under the RPL programme, the Government of Bangladesh has permitted a number of registered training organizations – such as TTCs, Technical Schools and Colleges, private institutes and NGO-run training facilities – to recognize the prior learning of workers through a certification (Interview with BMET officials, 2018). By 2017, about 20,000 people had received RPL certificates from various training organizations issued by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board. There is, however, no systematic data on how many Bangladeshis are employed at home and abroad with the RPL/ skill certificates. BMET and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board can conduct a mapping of existing vocational and training institutions offering skills training and RPL certificates. This is important to link skills training with returnees.

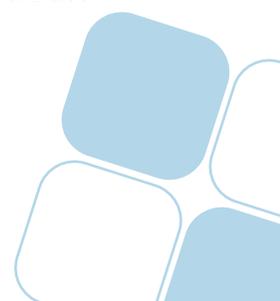
2.10 Supporting Sustainable Self-Employment Schemes

WEWB, in collaboration with PKB, would support sustainable self-employment schemes, already offered by PKB. It would require human resources recruitment, such as managers or business development advisors, with responsibilities of monitoring and offering guidance. Local business chambers can organize bimonthly meetings to stimulate returnees' interests in self-employment through entrepreneurship development. This can provide an opportunity to leverage the skills of local entrepreneurs with similar backgrounds and expertise to share their knowledge and experiences with returnees. Local business chambers should take the prime responsibility in this regard.

2.11 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

There is a need to establish a monitoring and evaluation system to assess how various actors implement the framework of reintegration and remigration services for returnee migrant workers, and to examine the strengths and gaps in service delivery from the perspective of recipients. Monitoring can be done at the programme implementation and beneficiary levels. Monitoring and evaluation should “assess effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, sustainability, and coherence” of reintegration assistant programmes (IOM, 2017a:14).

Participants in this study recommend that the WEWB would be the designated lead MOEWOE agency for implementing and monitoring reintegration and remigration services for returnee migrants. As the lead agency, WEWB may have provisions for conducting evidence-based research to generate feedback from both the receiving communities and service providers to assess the overall impact of return migration and level of satisfaction among the individuals and communities about the services provided by various actors. Such research would generate useful data to develop evidence-based policies and programmes. Various implementing agencies, working on individual assistance, community-based support and structural interventions, should also carry out evidence-based research to assess their activities and to guide their future operations.



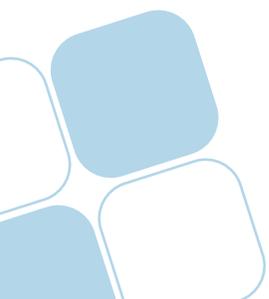
In summary, there is a legal and policy basis for developing a framework of services for the returnee migrants. Several steps need to be taken to adopt such a framework. These include legal amendments, forming a coordination mechanism, and introducing a returnee registration system. It should also include assessment of returnees' risks and potentials, and putting returnee information into a larger labour market information database. There should be clearly defined provisions for the funding of reintegration schemes and recognition of prior skills and learning. The role of public–private partnerships and engagement of the international development partners is critical in capacity building of concerned stakeholders. Finally, a monitoring and evaluation system should be put into place as a key step in adopting a returnee services framework.

CHAPTER

03

TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR RETURNEE MIGRANTS

This chapter discusses the key components of a sustainable framework for returnee migrants services and the key organizations responsible for implementing the returnee services framework.



3.1 Components of a Sustainable Framework of Services

Following the long-standing practices of member States of IOM (Van Schayk, 2014; Fonseca et al., 2015; IOM, 2017a), the proposed framework of services for returnee migrants in Bangladesh has three key components: psychosocial well-being, economic self-sufficiency and social stability. These are explained below.

3.1.1 Psychosocial well-being

Psychosocial well-being is a vital first step in a sustainable reintegration strategy (Islam, 2010; Public Services International, 2015). This is especially important for returnees who are often overwhelmed by feeling of shame, loss, failure, disorientation, anxiety, insecurity and stress, which will hinder the reintegration process. However, there is no mechanism to provide psychosocial counselling to migrants, including those who are vulnerable in Bangladesh. This study found that none of the 200 returnees who were surveyed took psychosocial counselling after their return. The study also found that there was no mechanism in Bangladesh to provide psychosocial counselling to those migrants who were away from home for quite a long period, or were detained or had chronic illness. There was also a lack of organized schemes for reintegration of women returnees who suffered serious problems with reintegrating back into society, or women who, despite having no negative experiences, faced stigma and distancing from their families.

Returnees in general and the distressed, and deported migrant workers in particular, need vulnerability assessment and appropriate counselling support. Returnees who need counselling services or medical treatment will be connected with the local and central hospitals for such services. The study found some NGOs created safe homes and migrant support centres to provide psychosocial services to men and women returnees who suffered physical abuse and exploitations. There is a need to collect data to assess the impact of these safe home and support centres. If the impacts are found to be positive, local and national NGOs can replicate and extend such services with support from international development partners, including bilateral donors, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies. However, these cannot be sustainable in the long run unless the local hospitals and other health-care providers are linked with the returnee services framework. DEMOs can develop a referral network with the hospitals and health-care providers so that returnees in need of health and psychosocial support can be directly sent to these medical facilities after needs assessment.

3.1.2 Economic reintegration and remigration

When returnee migrants are able to fulfil their psychosocial needs, they can concentrate on economic activities to support their sustainable reintegration (Fonseca et al., 2015). Returnees interviewed for this study on mapping and scoping of services for Bangladeshi migrant workers expressed that they thought about business, services and remigration after return (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). Of the 200 returnees surveyed for this study in Chattogram, Cumilla, Gazipur, and Tangail districts, 35.5 per cent had plans to do some local businesses, while 11.5 per cent thought about finding employment in the country. In contrast, 41 per cent returnees reported that they would like to pursue remigration as a career option.²² The survey findings clearly indicate that nearly

²² As mentioned before, an earlier study by Siddiqui and Abrar (2002) found that more than 90 per cent of returnees in Bangladesh wished to pursue remigration.



half of the returnees (47%) wish to opt for economic reintegration via business or salaried employment paths. Many returnee migrants are disillusioned by the lack of available reintegration services in Bangladesh. Data from the same survey reveal that more than 50 per cent of migrants reported that they could not materialize their plans due to lack of money, support and facilities. An even larger segment of the returnees, 90.5 per cent, reported that they had no opportunities to use skills acquired in countries of destination after returning home. Again, 91 per cent of migrants received no support in this regard, while others mentioned assistance from neighbours and informal service providers towards remigration.²³

As for the support system for business ventures, only 18 per cent of returnees claimed they opened businesses with their own initiatives. Although the private banks offer loans for SMEs, the process of paperwork for SME loan disbursement is perceived to be complicated, and thus become a barrier for returnees to access such loans. On top of that, PKB has limited reintegration and rehabilitation loans—less than 5 per cent of total loans—available for returnees. Among CSOs, BRAC facilitates returnee migrants in utilizing skills to establish income-generating activities and SMEs such as poultry, hatchery and small grocery stores, which are operated in only a few districts. The scope of reintegration is more limited for women returnees, most of whom are found unemployed due to cultural factors influencing women's ability to reintegrate, lack of information on available services, and insufficient skills matching and training facilities.

This framework of services for returnee migrant workers proposes that creating jobs in local communities, business cooperatives, skills recognition and certification, and offering placement support can ensure local employment of returnees. It also proposes developing a one-stop service centre, employment service centre or strengthening the existing migrant resources centres to provide placement and career counselling for returnees. Entrepreneurship development requires migrants to receive skills training and funding support to start new business ventures. For returnees opting for remigration, ensuring safe migration practices and preparing them for safe return to the country of origin would constitute an important component of remigration strategy. Private business firms can be encouraged to consider allocating a portion of their job opportunities for returnee migrants. Public–private partnerships for skills matching and savings use is necessary for successful implementation of returnee reintegration. This would include skills training and job placement after completion of training, and organizing job fairs. Banks and other financial institutions should consider providing a wide range of services, such as financial literacy training, effective remittance management, business development and business marketing. They should also allocate financial grants to start small enterprises by returnees. As stated before, this would require a policy change from the Government of Bangladesh to be effective, and Bangladesh Bank is the statutory body to issue an official directive to initiate such a policy change.²⁴ CSOs should refer returnees to TTCs for recognition of skills, access to information and job placement of returnees at home and abroad. TTCs could receive information on labour market and adapt training courses on skills that are in demand in the labour market.

²³ Findings from another study by IOM provide useful insights into the aspirations and intentions of migrants who travelled to South-East Asia through irregular channels in the Andaman Sea (Connell, 2017). The study finds that, among 2,290 returnees an overwhelming majority of 73 per cent would like to try for employment within Bangladesh, and a significant minority of 24, per cent would like to remigrate (Connell, 2017: 23). Most of these returnees were more interested in businesses and entrepreneurial ventures than education and skills training.

²⁴ A representative from the commercial bank during the expert meeting for this project shared this view, and a former senior official of PKB supported this. Other delegates from the public and private sectors and civil society strongly supported this.

3.1.3 Social reintegration

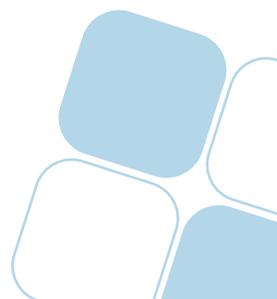
Social reintegration would allow a returnee to resettle in the country of origin. It involves creating peer groups among returnees that can provide a ready-made community or quasi-formal support networks or contact points for new returnees or connecting returnees to community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop their social network (Fonseca et al., 2015; IOM, 2017a, 2017b). Social reintegration is important for making sure that returnees have access to basic social services. It requires providing counselling services to the families of returnees to overcome the complex psychological dilemmas and traumas caused by the absence of the migrant family members. The mapping and scoping study finds that some NGOs – such as BRAC, the Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants (WARBE) and the Ovbashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) – work towards creating an enabling environment for the economic and social reintegration of returnees. They also facilitate socioeconomic reintegration of migrant workers, their families and returnee migrants.²⁵ Through support groups, forums and volunteers at community levels, they help returnee migrants and their families through peer counselling. NGOs such as WARBE bring returnees and family members together to form CBOs, which aim to organize collective strength, claim rights and access services. These groups act as self-help groups at the grass-roots level and work as an organized platform for the welfare of the migrants' community. The peer groups and CBOs of returnees may also create knowledge-sharing mechanisms to learn about how to deal with debt bondage and where to seek mediation services for the victims of fraudulence.

Although there are visible impacts of CSO services, due to resource constraints, CSOs can cover only a fraction of the migrant community (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). The study found that CSO activities regarding reintegration were mostly donor-driven and often not self-sustaining. Many CBOs do not have microcredit loan schemes to run the projects irrespective of their ability to generate funds from donor agencies. The framework, therefore, proposes concerted and targeted activities for social reintegration of all returnees who want to stay home.

3.2 Implementing Organizations

An effective framework for returnee migrants' reintegration and remigration requires concerted efforts of various actors in the Government, the private sector, host communities and CSOs and international development partners. Drawing on a review of open source literature and expert opinion, this paper has generated a list of key institutions and actors that are well positioned to implement various components of a sustainable strategy for returnee migrants' services.

²⁵ Rashid and Ashraf, 2018.



3.2.1 Government

The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) would be the lead ministry to collaborate with and implement the proposed reintegration and remigration programme. At the implementation level, each of the three components of returnee services – psychosocial well-being, economic self-sufficiency and social stability – will require close collaboration among the following institutions:

- BMET
- WEWB
- PKB
- DEMO
- TTCs
- Department of Youth Development (DoYD)
- Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
- Department of Agricultural Extension

Each of the institutions and actors listed above has a comparative advantage in delivering returnee services, some of which are discussed throughout this paper, especially in chapter 4 on action plans. BMET has been the dominant actor in managing the migration process in Bangladesh and controlling the district level DEMOs and TTCs. In collaboration with the DEMOs, which operate under the authority of BMET, WEWB manages the delivery of welfare services to migrants and provides scholarships to migrants' dependents. WEWB also facilitates the return of deceased workers' bodies in collaboration with the labour attachés in Bangladeshi missions at abroad or destination country. DEMOs are vital actors in providing registration of migrants, a service that can be extended to returnees. TTCs are critical actors in skills training. DoYD has long-standing programmes for the youth, which can be replicated in managing services for young returnee migrants. The Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation offers loans and training for small enterprises, which can play an important role in economic reintegration. A large majority of returnees originate from rural areas, where the Department of Agricultural Extension has an extensive field-level presence, and thus can support the returnees wishing to pursue careers either in agrobusiness or farming.

As the lead ministry for managing labour migration from Bangladesh, MoEWOE would be responsible for training officials from various Governments, the private sector and CSOs on various programmes and services designed for returnee migrants. However, successful implementation of the framework would require MoEWOE's regular and direct collaboration with other concerned ministries to coordinate skills training, job placement, self-employment projects, psychosocial support, welfare activities and women's issues. A list of concerned ministries would include but is not limited to the following:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
- Ministry of Commerce (MoC)
- Ministry of Education

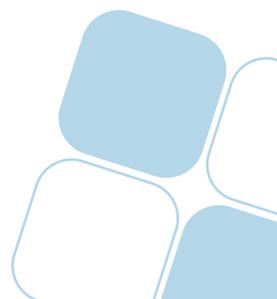
- Ministry of Industries
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)
- Ministry of Information Communication and Technology
- Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD)
- Ministry of Public Administration
- Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW)
- Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA)
- Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)

There are compelling reasons for including these peer ministries as implementing partners for returnee migrants' services. Under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Directorate General of Health Services can issue guidance to health-care facilities to address the health and psychosocial needs of returnees. The Ministry of Agriculture controls the Department of Agricultural Extension, and thus its policy level intervention is crucial. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism manages the airports and controls aviation related issues, and hence it is ideally suited to partner with MoEWOE to address the needs of returnees at their points of return to facilitate the detection and registration at airport welfare desks. As for employment generation, the roles of Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industries and Ministry of Labour and Employment are important. The Ministry of Education is the lead ministry for controlling the general and technical education boards, and thus it can implement, in collaboration with MoEWOE, policies for the skills training and skills certification of returnees. The operations of DoYD are controlled by MoYS, which can align its current programmes and projects to address the needs of both men and women returnees at the field level. As the numbers of women migrants are gradually increasing, MoWCA can play a vital role in addressing the needs of women returnees and their children. At the grass-roots level, LGRD has extensive control over the local government offices which can facilitate the registration of returnees. MoSW has many ongoing programmes for social inclusion of the poor and the vulnerable. MoSW can direct its concerned agencies to bring those returnees who have returned with disabilities and who live in poverty conditions.

3.2.2 Private sector

Any sustainable reintegration strategy would leverage on the strength of private sector in Bangladesh. As stated above, the private sector will come up with reintegration schemes for returnees, including job placement, training, and SME loans. Private businesses and banks may offer loans to women, including family of migrant workers. Initially, the following business associations may be involved:

- Bangladesh Association of Banks
- Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI)
- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
- Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)



- Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)
- Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI)
- Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB)

As a professional association of the private commercial banks in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Association of Banks can encourage its members to introduce deposit and loan products for returnees, and bring returnees under the corporate social responsibility schemes. FBCCI, BGMEA and BKMEA have many enlisted business firms, which can introduce policies for tapping the resources of skilled returnees and provide in-service training to returnee migrants. As a think tank of private chambers, BEF can collaborate with its member organizations to hold events and facilitate the employment and enterprise development of returnees. With more than 1,000 members, the association of real estate developers, REHAB, can play a significant role in employing the skilled returnee workers in various works related to building construction.

3.2.3 Non-governmental and civil society organizations

The study found that a number of national and international NGOs already provide services such as counselling, awareness training, service referral, and forming CBOs for reintegration purposes. They also provide pre-decision and pre-departure awareness for safe remigration. The Bangladesh Ovivashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA), BRAC, OKUP, RMMRU, Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS), WARBE Development Foundation and Manusher Jonno Foundation are pioneers among them. This list is not exhaustive, and these NGOs and intergovernmental organizations cover a limited geographic area on a pilot basis. There is a need to expand their geographical areas of coverage for the implementation of the reintegration and remigration framework. There is also a need for these NGOs and CSOs to work with local community to deliver services to returnee migrants.

Each of the NGOs and CSOs listed above has a distinct role in the migration sector of Bangladesh. WARBE has long prioritized the needs of returnee migrants and has several ongoing programmes, such as community-based reintegration of returnees. BOMSA works exclusively with women migrants, and thus can lend its gender expertise in implementing services for the women returnees. BRAC is the largest NGO and has a growing programme for migrants, and a pilot programme for the returnees in 10 districts. RMMRU is a leading migration-focused think tank with extensive field-level action research experience, including in both the migration-intensive districts and the areas affected by climate change. TMSS is a leading regional NGO in northern Bangladesh with strong expertise in developing community-level programmes, and can lend its expertise in social integration. Finally, Bangladesh has a rich tradition of partner NGOs at the local level, which can play an important role in detecting, registering and engaging the returnees in productive income-generating activities and helping them resettle in their chosen geographic areas upon return to Bangladesh.

3.2.4 Bilateral partners and international organizations

Bilateral development partners and international organizations, including multilateral and intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies, can become important partners in implementing the proposed framework of services for returnee migrants. Their roles may focus on providing support for capacity-building of the Government and CSOs to effectively implement projects for returnees. Such projects may include, among others, developing research, infrastructure, training and funding support.

Among the bilateral partners, the following can play an important role:

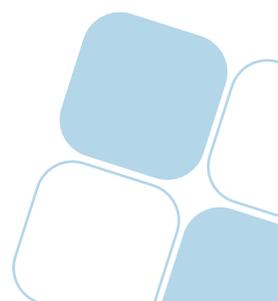
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Among the multilateral, intergovernmental and United Nations agencies, the following can play a vibrant role in returnee services:

- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- European Union
- IOM
- ILO
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- World Bank

There are strong rationals for including the bilateral and multilateral development partners in the returnee framework. SDC has long been a partner in supporting Bangladesh to develop its migration-related policies and programmes, especially under the Global Compact on Migration. As the United Kingdom and the United States are the largest host countries for Bangladeshi diasporas, DFID and USAID can play an important role for tapping diaspora resources in facilitating returnee migrants' services. ADB and the World Bank can expand their existing migration-focused activities to include support for returnee migrants.

Finally, the roles of IOM, ILO and UN Women are important. As stated before, IOM has long-standing expertise and experience in migration management especially with returnees in several major countries of origin. The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme is a testimony to this credential. It also previously worked with the Government of Bangladesh in facilitating the return of migrants, especially from fragile countries, with Libya being a prime example. It is also involved in supporting the humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. ILO has a long-standing priority of promoting the rights of labour migrants, including returnees (Islam, 2010). In South Asia, ILO has conducted research, developed programmes and supported policy formulation in the area of reintegration (Rai, 2017; Kumar, 2018). UN Women has long been operating in Bangladesh with the Government of Bangladesh and CSOs to promote good governance in labour migration. The independent and collective experience of IOM, ILO and UN Women can contribute to developing a robust regime for reintegration and remigration of returnee migrants.



As a major destination of irregular migrants, the European Union has recently shown huge interest in facilitating the reintegration of migrants, especially with irregular status in many European Union Member States (Latek, 2017). It has also initiated reintegration funds to support sustainable schemes for the returnees.

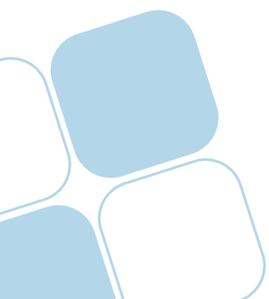
In a nutshell, the three components – psychosocial well-being, economic self-sufficiency and social stability – constitutes a comprehensive framework for returnee migrants' services. Implementing various task lists in each of these three components would require concerted efforts from the Government of Bangladesh, the private sector and CSO entities, with technical and funding support from bilateral and multilateral development partners. There is a need for collaboration between all entities and partners in implementing reintegration programmes. The WEWB may hold bimonthly or quarterly meetings to monitor inter-agency collaboration among various government ministries and agencies and private sector entities, CSOs and international agencies involved in implementing the framework of services for returnee migrant workers.

CHAPTER

04

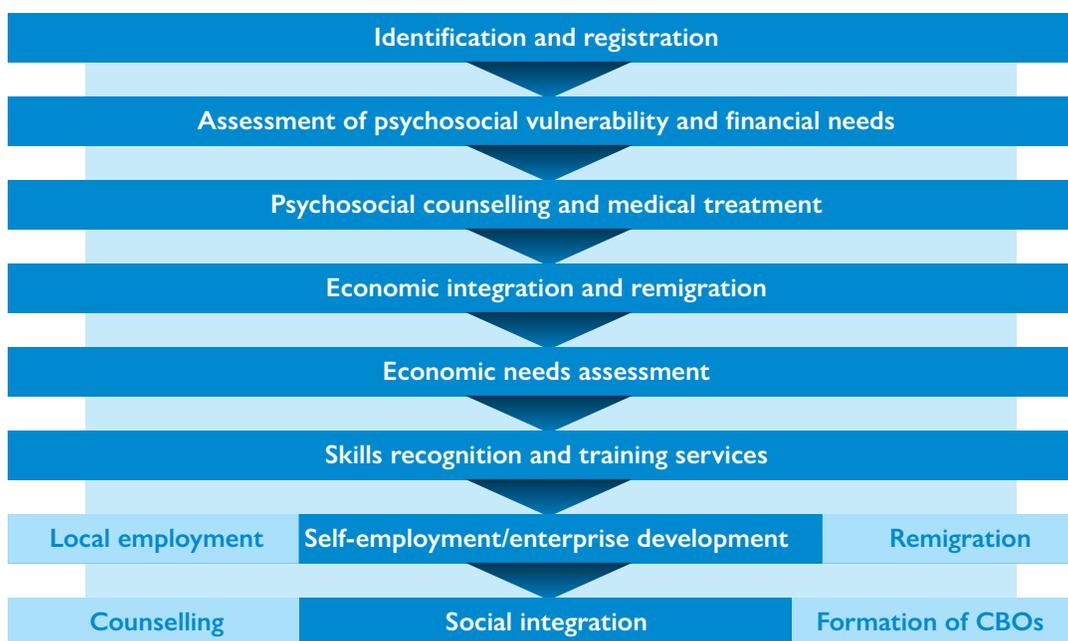
ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING RETURNEE MIGRANTS' SERVICES

This chapter presents an action plan for the implementation of the framework of services for returnee migrants. It shows three common steps for the returnees: identification and registration, assessment of psychosocial vulnerabilities and financial needs, and the provision of psychosocial counselling or medical treatment. Once these three steps are completed, a returnee will either opt for economic reintegration or remigration. Those pursuing reintegration will have two career paths: local employment or entrepreneurship. Social reintegration measures would be offered as per the needs of returnees. Returnees seeking to remigrate may not pursue social integration at the post-return stage. In closing, a matrix shows key actors, potential coordinators and concerned ministries responsible for the action plan.



A visual diagram (Figure 4.1) shows key steps in the proposed action plan for returnee services.

Figure 4.1 Action plan flow chart for implementation of returnee migrants’ services



Source: Authors

Note: Ideas for this action plan came from several sources, including: Siddiqui and Abrar, 2002; Ruben et al., 2009; Islam, 2010; Fonseca et al., 2015; IOM, 2017a, 2017b; and Rashid and Ashraf, 2018.

4.1 Identification and Registration

The returnees would first complete an online registration process in UDCs, DEMOs or TTCs. A mobile application may be created so that returnee migrants can do the registration by themselves. A unique identifier, such as National ID, is required to avoid multiple registration by the same person. The registration process and relevant data will be managed by WEWB. The immigration control police can support the identification and registration process by sharing their data on the arrival or return of a migrant, and doing this would require a data-sharing policy and a standard operating procedure to be agreed by MoEWOE and the Ministry of Home Affairs.²⁶ Local NGOs can also identify returnees and facilitate their registration with the UDCs, DEMOs and TTCs. The returnee registration website would be maintained by BMET. DEMO will use it for assessing needs of the returnees for reintegration purposes. As mentioned before, the identification of vulnerable returnee migrant workers can be done by the DEMOs and CSOs in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children, and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. A data-sharing platform can be developed to ensure that UDCs, DEMOs and TTCs, and immigration officials at airports have access to the returnee migrant database.

²⁶ Delegates from BAIRA, CSOs and WEWB attending the expert meeting for this study shared this view.

Currently, there is no mechanism of identification and registration of irregular migrants unless they are returned by the Government of Bangladesh. To include irregular migrants within reintegration and remigration framework, they can be provided with an opportunity to register at the Bangladeshi embassies/High Commissions in countries of destination and pay the requisite welfare fee like the regular migrants do in Bangladesh before their departure. While this may sound unrealistic, several CSO officials consider this a pragmatic option to extend the welfare services to irregular and undocumented migrants.

4.2 Assessment of Psychosocial Vulnerability and Needs

After the returnees are identified and registered, it is imperative to assess the state of their psychosocial health and financial needs. As stated before, this needs assessment would be done by DEMOs with the support from WEWB and BMET by interviewing returnees and assisting them to fill out a semi-structured questionnaire. Since women migrants, especially in the Gulf countries, operate in domestic caregiving services, where they have greater exposure to exploitative working conditions, their psychosocial needs require special attention for a gender-sensitive assessment. After an assessment of their psychosocial health, priority will be given to understand the financial needs of returnees as a first step to determine whether they wish to pursue economic reintegration or remigration. Victims of trafficking will also need special considerations for psychosocial assessment.

4.3 Psychological Counselling and Medical Treatment

Returnees who are found to be in need of psychosocial support will be referred to the hospital or reintegration support centres operated by NGOs for counselling and medical treatment. There should be a system in place to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of each returnee migrant with a medical need. Costs for psychosocial counselling and medical treatment would be covered by the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund managed by WEWB. Banks and private institutions, and international development partners, may provide supplementary funding support and capacity-building in this sector. Those returnees whose medical needs are well addressed should be directed to the next step on economic reintegration or remigration. At this stage, returnees would also be assisted in accessing existing complaint mechanisms to find redress against psychological stress and financial burden incurred during migration. If necessary, returnees would be provided with psychosocial counselling services. At this stage, if it is found that psychological stresses are caused by returnees' debt burdens, they should be referred to local NGOs and community-based organizations to find a way to relieve their debt or to renegotiate the terms of loans and interests. Such community-level interventions in negotiating debt burdens need to be done in a transparent way so that no unintended impacts on community relationship occur.

4.4 Economic Integration

As stated before, economic integration can take two alternative paths: wage employment and entrepreneurship. These two paths of economic reintegration are described below.

4.4.1 Economic Needs Assessment

At this stage, DEMOs can conduct an assessment with registered returnees to further identify their existing skills, training needs and recognition of prior learning of skills. On the basis of the data collected from such a needs assessment, DEMOs will refer returnees to various district and local-level agencies such as the TTCs, Agriculture Office, Livestock Office, Chamber of Commerce and Youth Development Centres. While the TTCs will only provide further skills training and assist returnees in securing certification of prior skills, the other agencies will provide both specialized training and loans for self-employment or entrepreneurship.

Figure 4.2 Job-centric economic reintegration

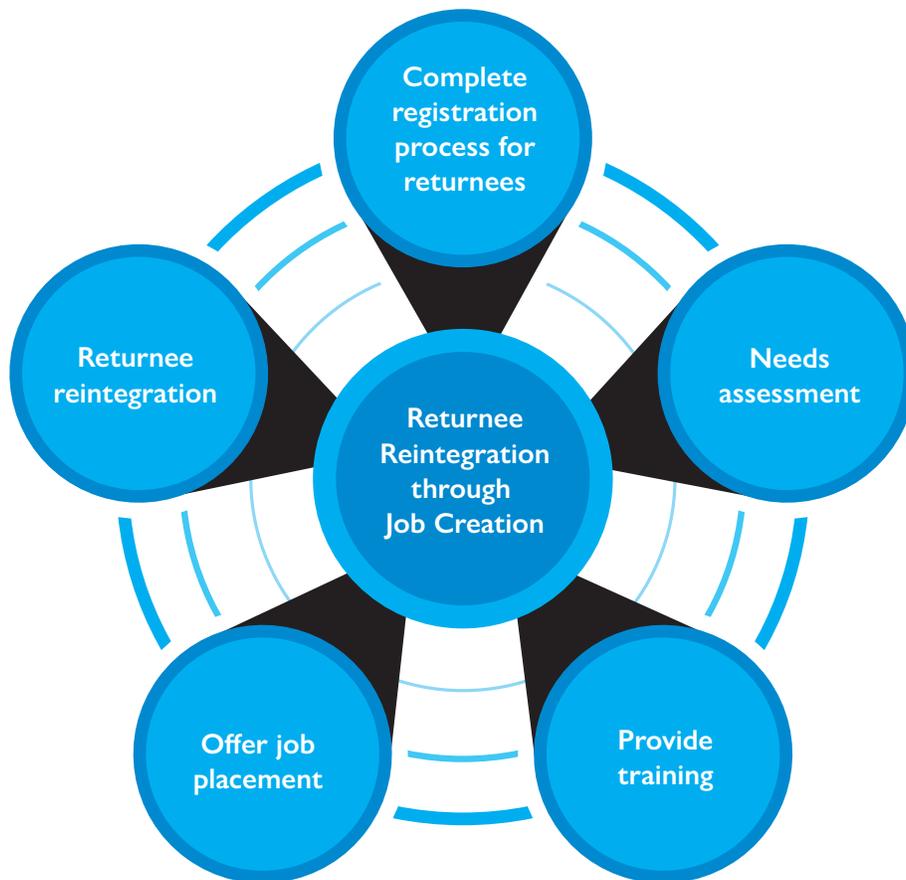
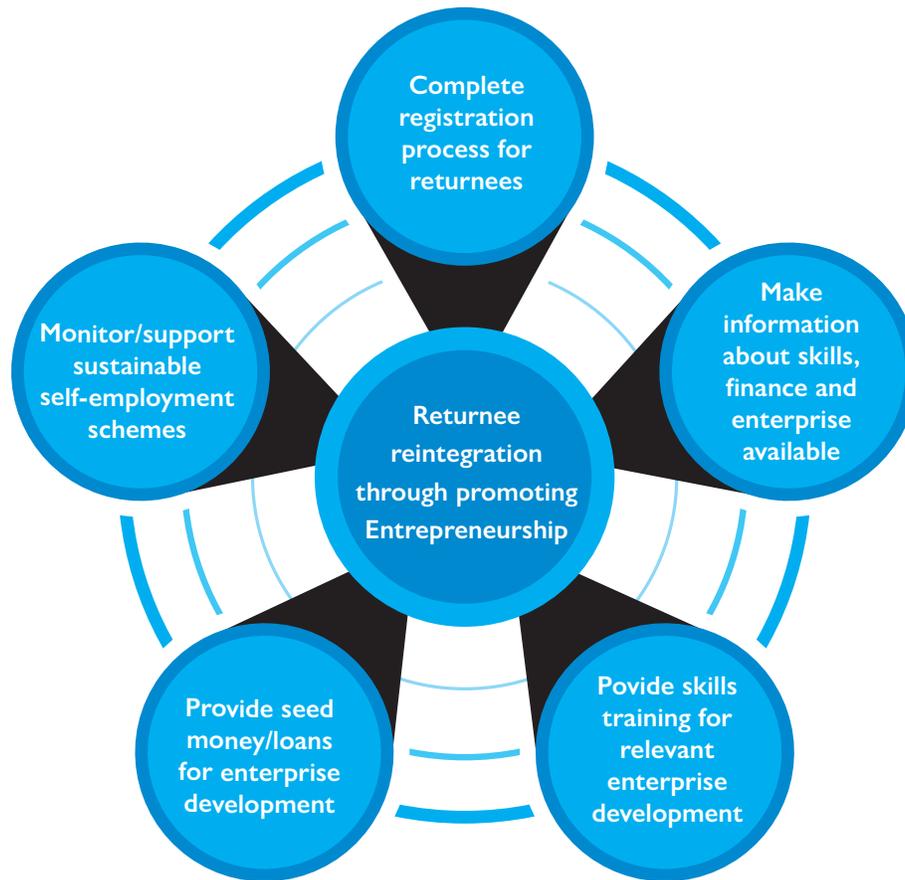


Figure 4.3 Entrepreneurship-centric economic reintegration



4.4.2 Job Placement and/or Funding Support for Enterprise Development

With skills recognition and training, returnees will be ready for job placement or securing funds to start businesses. WEWB may introduce a reintegration wing with two desks – one for monitoring career counselling and job placement services, and the other for entrepreneurship of returnee migrants and hotline services. It should be noted that only high business potential individuals will receive targeted support for entrepreneurship, and they will go through some forms of risk assessment. DEMOs and WEWB desks at district level will take the responsibility of coordination with the WEWB head office in Dhaka. For job placement services, arrangements can be made for job-matching mechanisms or organizing job fairs, where prospective employers will recruit returnee migrants through a merit-based competitive and transparent process. This process may be facilitated either by a private firm outsourced by WEWB or by various business chambers such as, FBCCI, BGMEA, BKMEA and MCCI. As for enterprise development, PKB and commercial banks can provide loans, and the business chambers may provide mentoring services to returnees. In both cases, whether for job placement or for enterprise development, local NGOs and CSOs, and merchant associations' think tanks such as BEF, can closely collaborate with various Government of Bangladesh agencies and the private sector to facilitate economic reintegration of returnees.

4.5 Social Reintegration

For smooth reintegration into society, CSOs – with the help of WEWB, the Department of Women’s Affairs and the Department of Social Services – need to organize awareness-raising workshop and family counselling sessions at the community level on a regular basis. Such workshops should focus on how host communities can play a positive role in enabling returnees to reinsert into society and how the reintegration process can benefit the local host communities “through migrants’ contributions, skills, and experiences” (IOM, 2017a:6). Returnees need to be encouraged to join CBOs to increase their social network, which is also quite essential for economic reintegration. They should also be aware of the loan conditions attached to finance of the different types of loans available and the ways in which they can avoid predatory loan providers.

4.6 Remigration

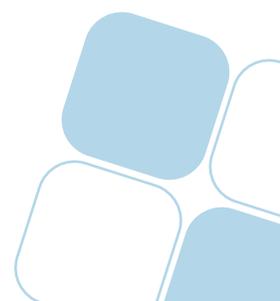
Returnees who wish to remigrate to the same country where they previously worked, or to a new country of destination, will go through the initial three stages of services – identification and registration, psychosocial vulnerability and financial needs assessment, and psychological counselling and medical treatment – which were discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Assuming that some returnees are unwilling to pursue economic integration, either because they do not find it an attractive career option or they have failed to avail themselves of feasible paths for economic reintegration, they are less likely to look for possible avenues for social integration. At this stage, they may consider it to be the best strategy to pursue safe migration paths, as charted below.

4.6.1 Online Registration and Fingerprint

The labour migration governance system in Bangladesh first requires an aspirant migrant to visit a DEMO to complete online registration and provide biometric fingerprints. Returnees wishing to remigrate will also be required to complete the online registration and provide fingerprints. As a standard practice, such data will be managed by BMET. Returnees can learn about potential job opportunities in countries of destination from the private recruitment agencies, informal intermediaries, or their migrant friends and family members.

4.6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning of Skills and Provision of Relevant Skills Training

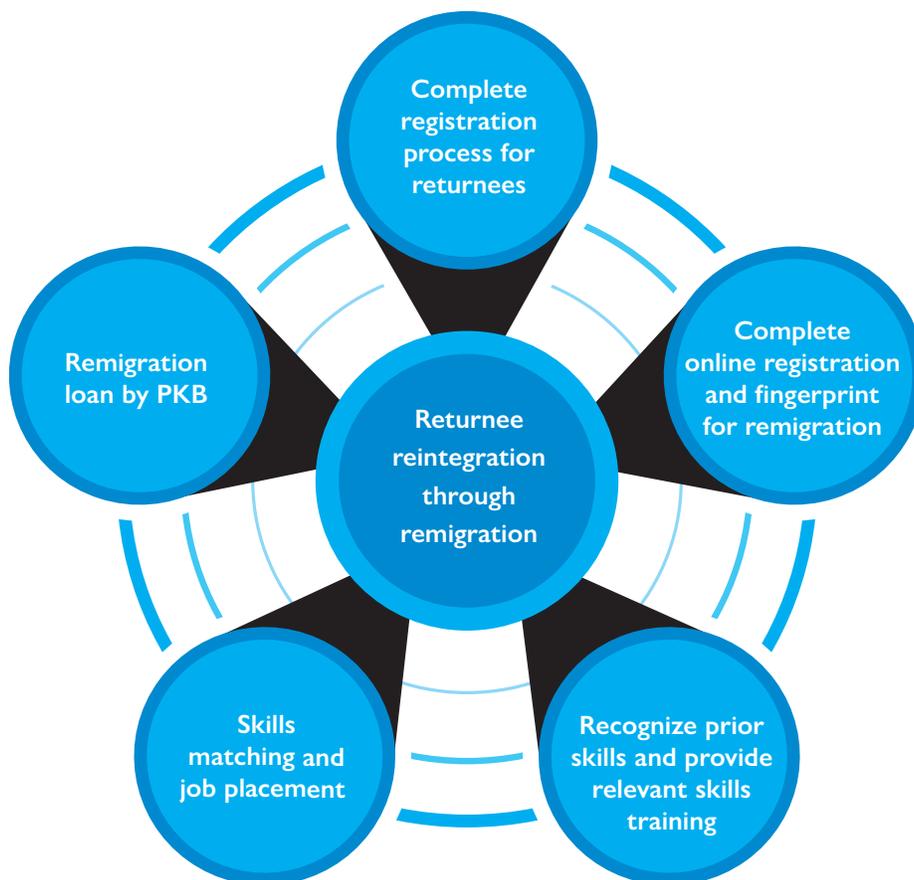
BMET, in collaboration with TTCs and other registered training organizations, will provide services relevant to recognition of prior learning of skills of returnees, and provide them also relevant skills training as suitable for the jobs they wish to secure in foreign countries. A database of such training organizations, the type of skills training, the list of trainees and their career choices need to be maintained for monitoring, evaluation and learning purposes.



4.6.3 Skills Matching and Job Placement

Public and private recruitment agencies will provide information to BMET and WEWB regarding job demands suited for returnees. The LMIS database and the MWIMS database may be well-aligned to see if available jobs match any returnee profiles.²⁷ After assessing and matching the skills acquired by returnees at home and abroad, WEWB will refer migrants to the specific recruitment agency for remigration and job placement. Currently, BMET is responsible for monitoring the private recruitment agencies, and if any irregularities or recruitment malpractices are found, their licenses can be cancelled or withheld, and other legal and financial penalties can be imposed on them. As for monitoring the decent work conditions in migrants' countries of destination, the Labour and Welfare Wings in the diplomatic missions of Bangladesh are responsible for onsite inspection of workplaces and organizing open houses to exchange ideas and experiences with migrant workers.

Figure 4.4 Key steps in returnee remigration



²⁷ The LMIS database will have detailed information about the domestic labour market with a section for migrant workers. On the other hand, MWIMS will have detailed information about Bangladesh-origin migrant workers. As stated before, both databases are being developed and implemented by ILO, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, SDC and IOM.

4.6.4 Provision of remigration loans to interested returnees

PKB and commercial banks would be encouraged to provide loans to returnees to cover the costs of migration. Such costs mainly include recruitment fees, visa fees and passport fees. In the absence of institutionalized provisions for migration loans, Bangladeshi migrants often fall into the prey of debt bondage or forced labour. PKB and commercial banks can also consider giving financial literacy training to returnees to ensure that they fully understand the loan terms and remittance management. Local NGOs and CBOs should be engaged in pre-decision and pre-departure awareness trainings to emphasize how returnees and their families can avoid predatory loans and debt burdens before choosing remigration as a career option.

In summary, this chapter presented an action plan for the returnee migrants' services in Bangladesh. Table 4.1 presents a matrix mapping the key actors and their role in implementing the action plan.

Table 4.1 A matrix for the framework of services for returnee migrants' reintegration and remigration

Components of sustainable reintegration and remigration	Key steps	Implementing actors	Monitoring and coordinating agency	Lead/co-lead/associate ministries
Identification and registration	Identify returnee migrants	Immigration police/Special Branch, local NGOs, UDCs, DEMOs, TTCs	BMET, WEWB	MoEWOE, Ministry of Home Affairs, MoLGRD
	Register returnee migrants	UDCs, DEMOs, National ID project	BMET, DEMO	MoEWOE, LGRD
Psychological well-being	Vulnerability assessment psychosocial counselling	CSOs, Department of Women's Affairs, Department of Social Services, ILO, IOM	DEMO, WEWB	MoEWOE, MSW, MWA
	Capacity-building of implementing actors	DFID, European Union, ILO, IOM, SDC, UN Women, USAID	WEWB	MoEWOE, MoFA
Economic reintegration through job creation	Find employers	DEMOs, UDCs, online job portals	BMET, WEWB	MoEWOE, Ministry of Information Communication and Technology
	Provide skill recognition and training service	TTCs	BMET	MoEWOE
	Offer job placement	DEMOs, NGOs and CSOs	WEWB	MoEWOE

Components of sustainable reintegration and remigration	Key steps	Implementing actors	Monitoring and coordinating agency	Lead/co-lead/associate ministries
	Recruit returnees	Public and private employers	Private chambers	MoC, Ministry of Industries, MoLE
	Capacity-building of implementing actors	ADB, DFID, European Union, ILO, IOM, SDC, UN Women, USAID, World Bank	WEWB	MoEWOE, MoFA
Economic reintegration through entrepreneurship	Make information available	DEMOs, TTCs, District Agriculture Extension Office, Livestock Office, Chamber of Commerce, Youth Development Centres	BMET, Office of Deputy Commissioner	MoEWOE, Ministry of Agriculture, MoFL, MoC, MoYS, Ministry of Public Administration
	Provide skills training	TTC, Youth Development Centre	TTC, DYD	MoEWOE, MoYS
	Provide funding support	PKB, commercial banks	WEWB	MoEWOE, MoF
	Monitor sustainable self-employment scheme	District welfare desks (newly created)	WEWB	MoEWOE
	Capacity-building of implementing actors	ADB, DFID, European Union, ILO, IOM, SDC, UN Women, USAID, World Bank	WEWB	MoEWOE, MoFA
Remigration	Complete online registration and fingerprint for regular labour migration	DEMOs	BMET	MoEWOE
	Recognize prior learning of skills and provide relevant skills training	TTCs, LMIS Server	BMET	MoEWOE
	Provide remigration loan to interested returnees	PKB, commercial banks	BAAB	MoEWOE, MoF

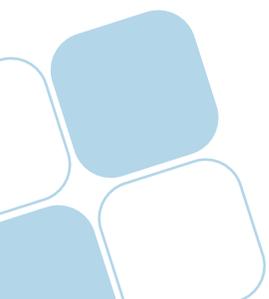
Components of sustainable reintegration and remigration	Key steps	Implementing actors	Monitoring and coordinating agency	Lead/co-lead/associate ministries
Social integration	Counselling of family members integration and active participation of returnees within CBOs	CSOs	WEWB	MoEWOE, MoSW, MoWCA
	Capacity-building of implementing actors	ADB, DFID, European Union, ILO, IOM, SDC, UN Women, USAID, World Bank	WEWB, ILO, IOM	MoEWOE

The preceding chapters have already discussed how various elements of the returnee services framework can be carried out in coordination by different government agencies, and how funds should be pooled or resourced. Various entities of the Government of Bangladesh and private sectors, and CSOs, have provided or are expected to provide a wide range of services for which they have competencies. Bilateral and multilateral development partners are also desired to support activities. As shown in Table 4.1, BMET and WEWB are expected to play monitoring and coordination roles as the general consensus is that MoEWOE should take the lead in implementing the returnee services framework. The proposed returnee services framework recognizes the potential role of private sectors in employment generation. ILO and IOM are expected to coordinate the capacity-building initiatives largely due to their global experiences in this area of intervention. The issue of funding is well discussed in several parts of this paper, giving an emphasis on public-private partnerships and a detailed plan for reintegration funds.

A brief description of global best practices in returnee reintegration in five countries (Ghana, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) was presented in Chapter 1. In the Philippines, the National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers provides a national platform for the delivery of wide-range of services to returnees. In Pakistan and Sri Lanka, national governments allocate special funds for delivering certain returnee services. By contrast, in Ghana, IOM manages returnee services with the financial support of the Government of Japan. Drawing lessons from these global best practices, Bangladesh can develop a national framework of services for returnee migrants, as discussed throughout this paper.

In summary, this chapter discussed various components of an action plan for the returnee migrants' services in Bangladesh. It also presented a matrix of key actors and their role in implementing the action plan. The question arises: What are the risks and opportunities in implementing the action plan? The concluding chapter will address this.



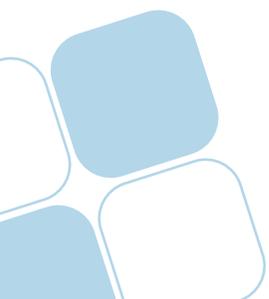


CHAPTER

05

RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCLUSION

This chapter identifies the potential risks and opportunities in implementing a framework of services for returnee migrants, and offers some concluding remarks. It shows that sufficient opportunities exist to outweigh the risks in adopting a reintegration programme for labour migrants from Bangladesh.



5.1 Potential Risks

Several risks may impede the implementation of the proposed returnee services framework in Bangladesh:

- First, MoEWOE may confront some challenges in securing support from other line ministries to implement the proposed reintegration and remigration framework, as this would put additional responsibilities and require additional funding commitment.²⁸
- Second, there is a risk of the framework not being implemented due to lack of coordination and consensus among stakeholders.
- Third, funding constraints may affect the delivery of returnee services.
- Fourth, the proposed framework of services cannot be implemented without trained human resources.

5.2 Potential Opportunities

The following opportunities exist to address the risks listed above:

- First, as per the mandates provided in the Migrants Act 2013 and the Migration Policy 2016, MoEWOE will need to provide the leadership in developing interministerial partnership in implementing a sustainable framework of services for reintegration and remigration. This would require translating the laws and actions into concrete actions. ILO, IOM and other labour and migration-focused development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, need to take steps to provide continuous technical and financial supports to strengthen the capacity of MoEWOE and other partner ministries in implementing the returnee services framework.
- Second, senior MoEWOE officials in general and WEWB officials have shown a strong commitment and a positive attitude toward adopting a reintegration and remigration framework. They have also shown a keen interest in learning global best practices in returnee reintegration services, and felt the need for a strategy paper on returnee services as a first step to implement this. The private sector and CSOs are willing to partner with the Government of Bangladesh in expanding services for the returnee migrants. More stakeholder consultations are needed to sensitize the issue of returnee reintegration and to forge a consensus among the public, private and CSO actors to cater to the needs of returnee migrants.
- Third, concerns over funding constraints can be addressed by drawing the resources of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund, which has the mandate to address the needs of all categories of migrants, including returnees. There is a need to do a stocktaking of the welfare fund being generated from migrants' contributions and how it can be partially used for developing programmes for the returnees. This stocktaking should recognize migrants' contribution to the national economy and the potential development impact of engaging the returnee migrants, including the diaspora. Public-private partnerships and financial support from development partners can address the need for a separate fund for returnee reintegration.

²⁸ During the Expert Meeting on Framework of Services for Returnee Migrants' Reintegration and Remigration, and key informant interviews with concerned stakeholders, lack of interministerial coordination came up as a potential first risk in implementing services for the returnee migrants.



- Fourth, ILO and IOM have considerable expertise in the field on the rights of labour migrants, including the reintegration needs of returnees. Their involvement would be crucial in technical support and human resources development in the domains of psychosocial counselling, economic reintegration and social reintegration. A comprehensive human resources development plan needs to be put in place detailing the target trainees, potential trainers, duration and frequency of training, and the roles of the government institutions, the private sector, CSOs and multilateral international institutions in capacity-building. As for the remigration strategy, existing good practices in BMET, Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd., WEWB and PKB need to be scaled up.

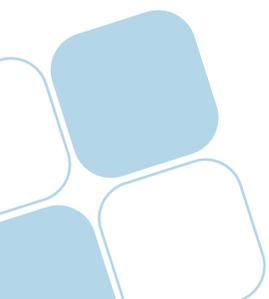
5.3 Conclusion

This paper has proposed a framework of services for the returnee migrants' reintegration and remigration. It must begin with identification and registration, followed by assessment of the psychosocial well-being of the returnees, especially those who were deported and with distressed conditions. Second, it shows two possible pathways to economic reintegration – job placement and entrepreneurship development for self-employment. Those who will be economically reintegrated will need a complementary process of social integration to make return a sustainable experience. An alternate to economic integration is pursuing remigration, which is aspired by nearly half of the returnee households surveyed for this study, and well discussed in this paper. Finally, returnees need social integration. This can be done by engaging them in CBOs and providing them and their families with counselling services in order to facilitate a smooth rehabilitation with their societies upon their return.

For each component of reintegration and remigration framework, various tasks and steps are listed and the imperatives for implementing actors are specified. Successful reintegration and remigration of returnees would hinge on multi-stakeholder involvement. There are both potential risks and opportunities in implementing the proposed returnee services framework. It is high time that the Government of Bangladesh, private sector and CSOs – in collaboration with multilateral, intergovernmental and United Nations agencies – forge consensus to address the needs of returnee migrants in Bangladesh.



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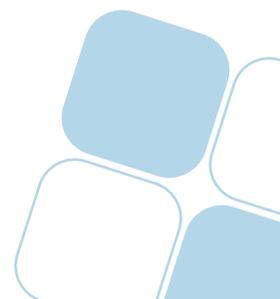
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