



International
Labour
Organization

► Research Study on Effectiveness of Implementation of Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration - 2015



- ▶ **Research Study on Effectiveness of Implementation of Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration - 2015**

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2023
First published 2023



This is an open access work distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). Users can reuse, share, adapt and build upon the original work, as detailed in the License. The ILO must be clearly credited as the owner of the original work. The use of the emblem of the ILO is not permitted in connection with users' work.

Attribution – The work must be cited as follows: *Research study on effectiveness of the implementation of sub-policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration*, Colombo: International Labour Office, 2023]

Translations – In case of a translation of this work, the following disclaimer must be added along with the attribution: *This translation was not created by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and should not be considered an official ILO translation. The ILO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation.*

Adaptations – In case of an adaptation of this work, the following disclaimer must be added along with the attribution: *This is an adaptation of an original work by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Responsibility for the views and opinions expressed in the adaptation rests solely with the author or authors of the adaptation and are not endorsed by the ILO.*

This CC license does not apply to non-ILO copyright materials included in this publication. If the material is attributed to a third party, the user of such material is solely responsible for clearing the rights with the right holder.

Any dispute arising under this license that cannot be settled amicably shall be referred to arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). The parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of such a dispute.

All queries on rights and licensing should be addressed to the ILO Publishing Unit (Rights and Licensing), 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland, or by email to rights@ilo.org.

ISBN 9789220393956 (Print + Web pdf)

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the ILO concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the ILO of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the ILO, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

Information on ILO publications and digital products can be found at: www.ilo.org/publns.

Printed in Sri Lanka

► Foreword

In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare (currently the Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment) with the technical support of the International Labour Organization's Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, released a Sub Policy and National Action Plan on the Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers in complement of the National Labour Migration Policy of 2008.

This sub-policy focuses on five strategies: i) social reintegration, ii) economic reintegration, iii) physical and psychological well-being of returnees and their family members, iv) mobilisation and empowerment of returnees, and v) the effective management of the return and reintegration process.

The implementation of the sub-policy has achieved many results. However, the impact and effectiveness of the policy in addressing the needs of returned migrant workers have yet to be assessed. Anecdotal evidence from various qualitative research studies suggest that most returned migrant workers are often not aware of reintegration services and did not receive any support or training, and those who were aware had received information from civil society and peer networks rather than mandated government sources.

The ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives commissioned this study at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment of Sri Lanka. The study focuses on the experience of Migrant Workers and their families through their return and reintegration journey back to Sri Lanka. It includes the experiences of migrant worker returnees during the COVID 19 pandemic, a time fought with many challenges in servicing returnees for both government and civil society organisations.

Returnees can play an important role in facilitating the transfer of qualifications and skills to origin countries as they bring back skills, experience and entrepreneurship abilities which can help countries to rebuild better. The analysis provides qualitative and quantitative evidence-based information on the experiences of both Migrant Workers and their family members. The efforts of duty bearers in their return and reintegration, with immediate and short to medium-term recommendations for enhanced implementation of the Sub- Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration – for action by the Government, and civil society organisations including migrant workers associations; trade unions; and employers' is also considered in this study. Another objective of this study is to better inform any necessary updates and changes to future policies and strategies.

This effectiveness study was prepared for the ILO by an independent consultancy group - KPMG Sri Lanka - in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment, the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) and district partners of the ILO's Safe Labour Migration Programme funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The completion of this report would not have been possible without the contributions of the district partners of the Safe Labour Migration Programme who provided significant ground-level coordination support for data collection. The contribution by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is also highly appreciated as a long-term strategic development partner of the ILO. The contribution from key informants including Government and non-government stakeholders was tremendous in ensuring the success of this study. I am grateful for the support of the ILO Safe Labour Migration Programme team for their tireless efforts in bringing this effectiveness study into the public domain.

In this research study, ILO focuses on highlighting the importance of return and reintegration as an important matter and pursuant to its relevance to the ILO migration mandate. As the specialised UN agency for the world of work, the ILO is strongly committed to delivering sustainable and systematic assistance to our constituents and other partners to create decent employment opportunities for all while promoting rights at work, enhancing social protection, and strengthening social dialogue.

Simrin C. Singh

Director

ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Contents

Foreword	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
Abbreviations	ix
1. Background of the Study	1
2. Definition of Key Terms in Scope	3
3. Profile of Migrants and Returnees to Sri Lanka	5
3.1 Overview of the Sri Lankan Migrants and Returnees	5
3.2 Migrant Profiles	5
3.3 Determinants of Return Migration	9
4. Comparative review of the strategies and action plans	12
4.1 Institutionalization of a mechanism for migrant workers	12
4.2 Psycho-social wellbeing of returnees and their family members	13
4.3 Social security scheme for migrant returnees	14
4.4 Physical wellbeing of returnees and their family members	14
4.5 Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle	16
4.6 Welfare and protection of migrant workers' family members	17
4.7 Empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness	17
4.8 Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination and returning countries	18
4.9 Promote migrant worker safety and protection	19
4.10 Quality standardization of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return	20
4.11 Financial literacy of migrant workers and services related to Remittance	21
4.12 Entrepreneurship and Employment	23
4.13 Financial Services for Migrants	25
4.14 Measures undertaken to promote return to home country	25
4.15 Measures undertaken to recognise migrant's contribution	26
4.16 Complain mechanism for migrants	27
5. Methodology	29
5.1 Selection of the sample	29
5.2 Selection of Geographies	31
5.3 Questionnaire	31
5.4 Pilot Testing and Enumerator Training	32
5.5 Data Collection	32

5.6	Data Analysis	35
5.7	Limitations	35
6	Outcomes and Impact	36
6.1	Area 01 - Social Reintegration of Returnees	36
6.2	Area 02 - Economic reintegration of returnees	48
6.3	Area 03 - Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members	58
6.4	Area 04 - Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees	63
6.5	Area 05 - Effective management of the return and reintegration process	68
7	Conclusion	74
8	Key Discussion Points through KIIs and FGDs from the Field Study	76
8.1	Area 01 - Social reintegration of returnees	76
8.2	Area 02 - Economic reintegration of returnees	77
8.3	Area 03 - Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members	77
8.4	Area 04 - Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees	78
8.5	Area 05 - Effective management of the return and reintegration process	78
9	References	79

► List of Figures

Figure 1	below illustrates the number of migrants from 2017 to 2021.	5
Figure 2	illustrates the migration population based on gender from 2017 to 2021.	5
Figure 3	Migration Population Based on the Age (2017 - 2021)	6
Figure 4	Migration population based on the Skill Level (2021)	6
Figure 5	below depicts the number of returnees to Sri Lanka from 2016 to 2021.	8
Figure 6	Factors influencing individual return decisions	9
Figure 7	Framework for Push and Pull factors	10
Figure 8	Migrant Profiles	30
	Figure 9: FGD – Puttalam © 2023 KPMG 24th March 2023	33
Figure 10	FGD – Kandy © 2023 KPMG 29th March 2023	34
Figure 11	FGD – Anuradhapura © 2023 KPMG 04th April 2023	34
Figure 12	FGD – Vavuniya © 2023 KPMG 04th April 2023	34
Figure 13	FGD – Kurunegala © 2023 KPMG 25th April 2023	34
Figure 14	The process of obtaining a FBR	44
Figure 15	Number of self-employment loan or assistance receivers based on the number of applicants of the survey group	55
Figure 16	The percentage of implementation of each Area under the Sub Policy, and the percentage of Implementation of action plans of each strategy	75

► List of Tables

Table 1:	Migration Population based on the Gender, Skill Level and Region (2021,2020)	7
Table 2:	Migrant Profile based on region from 2016 – 2021	8
Table 3:	Migrant Profiles Vs. number of migrants participated for the FGDs	35
Table 4:	Area 01 Strategy 01 Action plan wise implementation summary	36
Table 5:	The level of awareness and implementation of action plans	37
Table 6:	Area 01 Strategy 02 Action plan wise implementation summary	40
Table 7:	Area 01 Strategy 03 Action plan wise implementation summary	41
Table 8:	Area 01 Strategy 04 Action plan wise implementation summary	42
Table 9:	The level of awareness and implementation of activities under the action plan of Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with a special focus on children	43
Table 10:	Returnees who benefited from essential stationery aids	45
Table 11:	Area 01 Strategy 05 Action plan wise implementation summary	46
Table 12:	Area 02 Strategy 01 Action plan wise implementation summary	48
Table 13:	Area 02 Strategy 02 Action plan wise implementation summary	50
Table 14:	The awareness Vs. implementation of different activities under the action plan	50
Table 15:	The number of return migrants who participated in focus group discussions and have received financial literacy training provided by different organizations.	51
Table 16:	Area 02 Strategy 03 Action plan wise implementation summary	53
Table 17:	The level of understanding and execution of action plans.	54
Table 18:	Area 02 Strategy 04 Action plan wise implementation summary	57
Table 19:	Area 03 Strategy 01 Action plan wise implementation summary	58
Table 20:	Area 03 Strategy 02 Action plan wise implementation summary	61
Table 21:	Area 04 Strategy 01 Action plan wise implementation summary	63
Table 22:	The SLBFE trainings as reported by participants in the FGDs	64
Table 23:	Area 04 Strategy 02 Action plan wise implementation summary	65
Table 24:	Area 04 Strategy 03 Action plan wise implementation summary	66
Table 25:	Area 05 Strategy 01 Action plan wise implementation summary	68
Table 26:	The level of understanding and execution of action plans.	69
Table 27:	Area 05 Strategy 02 Action plan wise implementation summary	70
Table 28:	Area 05 Strategy 03 Action plan wise implementation summary	71
Table 29 :	Areas, strategies, and action plans of the sub policy on return and reintegration	74

► Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEEM	Aatmanirbhar Skilled Employees Employer Mapping
AVRR	Assisted voluntary Return and Reintegration
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BOMSA	Bangladesh Ovhibashi Mohila Sramik Association
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Offices
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EU	European Union
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
FEA	Foreign Exchange administration
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupees
ILO	International Labor Organization
ILO GMS TRIANGLE	Tripartite Action to Protect Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Subregion from Labour Exploitation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRM	Involuntary Returned Migrants
KII	key Informant Interview
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MOL&FE	Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment
MOLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MRC	Migrant Resource Centers

MSR	Mutual Skills Recognition
MTO	Money Transfer Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLRC	National Labour Relations Commission
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OKUP	Ovibashi Karimi Unnayan Program
PDOLVT	Provincial Department of Labour and Vocational Training
PDOS	Predeparture One-day Seminar
PEOS	Pre-employment Orientation Seminars
PHR	Personal Health Records
PKB	Probashi Kalyan Bank
POLO	Philippine Overseas Labor Office
PSKTK-PM	Directorate for the Social Protection of Violence Victims and Migrant Workers
ReMiMIS	Returning Migrants Management of Information Systems
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RPTC	Protection Home and Trauma Center
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SWADES	Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support
TTC	Training and Testing Centres
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollars
WARBE	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants Development Foundation
WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board

▶ **Glossary**

National Level Stakeholders	MOL&FE, SLBFE, including ILO, and IOM
District Level Stakeholders	FEDDO, FEDO and Grama Niladhari
District Partners	District Level Civil Society Organizations

1. Background of the Study

Introduction

The Safe Labour Migration Program in Sri Lanka, supported by the Government of Switzerland aims to ensure the effective implementation of the Sri Lanka National Labour Migration Policy. The wider objectives of the Safe Labour Migration Project are as follows:

- ▶ To improve the policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and processes that govern labour migration in Sri Lanka to reflect and respond to current contextual situations and needs that further safeguard the rights of women and men migrant workers
- ▶ To protect the rights of and empower women migrant workers and their families
- ▶ To maximise the benefits and minimise the negative impacts of labour migration
- ▶ To document and share experiences, good practices and the lessons learned at the national, regional and global level

As part of this project, the Ministry of Foreign Employment Protection and Welfare released a Sub-Policy and National Action Plan on the Return and Reintegration of migrant workers that complements the National Labour Migration Policy. This sub-policy focuses on five strategies namely, social reintegration, economic reintegration, physical & psychological well-being of returnees & their family members, mobilization & empowerment of returnees, and effective management of the return and reintegration process.

To determine the effectiveness of implementation and monitoring of sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration, ILO has commissioned KPMG for a research study to develop an in-depth understanding with regard to the standards and processes in reintegration programming that aim to protect returnees' rights and foster the sustainability of reintegration. Furthermore, it seeks to analyse the benefits of the Labour Migration Governance Framework through monitoring and reviewing its implementation, understanding fair and ethical recruitment practices, skills recognition, certification, and quality of service delivered by state officials through the strategic initiative. The research study has been carried out in five selected districts namely, Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Kandy and Kurunegala

Objective of the Study

The study was conducted mainly on the return and reintegration experience of Migrant workers and their families including the returnees who came back to Sri Lanka due to the covid 19 pandemic, which is one of the pressing concerns of government and civil society organizations but not limited to them. This analysis will provide qualitative and quantitative evidence-based information gathered from both return migrants and their family members.

This report entails the findings and data received through the National level KIIs, District Level KIIs, FGDs and field observations carried out under the Research Study on Effectiveness of Implementation of Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration. The main objective of this report is to evaluate the Effectiveness of Implementation of Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in Sri Lanka.

The report further discusses the followings:

- ▶ Definition of key terms in the scope
- ▶ Determinants of return migration
- ▶ Return and reintegration policies adopted in other countries

- ▶ Effectiveness of return and reintegration policies
- ▶ Sub policy on return and reintegration in Sri Lanka
- ▶ Detailed methodology adopted to make this study a success
- ▶ Outcomes and Impacts of the research study
- ▶ Key Discussion Points

2. Definition of Key Terms in Scope

There are many definitions available for the key terms used in international migration. Therefore, this section presents the definitions adopted in this study either using standard definitions or using working definitions.

Return Migrants

Return migration refers to the return of migrant workers from a destination country to their home country. According to the Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, return migrants are “persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year” (UNDESA, 1998). According to the migration statistics guidelines of International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018), return international migrant workers are defined as “all current residents of the country who were previously international migrant workers in another country or countries”. The minimum duration of labour attachment abroad required for a person to be considered a return international migrant worker relatively short, such as six months (Wickramasekara, 2019). Return migrants can be formed by force migration usually takes on the form of deportation or assisted return (Erdal, 2020) and voluntary migration.

Skilled Migrants

The term “skilled migrants” has been used more broadly to refer to the migration of individuals who have obtained any type of tertiary education (Koser & Salt, 1997). According to the Glossary on Migration by International Organization for Migration (IOM), Skilled migrant worker has been defined as “a migrant worker who has the appropriate skill level and specialization to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job” (IOM, 2019).

Semi-Skilled and Low Skilled Migrants

Semi-skilled migrant is referred to “a person who requires a degree of training or familiarization with the job before being able to operate at maximum/optimal efficiency, although this training is not of the length or intensity required for designation as a skilled (or craft) worker, being measured in weeks or days rather than years, nor is it normally at the tertiary level” (Richard Perruchoud, 2011). On the other hand, a less or low skilled migrant worker is defined as “a person who has received less training than a semi-skilled worker or, having not received any training, has still acquired his or her competence on the job” (Richard Perruchoud, 2011).

Skilled Returnees

Skilled Returnees refers to the returnees who returns from overseas to be employed while having the qualifications of an advanced degree and minimum two-year overseas work experience (Guo, 2001).

Effective return and reintegration

Effective reintegration of returning workers involves successful integration into their families, communities, the economy, and society. From the perspective of their home country, an effective return refers to the safe and dignified return of migrant workers after they have accomplished their goals abroad (Wickramasekara, 2019).

Physical Wellbeing

Physical wellbeing refers to the ability to conduct physical activities and social roles which are not restricted by physical limitations and biological health indicators (Capiro, et al., 2014).

Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional and dynamic construct composed of a framework of dimensions where, enjoying positive experiences and meeting basic needs are considered essential (Charry, et al., 2020). Psychological Wellbeing is crucial for individuals who have returned to their home, as they frequently experience emotions such as guilt, disappointment, defeat, confusion, nervousness, instability, and pressure, all of which can impede their successful resettlement (Rashid & Ashraf, 2018).

Social protection/social scheme

Social protection is an intervention of policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty, reducing inequalities, and reducing vulnerability among poor and at-risk populations such as persons with disabilities, older individuals, youth, women, children, malnourished people, disaster victims, migrant workers, families, and communities are referred to as interventions (Secretariat, 2016). These interventions aim to improve the capacities of these groups so that they can better manage risks and have equal access to essential services and opportunities based on their rights and needs (Secretariat, 2016).

3. Profile of Migrants and Returnees to Sri Lanka

3.1 Overview of the Sri Lankan Migrants and Returnees

According to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (2021), the annual average number of outward labour migration in Sri Lanka within the period from 2017 to 2019 is 208,763 migrants. The data for the years 2020 and 2021 cannot be considered due to the significant drop in migration owing to the pandemic in 2019 with only 53,711 Sri Lankans migrating. However, it is evident from the provisional figures of 2021 that the increase trajectory is returning to normalcy. The Department of Immigration and Emigration has stated that 311,269 Sri Lankans have left the country in 2022 due to the ongoing economic crisis along with the higher inflation rates which have been the highest migrating rate in the country which was more than the country's annual peak in 2014 of 300,413 (Economy Next, 2023).

► Figure 1 below illustrates the number of migrants from 2017 to 2021.

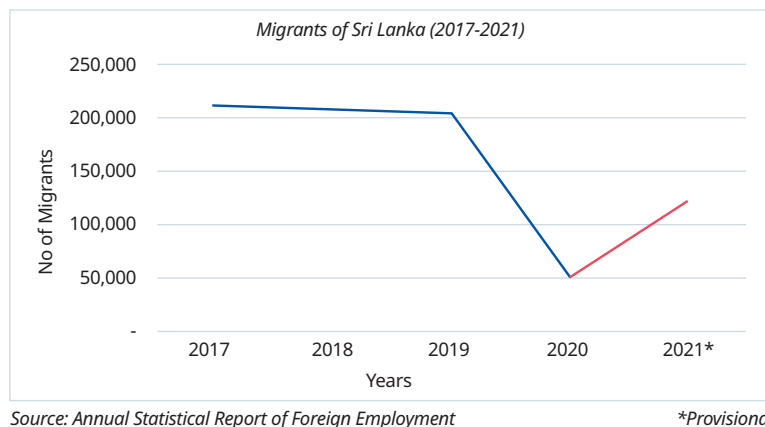


Figure 1 - Migrants of Sri Lanka (2017 - 2021)

3.2 Migrant Profiles

The migrants can be identified based on profiles such as gender, age, skill category, type of employment and county/region of destination.

► Figure 2 illustrates the migration population based on gender from 2017 to 2021.

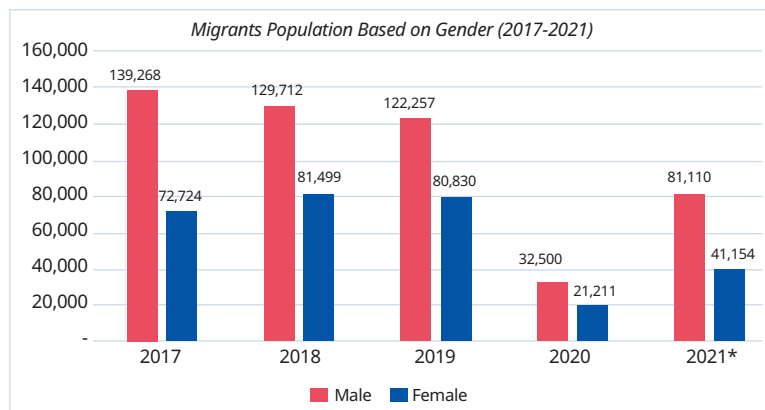
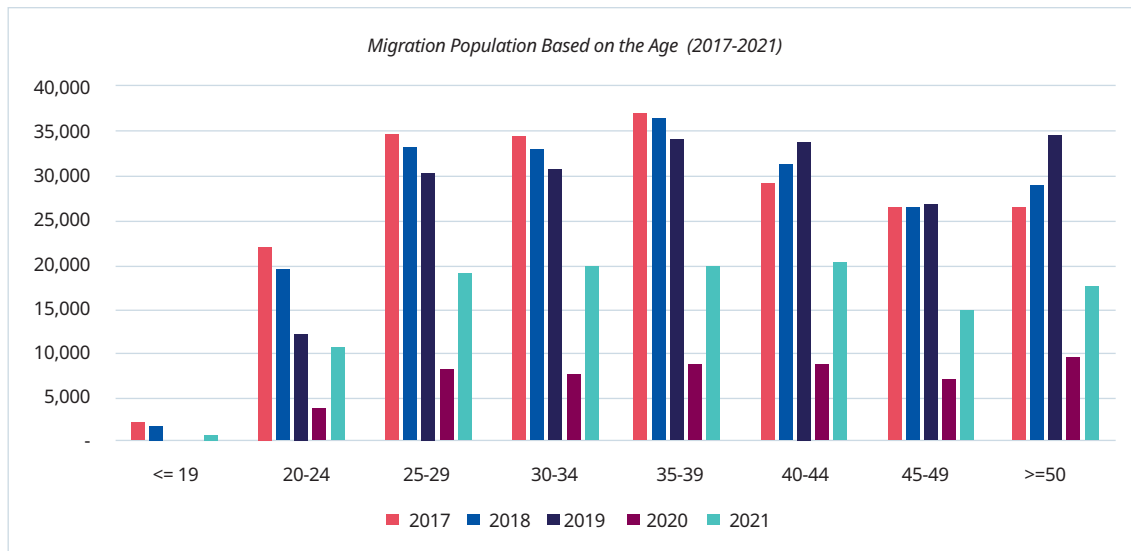


Figure 2 - Migration population based on the Age (2017 - 2021)

When considering the number of migrants based on the age, the total population of migrants in each age category from year 2017 to 2021 is represented in Figure 3.

► **Figure 3 Migration Population Based on the Age (2017 - 2021)**



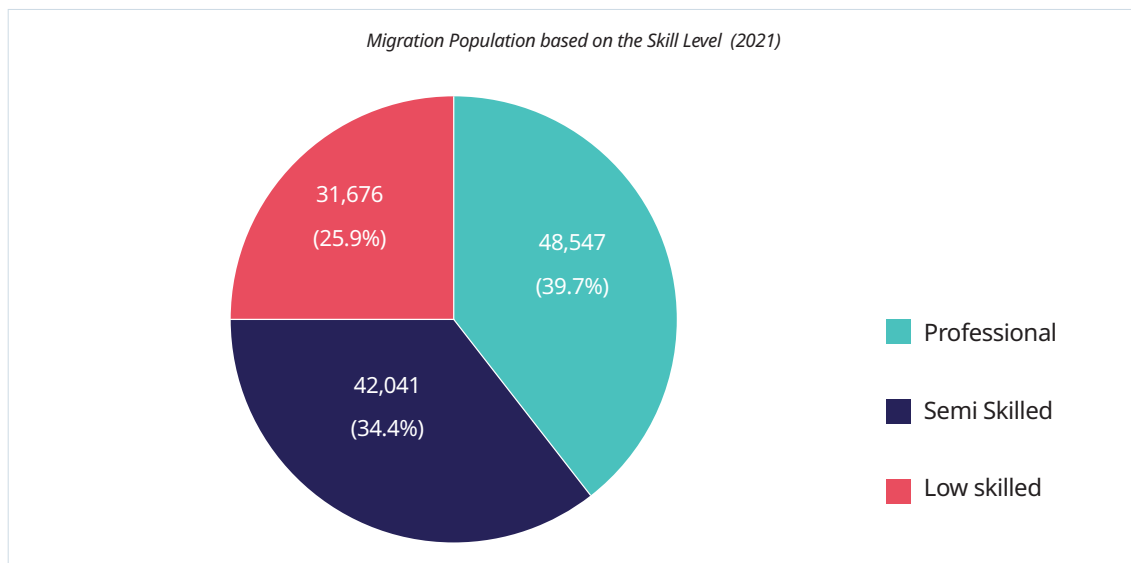
Source: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment

Figure 3- Migration Population Based on the Age (2017 - 2021)

Accordingly, 16.59% of the migrants are from the age group of 40-44 years which is 20,283 migrants while 19.817 (16.21%) migrants fall under the age group of 35-39 years.

Figure 4 below illustrates the migrant population in 2021 based on the skill levels identified as professional/skilled, semi-skilled and low-skilled.

► **Figure 4 Migration population based on the Skill Level (2021)**



Source: Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment

Figure 4 - Migration population based on the Skill Level (2021)

Majority of the migrants falls under the 'Professional/Skilled' category which is 48,547 (39.7%) migrants, while 42,041 (34.4%) migrants of the migration population are 'Semi-Skilled' and 31,676 (25.9%) of the migrants are in the 'Low Skilled' category.

Table 1 below indicates the migrant population from 2020 to 2021 based on the region of the destination country.

► **Table 1: Migration Population based on the Gender, Skill Level and Region (2021,2020)**

Region	Year	Professional/ Skilled		Semi-Skilled		Low Skilled		Total
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
East Asia & Pacific	2020	295	1,281	257	168	414	1,614	4,029 (2.3%)
	2021	121	1,260	241	180	403	1,815	4,020 (2.3%)
Europe & Central Asia	2020	43	687	249	45	476	719	2,219 (1.3%)
	2021	153	1,207	339	103	1,178	1,992	4,972 (2.8%)
Middle East & North Africa	2020	1,653	13,420	15,349	3,370	2,173	7,987	43,952 (25%)
	2021	2,779	36,791	30,263	9,197	4,972	19,509	103,511 (58.8%)
North America	2020	1	15	2	5	0	7	30 (0.0%)
	2021	4	15	3	5	0	2	29 (0.0%)
South Asia	2020	63	1,667	103	399	61	457	2,750 (1.6%)
	2021	185	4,848	264	1,132	141	1,492	8,062 (4.6%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	2020	25	373	11	101	10	43	563 (0.3%)
	2021	33	871	23	204	12	114	1,257 (0.7%)
Other	2020	6	79	14	27	6	20	168 (0.1%)
	2021	14	250	18	64	8	38	413 (0.2%)

Source: Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment

Accordingly, 39,750 (32.5%) of the professional/skilled Sri Lankan migrants in 2021 have migrated to Middle East and North Africa region where 36,791 (92.6%) of them were males. The opposite is evident from the semi-skilled migrants of Sri Lanka where female migrants stand at 30,263 (76.7%) of the 39,460 (32.3%) semi-skilled migrants in 2021 to Middle East and North Africa region. Further, 20.0% of the total migrants to Middle East and North Africa region are low skilled migrants from which 79.7% of them are male migrants.

South Asia is the 2nd highest region of destination with Sri Lankan migrants where 4,848 (60.0%) of the migrants to this region are skilled male migrants. According to the annual statistical report of foreign employment, higher proportion of the migrants are in the Maldives. Further, migrants in East Asia and Pacific region are mostly in South Korea and are mostly skilled male migrants.

Table 2 below indicates the migrant population from 2016 to 2021 based on the region of the destination country. Accordingly, Middle East & North Africa, East Asia & Pacific, and South Asia can be seen as the

regions where most Sri Lankans have migrated while Sub-Saharan Africa and North America with the least number of migrants within 2016 - 2021. However, based on the provisional data of 2021, the number of migrant populations has significantly increased in Middle East & North Africa, South Asia, Europe & Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan African regions from 2020 onwards.

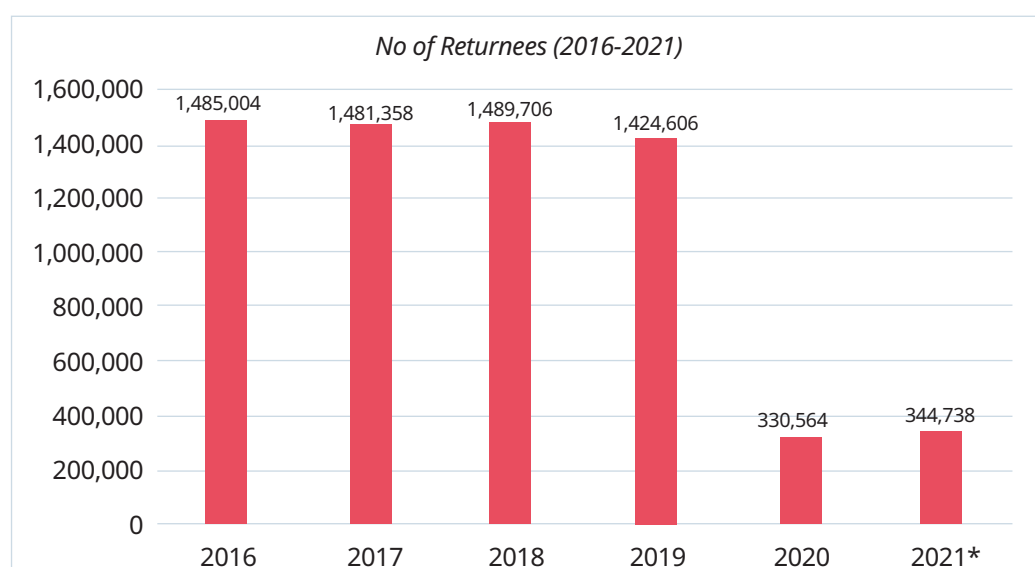
► **Table 2: Migrant Profile based on region from 2016 – 2021**

Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Middle East & North Africa	217,413 (89.5%)	189,535 (89.4%)	186,359 (88.2%)	172,678 (85.0%)	43,952 (81.8%)	103,511 (84.7%)
East Asia & Pacific	14,373 (5.9%)	11,009 (5.2%)	11,616 (5.5%)	14,551 (7.2%)	4,029 (7.5%)	4020 (3.3%)
South Asia	7,072 (2.9%)	7,169 (3.4%)	8,252 (3.9%)	8,751 (4.3%)	2,750 (5.1%)	8,062 (6.6%)
Europe & Central Asia	2,357 (1.0%)	2,492 (1.2%)	2,891 (1.4%)	4,958 (2.4%)	2,219 (4.1%)	4,972 (4.1%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,207 (0.5%)	1,336 (0.6%)	1,531 (0.7%)	1,543 (0.8%)	563 (1.0%)	1,257 (1.0%)
North America	11 (0.0%)	21 (0.0%)	18 (0.0%)	35 (0.0%)	30 (0.1%)	29 (0.0%)
Other	383 (0.2%)	430 (0.2%)	544 (0.3%)	571 (0.3%)	168 (0.3%)	413 (0.3%)
Grand Total	242,816	211,992	211,211	203,087	53,711	122,264

Source: Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment

Accordingly, the migration population has been slightly decreasing from 2016 to 2019. In 2020 the migrant population has been stated as 53,711 migrants which shows a significant reduction compared to previous years due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. In 2021 the migrant population was stated as 122,264 which is a 56% increment compared to 2020. Majority (84.7%) of the migrants have migrated to Middle East and North African region in 2021.

► **Figure 5 below depicts the number of returnees to Sri Lanka from 2016 to 2021.**



Source: Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment

*Provisional

Figure 5 - Number of Returnees form 2016 -2021

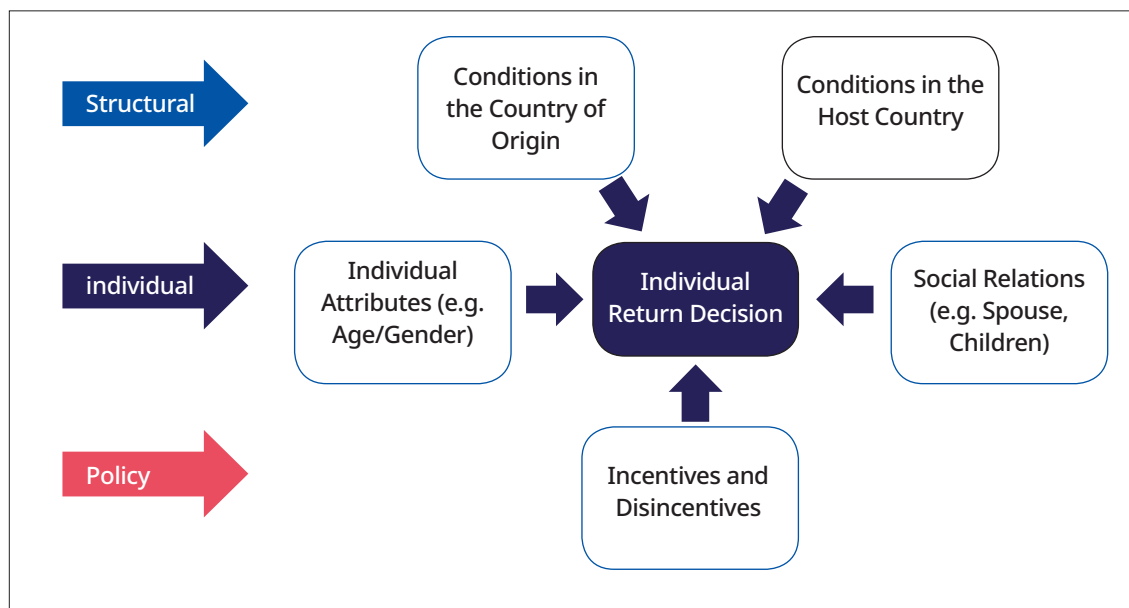
The total number of returnees to Sri Lanka from 2016 to 2021 has been stated as 6,555,976 and an annual average of 1,470,169 migrants have migrated within the years 2016 to 2019. The number of returnees to Sri Lanka in 2020 and 2021 has been stated only as 330,564 (5.0%) and 344,738 (5.3%) which shows a significant reduction in returnees compared to previous years (Employment, 2021).

Labour migration research on Sri Lanka identifies a lack of data on actual returned migrant workers including statistics on their background and reasons for the return (overall positive or negative) migration experience (Lansakara, 2022). Due to the lack of data in relation to the returnees to Sri Lanka and the lack of data about the migrants who have become permanent in overseas countries, it is unable to conclude the exact number of returnees to Sri Lanka under the different profiles such as gender, age, skill category, type of employment and county/region of destination.

3.3 Determinants of Return Migration

Black et al. (2004) has proposed a comprehensive framework to understand the determinants of return migration using information of 99 migrants in the UK. Accordingly, there are both “push” and “pull” factors that are economic, social, personal, and political in nature that influence decisions of the migrants to return out of which, family and lifecycle considerations may be more significant. Based on the identified possible factors that influence the decision to return, a framework has been developed as depicted in Figure 05 below. According to (Black, et al., 2004). “Influences on the decision to return come in the form of both information about options and inputs that structure how these options are viewed”. Regarding the former, the choice to return if it is voluntary, is typically made after contrasting the circumstances and prospects in the host nation with those in the nation of origin and getting information about any policy interventions in the form of additional incentives or disincentives to stay or return. However, nobody is completely a “rational” decision-maker, and different people can draw different conclusions from the same information. One reason relates to individual attributes such as age and gender, while another one relates to the broader context of social relations. These are reflected in Figure 05 as inputs to the return decision (Black, et al., 2004).

► Figure 6: Factors influencing individual return decisions

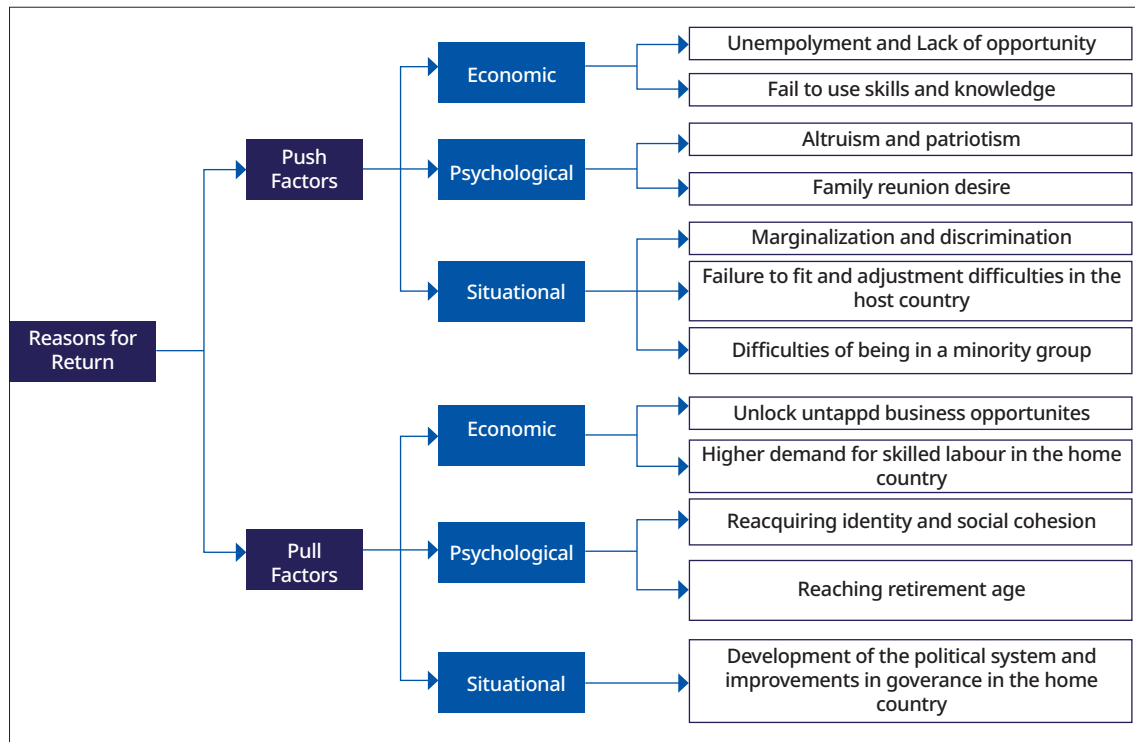


Source: Illustrated based on Black, et al., (2004)

Figure 6: Factors influencing individual return decisions

When evaluating both push and pull factors for return migration, reasons considered are categorised as economical, psychological, and situational. A framework that encompasses both push and pull factors affecting return migration to the home country is given below in figure 6.

► **Figure 7 – Framework for Push and Pull factors**



Source: Push-pull factors influencing international return migration intentions: a systematic literature review

Figure 7 – Framework for Push and Pull factors

Push Factors

Push factors are elements that drive migrants to return to their home country due to unfavourable conditions present in the host country.

Economic push factors which influence migrants who are unemployment and lack opportunity in the host country and inability to utilize their skills in the host country. The absence of employment opportunities or disparities in employment opportunities and wages can be powerful motivators for international migration, leading immigrants to consider returning to their home country (Potter & Phillips, 2006). Some immigrants may encounter difficulties in utilizing their skills in foreign countries. Language barriers can pose significant challenges for immigrants in securing job opportunities (Galarneau & Morissette, 2004). When evaluating the current economic situation in Sri Lanka, it presents itself as a push factor that deters migrants from returning.

Psychological push factors are altruism and patriotism, and family reunion. Diaspora immigrants who choose to return and invest in their home country do so, driven by altruistic motives and a strong attachment to their country of origin (Mohamed, 2020). The objective of the migrants is to go back to their homeland and effect change by introducing fresh perspectives and principles, as well as applying the knowledge and abilities they gained in the host nation (Kunuroglu, et al., 2015). Under psychological factors, a desire to reunite with one's family is also a driving force that affects the decision to return. Expats are known to have a high rate of returning to their home country when they are not accompanied by their

partners, don't have children, or when their children experience difficulties adjusting to the new culture (Harvey, 2009; Hugo, et al., 2003).

Situational push factors mentioned in the framework are marginalization and discrimination, inability to integrate into the host nation and challenges faced by being in a minority group. Marginalization is described as a situation where an individual becomes isolated from mainstream societal institutions such as the family, education system, and workplace (Eldering & Knorth, 1998). In response to the increasing levels of joblessness, the governments of the GCC took bold actions by adopting localization policies designed to provide employment opportunities for their citizens (Elbanna & Fatima, 2022). Due to the nationalization process, it is possible that migrants may face unemployment, resulting in a potential need for them to return to their home country. Research on Turkish migrants who left Western Europe and went back to Turkey revealed that the perceived discrimination in Western Europe was the primary cause for their decision to return home (Kunuroglu, et al., 2015; Skrobanek, 2009).

Inability to integrate into the host nation implies return of failure. The term “return of failure” refers to when immigrants are unable to adjust to the host countries due to social, cultural, or political factors and choose to go back to their home country (Mohamed, 2020). As another situational push factor, the challenges of being part of a minority group can also drive immigrants to make the decision to return to their home country (Mohamed, 2020). The economic situation in certain regions of Europe has made it challenging for migrants to survive, and discrimination in the job market along with anti-immigrant policies have limited their job opportunities (Baaz & Akesson, 2015).

Pull Factors

Factors that attract migrants back to their home country due to the presence of positive conditions in their home country are referred to as pull factors.

Economic pull factors are unrealized business prospects and higher demand in the home country. Migrants return to their home country due to unrealized business prospects. Migrants who have a strong understanding of their home country and access to market information are likely to identify business opportunities, leading them to return and participate in various economic activities, including investing in their homeland (Gillespie, et al., 1999). The need for specialized workers and expertise in their home country could also be a factor that draws immigrants back. Due to the request from the governments of the country of origin to promote development, capable immigrants consider returning home and, in this scenario, the mutual benefits for both the diaspora and the governments in the country-of-origin result from this type of return (Chand, 2016).

Psychological pull factors discussed in this study are, reacquiring identity and social cohesion and retirement and the desire to spend their remaining days in their home country. Powerful pull factors that influence a migrant's decision to return to their home country include the desire for a sense of belonging, attachment to the homeland, and reclaiming their identity (Christou, 2006; Reynolds, 2007; Wessendorf, 2007). Upon reaching the end of older immigrants' working lives, they often choose to return to their home country with the goal of spending their golden years there (Carling & Pettersen, 2014).

Situational pull factor mentioned in the framework is the development of the political system and improvements in governance in the home country. Studies have shown that political reforms and regime changes in the home country can give the diaspora the confidence to return (Mohamed, 2020). A significant number of Gambian diasporas who had fled during Yahya Jammeh's rule returned in 2016 following the collapse of the regime, with most being political migrants who had left to avoid political persecution (Mohamed, 2020).

4. Comparative review of the strategies and action plans

A detailed study was carried out to identify the strategies and action plans implemented in different countries and how similar strategies are incorporated in the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration under the below identified sub sections. These strategies are also identified under the three stages in migration such as pre-departure, living abroad and return and reintegration.

Further, the effectiveness of the strategies is also identified as applicable through the desk research carried out.

4.1 Institutionalization of a mechanism for migrant workers

In order to institutionalise a mechanism that would support for a safe and dignified return and reintegration of the return migrants, countries have established agencies, working groups which are tasked to harmonise different activities carried out by the individual organisations, agencies, and ministries in an integrated and well-coordinated manner. The below section explains how other countries have performed on institutionalizing mechanisms for migrant workers in the return and reintegration stage.

4.1.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Jamaica's National Technical Working Group (NTWG) originally established in 2011 which comprises of NGOs, Civil Societies, academia and representatives from the Involuntary Returned Migrants (IRM) community provides a forum facilitating for exchange of ideas, sharing of experiences and acts as a catalyst for building and strengthening of partnership between agencies in order to better serve the issues related to the IRMs (Alicia A. Hayman, 2021).

The EU-IOM joint initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Ghana has initiated steps to provide counselling sessions for all returnees within a period of one month (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020). The organisation meets the returnees to assess the vulnerabilities, specific needs and direct the returnees to any existing services or programmes existing in any member agencies or organisations.

Similar initiatives are carried out in Bangladesh by IOM in partnership with ILO. Civil Society Organisation (CSO) is the umbrella organisation which carries out campaigns for safe migration, referral to existing programmes and services for voluntarily returning migrants. Multiple migration resource centres are opened at district level which provide services to the return migrants. Online registration and emigration clearances which was provided only through the BMET Head Office and Dhaka DEMO are provided in 46 district level DEMOs. By 2017 over one million households were reached through various communication campaigns. Survey results point that 60% of the households surveyed knew the documents required for migration process and around 30,000 migrants have benefitted from the facilitation services (SALEH, 2017). 10 district coordination committees which were planned to be opened in 10 districts have been formed comprising of relevant departments and directorates (IOM, 2021).

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Taiwan, provides protection of labor policies and promotion of the welfare activities to their migrant workers. Taiwan government has active engagement with POLO through greening and social activities. Training is provided in collaboration with local NGOs to introduce the available DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment) reintegration programs. The training covers the documentation requirements as well as business practices. POLO provide guidance and planning process for reintegration programs once they return to the Philippines. The survey conducted by the Institute for Labor Studies of Philippines by 120 respondents have identified out of which 49% migrants

have contacts with Philippine's authorities and they are still abroad in Taiwan. Most of them visit POLO and ask information on government programs and services (Bernas, 2017).

4.1.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

The sub policy framework in Sri Lanka has an action plan to form a special unit at SLBFE HQ with regional and district level coordination with links to other agencies and coordination committees are also planned to be established to provide efficient services at GN Level. To accomplish these action plans the sub policy framework in Sri Lanka addresses the need to have an integrated mechanism for safe and dignified return of the returnees under the area "Social reintegration of returnees" (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

The "One Stop Centre" which will be operational and accessible at Divisional Secretariat Level will provide information and services on economic, health, financial and skill training among the wide range of services provided by multiple resource centres currently (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.2 Psycho-social wellbeing of returnees and their family members

The psycho-social wellbeing of returnees is key for the effective return and reintegration of the migrants. A holistic approach to return and integration which considers psycho-social factors in addition to economic and physical factors should be incorporated in the activities commissioned to the returned migrants. The psycho-social wellbeing practices implemented by other countries for the returnees in their return and reintegration stage is as identified below.

4.2.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

A result of the field survey conducted in Bangladesh of 200 respondents in 2018 reveals that Bangladesh lacks a state-run initiative for psycho-social counselling of return migrants. But CSO in Bangladesh provide psycho-social counselling for returnee women who are exposed to ill treatments and torture. BRAC has appointed psychologist in 10 migration prone areas to offer counselling services to returnees (Rashid, 2018). The Prottasha, project led by the Government of Bangladesh with implemented by IOM in collaboration with BRAC during the period from 2017 to 2021 has enrolled 381 returnees for psychosocial support while 152 received in kind support through the need-based trauma counselling session (IOM, 2021).

Ministry of Social Affairs of Indonesia provides shelter for protection and trauma healing aimed specifically at the migrant returnees with physical and psychological problems. The RPTC developed by the Directorate of PSKTK-PM in 2006 provides bio-psychosocial therapy and trauma healing through RPTC before the victims return to their families. The services are provided by a professional team. However, the efforts are still lacking and systematically insufficient (Prasetyo, 2017).

In contrast, the EU-IOM joint initiative for migration protection and reintegration details out a vulnerability screening of the returnees in Ghana. This activity captures any quick indications of vulnerability and requirement for serious psychosocial needs. The policy is set in place to identify medical psychosocial care as a priority along with physical options such as employment, training, housing requirement, etc.

4.2.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

Under the sub area "Physical and psychological well-being of returnees and their family members", one of the strategies in the sub policy framework of Sri Lanka involves the development of a psycho-social support programme for migrant worker including their family members. The action plans discussed under that strategy include, reviewing of the existing psycho-social programmes and strengthening the capacity to cater to the needs of the returnee migrants, prioritizing the return of victims in host country and providing

referrals upon arrival following a Standard Operating Procedure, connecting existing counselling services at district and DS level, and co-ordinating among government and other service providers for effective psycho-social support (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.3 Social security scheme for migrant returnees

In order to support the social reintegration of returnees, a social security scheme for migrants has been considered. According to the ILO, (2021) countries have established different public services and social protection schemes such as social security, pensions, or old age assistance (ILO, 2021), state-supported health insurance or disability insurance options. Further, as per the Ministry of Foreign Employment, the availability and ease of access to an appealing insurance scheme for migrants, as well as the availability of a dependable social security or pension scheme for low-skilled workers, including female domestic workers, are also identified as important functions.

However, returnees are not usually aware of the formal public support services and social protection programs that their countries of origin offer. They might not be aware of their eligibility, and they might not understand how to navigate the bureaucracy necessary to access the service (ILO, 2021).

The below mentioned contains the social security practices conducted by other countries for the returnees in the return and reintegration stage.

4.3.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

A compulsory insurance program is initiated in December 2019 for all migrant workers, where the government of Bangladesh bears more than 50% of the cost of insurance. Moreover, the results of a survey depict that 72 percent of the migrants receive medical services abroad at some point in their migration, which includes health check-ups, outdoor patient services for occasional ails, hospital admission for long-term ails, injuries from accidents, etc (IOM, 2018).

Similar initiatives are carried out in Philippines, where the migrant workers are being provided welfare support by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in the form of education and training, insurance and loans, assistance with repatriation and reintegration and hospital coverage by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation for the migrants (Liu, 2015).

4.3.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

To address the sub area of “Social Reintegration of Returnees,” the Sub Policy Framework of Sri Lanka has outlined plans to examine current insurance programs for migrant workers and improve them by making them more accessible and user-friendly and to establish systems and procedures for a social security/pension plan for low-skilled migrant workers under the “Social Security Scheme for Migrant Returnees” strategy (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015). Nevertheless, the sub policy lists out of procedures to be in place to assist for the smooth return of migrants who voluntarily or involuntarily had to terminate their contracts prematurely. However, the existing insurance schemes does not address these risks faced by the migrant workers (N.P.D. Padmakanthi, 2022).

4.4 Physical wellbeing of returnees and their family members

Physical wellbeing refers to the ability to conduct physical activities and social roles which are not restricted by physical limitations and biological health indicators (Capió, et al., 2014). Considering the practices which focus on the returnee’s physical wellbeing, covers the overall health and fitness of the returnees after returning to the home country. Maintenance of physical wellbeing helps the returnee and the family

to reduce the risk of illness and injury, improved energy levels, and better overall quality of life. The below mentioned section consists of the physical wellbeing practices conducted focusing on all pre-departure, living abroad and the return and reintegration stages of the migrant workers.

4.4.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Ghana has conducted practices where the migrants will receive health services from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) linked with Ghana health services after signing the General Consent Form. Also, Ghana conducts follow up and monitoring programs which identifies migrants with special needs through screening interview form. Considering the mechanisms established to handle special cases of returnees with traumatic physical and mental experience, Ghana has conducted a Quick Vulnerability Screening which focuses on getting quick indications on potential situations of vulnerability (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020).

Bangladesh government has offered appropriate financial support to cover the medical expenses of the migrants who suffer from serious physical injuries or diseases and unable to continue the jobs in overseas destinations. The OKUP has also offered health services to migrants with serious health issues and has taken the responsibility of reuniting the migrants with their families, take care of pregnant migrants, mentally ill migrants, and contagious diseases (IOM, 2018). According to the results of the medical treatment services, 1,205 returnees have been profiled and 21 returnees have received medical treatment support. Meanwhile the help desk at the arrival lounge strengthened with medical and counselling staff, WEWB (Wage Earners' Welfare Board) in Bangladesh providing an ambulance service in Chattogram Airport which can be used for transporting migrant workers with medical conditions (Rashid, 2018). OKUP has also established migrate support centres in seven project areas along with small safe houses in Dhaka to offer psychological support to returnee women who are exposed to torture and ill-treatment (IOM, 2018).

Additionally, the program conducted by Indonesia's National Commission on Violence against Women consists of several steps including, information and counselling provision, legal case management and assistance at every stage of migration, health services for reproductive health including HIV and AIDS, trauma management, provision of facilities for disabled migrant workers, social reintegration and family and community acceptance, and economic empowerment. Also, Indonesia provides protection to victims of violence, provide information and advocacy services, social protection, psychosocial recovery, and reintegration, accelerate the recovery of the victims, change the mindset of the victims regarding violence and build awareness among migrant workers through the Shelter for Protection and Trauma Healing (RPTC) institute (Prasetyo, 2017). Similarly, the Philippine government has provided counseling services and offered training sessions on HIV/AIDS for Filipino migrant workers. The results of these measures show a significant portion of OFWs are women, and there has been a gradual but persistent rise in the number of migrant workers infected with HIV/AIDS, either due to abuse or violation (Liu, 2015).

4.4.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

Under the sub area "Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members", by using the strategy of ensuring accessibility to health (primary, secondary and tertiary) services stipulated under the Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy, Sri Lankan sub policy framework involves the development of national guidelines on health and fitness for job assessment of the migrant workers at the pre-departure stage along with development of Personal Health Records (PHR) for each worker, incorporation of comprehensive health awareness components within the pre-departure training including counselling and voluntary testing related information on STDs including HIV and AIDS, conducting a pilot review of coordinated care plans of 30 selected households of migrant workers at DS level by SLBFE staff and health personnel, including Sahanapiyasa and qualified medical staff and counsellors at the airport on roster basis to enhance the convenience for the migrant workers, assisting migrant workers upon return to access a health assessment and referrals if necessary, implementing special programmes regarding

trafficked, abused, and exploited returnees who needs specific attention on their return and after return and implement community follow up programs for migrant returnees with special needs (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.5 Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle

Data management and distribution on all stages of the migration cycle play important role for effective management of the return and reintegration process. This systematic recording of information related to migrants can create exchanges between different types of data across national borders and it will help for increase transparency of regional migration trends and support for evidence for policy decisions. The below mentioned section is conducted based on the data management and distribution which focus on all pre-departure, living abroad and the return and reintegration stages of the migrant workers.

4.5.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

National and decentralized data base includes data on returnees and accessibility of data at one centre for relevant stakeholders are key elements on management and dissemination of information of migrants. Key principles of return and reintegration in Ghana have explain, they collect personal data of returnees and in all instances, written consent will be obtained from the assisted individual prior to the disclosure of his/her personal data and/or story to a third party. The Ministry of the Interior will coordinate the regular exchange of information between relevant stakeholders about reintegration activities performed and key figures related to reintegration in their country. Personal information about returnees should not be shared due to concerns about confidentiality and data protection (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020).

According to survey results on Rashid (2018), their main challenge of returnee reintegration is the non-availability of records and databases. But In February 2021, the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) in Bangladesh launched a digital platform for Returning Migrants Management of Information Systems (ReMiMIS) with support of International Organization for Migration (IOM). Main objective of this digital platform is to collect, analyse and store information of returning migrants to Bangladesh. This platform allows to provide better migration data management and organized targeted reintegration support programs. In addition to that, stakeholders have access to information on skills profiles of returning migrants, which may contribute to skill transfers to communities or sectors in need (Bangladesh, 2021).

Philippines has introduced database for returning migrant workers according to their skill in Davao Province. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority lead the project by 6 other government agencies, and they maintain database and, in collaboration with the International Worker Welfare Agency, connects their expertise to prospective employers or other useful services (Leighton, 2020).

India launched Skilled workers arrival Database for employment support (SWADES) to returnee migrant workers under Vande Baharatt Mission and main objective is to conducting skill mapping exercise. Details of this database have been integrated with skill India's ASEEM portal (Employment, 2022).

4.5.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

In the sub policy framework of Sri Lanka, to address the sub area "Effective management of the return and reintegration process", action plan include, developing channels to collect information on returnees from sources available and enter into overall database on SLBFE and make the data available at district, and national One Stop Centres to be used by other sectors and stakeholders (common data sharing system) under the strategy "Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle" (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.6 Welfare and protection of migrant workers' family members

Safe and nurturing environment for family members of migrant workers is one of domain feature on social reintegration of returnees. Therefore, families become unsafe for their members, intervention is required to ensure that the children are placed in a safe and secure environment for their well-being. Hence welfare and protection of migrant workers family members is key factor for effective management of the return and reintegration process. The below section consists of the welfare and protection programs conducted on the migrant worker's families in the living abroad and the return and reintegration stages of the migrant workers.

Family profile of migrant workers and establishing data base in district level for service providing, developed capacity level of officials to identified family members or children in need of assistance and appropriate referrals services are key functions which focused on welfare protection of migrant workers family members.

4.6.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Migrants with specific needs who choose AVRR should be referred to existing services and programs implemented by state and non-state actors, such as IOs, NGOs, or UNHCR, and various MDAs (among others), both in the host countries and in Ghana, based on their profile and needs. This action is to develop a directory of public and other support services available for returnees for referrals by relevant officers. In Ghana, under their referral mechanism to ensure adequate referrals, there should be an ongoing effort to identify the main services and programmes of potential relevance for returning migrants. Community mappings or country-level assessments can help identifying relevant services and programmes and inform the referral process (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020).

According to Rashid & Ashraf (2018), BOMSA, BRAC, OKUP, RMMRU, and WARBE DF provide referral service In Bangladesh. District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOs) provide limited referral services to migrants, directing them to various government offices for relevant pre-departure services. Several NGOs and CSOs, including BOMSA, BRAC, RMMRU, and WARBE DF, have referral systems for migrants.

Department of Bureau of foreign employment of Sri Lanka provide some welfare services for migrant workers and their family members. Sahana Housing Project for Disabled Migrant workers, Daru Diriya Programme (Program for Develop the skills of migrant workers' school-aged children in the areas of singing, dancing, essay writing and oratory, drawing, and art.) and Child protection programme/Child Day care centre (SLFBE, n.d.).

4.6.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

To address the sub area "Social reintegration of returnees" under the "Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with special focus on children" strategy, actions in the sub policy framework of Sri Lanka involves preparing migrant family profiles; identify issues that need attention and coordinate provision of services, develop a directory of public and other support services available for returnees for referrals by relevant officers. Moreover, Development Officers will engage with returnee families and identify issues and needs for referrals and introduce the child vulnerability score card to Development Officers (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.7 Empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness

Empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness refers to the process of educating and informing migrant workers about their rights and entitlements, so they are better equipped to claim and exercise them. This can lead to improved working conditions, increased bargaining power, and reduced

exploitation for these workers. This is done to provide them with knowledge and resources to assert their rights and improve their overall well-being. The below chapter is mainly focused on the awareness sessions conducted focusing on the pre-departure stage of the migrant workers.

4.7.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

The Bangladesh government offers various services aimed at ensuring safe migration for its citizens, including information on safe migration, pre-departure training, skill-building opportunities, loans for reintegration, and consular assistance. Several state organizations, including the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), the Women and Economic Empowerment Board (WEWB), and the District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOS), play a crucial role in spreading information about safe migration practices (Rashid, 2018).

Similarly in Indonesia, they conduct public campaigns in areas where Indonesian migrant workers come from, such as Lampung, Central and East Java Province, to educate the migrant worker community about safe migration, basic labour rights, and how to obtain assistance from the Indonesian government and relevant organizations while abroad (ILO, 2013).

4.7.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka's sub-policy framework, under "Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees" sub area, by using the strategy "Empowerment of migrant workers through rights" following action plans are noted. Provisions have been made to implement awareness programs aimed at educating migrant workers on the importance of safe migration practices and their rights, particularly through pre-departure training. The objective of these efforts is to ensure that migrant workers are equipped with the knowledge to secure decent working conditions (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015). In the sub policy framework, it is noted to establish collectives and foster active participation among migrant workers with an aim to increase their representation in labour unions, so that the issues and concerns of the migrant worker community can be effectively raised and addressed through advocacy efforts that aim to influence policy and practices and another action to carry out advocacy on securing voting rights of migrant workers by collectives and another action to negotiate with labour unions and CSO networks to grant membership to returnee migrant workers with the goal of establishing provisions for migrant worker membership within the labour unions (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

The ILO official website stated that, through its Safe Labour Migration Project (Phase IV) in Sri Lanka, with support from the Swiss government, is partnering with HELVETAS to enhance the skills of state officials, trade unionists, and civil society organizations involved in protecting the rights of migrants (ILO, 2022).

4.8 Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination and returning countries

Legal empowerment for migrant workers is about ensuring they understand and access their rights, and can use the legal system to defend them, in both destination and returning countries. It involves providing legal assistance to migrants which provides information on laws and access to representation, dispute resolution and reintegration resources. The following consists of the legal assistance programs conducted focusing on the migrant workers in the host country and the return and reintegration stages.

4.8.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Under the strategy, legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return, one of the outputs is availability of a database of legal service providers in host and home countries available for legal assistance. In Bangladesh, there are 29 Labour and Welfare Wings located abroad that provide

comprehensive services, including legal support, to Bangladeshi migrant workers and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is responsible for creating and implementing legal and policy guidelines to regulate labour migration from Bangladesh. The Labour and Welfare Wings offer legal assistance to migrants who have committed crimes in the Countries of Destination (Rashid, 2018). A survey conducted for migrants reveals that a limited number of them sought or utilized legal services from their respective missions. The survey found that only 8% of the migrants approached the local Bangladesh embassy for resolving disputes, and despite 22% being victims of fraud, only 1.5% of the 200 surveyed migrants received help from the embassy (Rashid, 2018).

The Bangladesh government plans to provide legal support to its citizens who are imprisoned or in deportation camps through its overseas missions. These missions aim to resolve issues such as non-payment of wages and other benefits through the labour court and other relevant agencies, and by offering legal aid to the workers. The research found that diaspora and local organizations in the countries of destination did not play a role in offering legal services to migrants. However, Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations have begun to involve these groups to support the disadvantaged workers (Rashid, 2018). Likewise, The Legal Assistance Fund of Philippines provides legal aids to migrant workers and bilateral agreements has been established with foreign nations to provide social security to migrant workers. The services offered by the Philippine embassies and consulates include counselling, legal aid, welfare assistance, hospitalization, and skills training (Liu, 2015).

Indonesia conducts a recovery system development for migrant workers program which performed seven tasks. Information and counselling provision and legal case management and assistance at every stage of migration were among those activities (Prasetyo, 2017). While in Ghana in Screening interview form, they provide to migrants captures migrants who need legal assistance (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020).

The ILO FAIRWAY Project, backed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, is responsible for producing country briefs that outline the main legal provisions related to migrant workers in eight Arab nations and the information is presented through fact sheets. These fact sheets provide legal information on recruitment, working conditions, freedom of association, grievances and dispute resolution and sponsorship (ILO, 2022).

4.8.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

Sub policy framework of Sri Lanka mentioned two actions under the strategy “Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return” to address the sub area “Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees”. Those actions are creating a list of legal service providers both in the home country and in the host countries and establish connections between them and offer legal support through State organizations/ Non-Governmental Organizations/ Labour Unions and other service providers. And to have a One Stop Centre with legal assistance established in plantation sectors, Sri Lanka sub policy framework stated to establish procedures for providing specialized legal aid to migrant returnees in the plantation sector to enforce and obtain their contractual rights (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.9 Promote migrant worker safety and protection

Promoting migrant worker safety and protection involves guaranteeing fair treatment and safe working conditions for migrants. This involves implementing laws, providing support services and resources, and preventing human rights violations to ensure decent working conditions for all workers, regardless of migration status. The below section focusses on the safety and protection of the migrant workers in the host countries.

4.9.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

For monitoring compliance and implementation of contracts in host countries, in Bangladesh, WEWB collaborates with the labour and Welfare Wings of Bangladesh's diplomatic missions in foreign countries to obtain death benefits, unpaid wages, employee benefits, and insurance payments from employers (Rashid, 2018). In Bangladesh, the Prottasha project's community-based awareness-raising interventions have effectively disseminated information at the community level and motivated individuals and communities to take action to prevent irregular migration (IOM, 2021). As of September 2022, the Prottasha project's awareness-raising programs have reached 8,830,252 people through social media (IOM, 2022).

Similar initiatives are carried out in Philippine by combating illegal recruitment, such as higher penalties, prohibition of public officials from participating in private recruitment businesses and granting victims in illegal recruitment cases the ability to file complaints which are dealt by the National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC). A survey conducted by the Centre for Migrant Advocacy revealed that 20 percent of migrant workers did not have a contract when they arrived in the destination country (Liu, 2015).

4.9.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

To address the sub area, "Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees" under the strategy, "Promote safety and protection of migrant workers" the sub policy framework has outlined three specific actions. They are to standardize the employment agreements for female domestic workers in Gulf countries through collaboration with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), examine current labour agreements and employment contracts and incorporate provisions to guarantee the safety and dignity of migrant workers and to keep track of adherence to and execution of standard employment contracts in host countries (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.10 Quality standardization of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return

Quality standardization is referred to the process of developing and implementing standards to ensure consistent quality in products, services, or processes. It involves establishing clear guidelines and procedures to determine what constitutes acceptable quality, and then regularly measuring and evaluating performance against these standards. Quality Standardization concept is related to economic reintegration by helping the migrants and returnees to establish an economic self-sustenance upon their return and consists of two key elements namely, standardized skill assessment and certification mechanisms is developed and in operation, and bi-lateral/mutual skill recognition agreements are in place and operational. The below section consists of the quality standardization practices conducted on the migrant workers in the pre-departure stage.

4.10.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is offering training sessions based on the rights and life skill services on the pre-departure stage along with health and skills training to woman migrants can be seen as a practice of incorporating pre-departure trainings (Rashid, 2018). Results of the training sessions states that 1,364 migrants have been enrolled with the counselling sessions and 1,275 of the enrolled migrants have completed the sessions and 10 people have received trauma counselling and psychiatric treatment.

Also, the state, private and civil society institutions in Bangladesh offers various skills testing methods for the migrants. In state institutions, female domestic workers heading to the Middle East must complete a 30-day training program provided by the Training and Testing Centres (TTCs) under BMET, free of charge. Also, several private employment agencies have their own training centres, primarily offering courses

in construction and cleaning. Some of these agencies work with BMET and five Training and Testing Centres to offer housekeeping training for female migrant workers. Apart from that, several civil society organizations, including BOMSA, BRAC, and WARBE DF, provide training on rights, safety, and security. Through a partnership between MJF and BOMSA, women migrants previously received a one-month housekeeping training at the Keraniganj Training and Testing Centre. Recently, MJF signed a memorandum of understanding with BMET to introduce a five-month care-work training program for women at the Keraniganj Training and Testing Centre. The aim of this new training is to prepare women migrant workers for deployment to Japan, which requires a certain level of skills and language proficiency from foreign workers. As a result of the skill assessment programs conducted in Bangladesh, 54% of women migrants has received the skill training on housekeeping and readymade garments at the pre-departure stage and 3% of the men migrants has received training on construction work and driving training. 1572 migrants receiving skill training over 3930 migrants which clearly illustrates the effectiveness of the training sessions. Meanwhile, the government of Bangladesh has allowed certain training organizations to acknowledge the prior work experience of employees through certification. Approximately 20,000 individuals have obtained this certificate, known as RPL, from the Technical Education Board of the Ministry of Education, as of 2017. However, there is no available data on the number of Bangladeshis who are employed domestically or abroad with this RPL certification (IOM, 2018). Similarly, the Philippines has organized workshops and seminars such as PDOS (one-day predeparture seminar) and PEOS (pre-employment orientation seminars) to provide counselling and access to training sessions on HIV/AIDS for health information to migrant workers in times of distress (Liu, 2015).

4.10.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka's sub-policy framework, to address the sub area "Economic reintegration of returnees" under the strategy "Quality standardization and certification of skills of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return" following action plans are mentioned. Country specific skill standards and facilitate relevant agencies has been established to set up required skills testing methods which consists of assessments and certification at pre-departure level (NVQ 3Minimum) and matching host country requirements, an information desk has been set up at the airport on Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills Upgrading and enter into Mutual Skills Recognition (MSR) Agreements/ minimum skills requirements with the destinations (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.11 Financial literacy of migrant workers and services related to Remittance

Understanding basic financial concepts allows people to make informed financial decisions that maximize the benefits they receive as financial products become more complex. However, financial literacy can help migrants to identify opportunities and save money by comparing the best exchange rates and aware of banking information. Remittance is broadly explained as the money transfer from migrants to individuals in their home country (Ratha, 2005). According to Workers' Remittances: An important and Stable Source of External Development Finance document which was published by World Bank indicates that remittance is one of key factor on external funding for many developing countries (Ratha, 2002). The below section consists of the financial literacy programs conducted on migrant workers in the pre-departure and return and reintegration stages.

Comprehensive financial management and banking information available for migrant workers and State and Non-state financial institutions step up their services to migrant workers are key elements on financial literacy of migrant workers and its direct impact for economic reintegration of returnees also.

4.11.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

Bangladesh has programs related to financial literacy for migrants and their family members. From these programs migrants can make choice about the use of compensation for household consumption and way of investing in productive manner and field survey conducted to effectiveness of these programs. From that more than 50 per cent of migrants reported that they could not materialize their plans due to lack of money, support, and facilities. And they identified gap in information services related to financial literacy campaigns for migrant. Therefore, returnees not aware about financial literacy (Rashid, 2018). According to project “Prottasha”, they develop modules on financial literacy and remittance management under their awareness raising programs on reintegration. Till December 2019, 996,003 people reached to awareness raising programs related to module on financial literacy and remittance management. In terms of financial institutions and banks IOM has assisted the Bank in establishing a help desk to handle any inquiries or complaints. PKB has been running a help desk at its Dhaka headquarters for more than three years, with support of IOM and mainly handle queries related to loans. As per survey results despite the lack of awareness among migrants about the loan with limited number of reintegration loan schemes (Rashid, 2018). Similarly, most of the Philippine government's plans are implemented at the local level, which aims to promote financial literacy among migrant workers to enhance savings, investments, and efficient use of remittances (Liu, 2015).

Since 2003, Central Bank of Philippine's has exercised great levels of effort to bolster and streamline the transfer of remittance through the use of digital applications for instance, OWWA issued a standardized identification card (solely to replicate the role of visa card) to all regular workers. The card is directly linked to dollar / peso dominated savings account in a syndicate of banks and allows remittance to be forwarded at \$3 or less per transaction (O'Neil, 2004). Furthermore, a portal was launched in 2007 by OFW to encompass information from financial institutions and to provide comprehensive guideline to help migrant workers with the process. International Organization for Migration (International Organisation for Migration, 2013). In the year 2008, the Philippine Central Bank joined hands with Association of Bank Remittance Officers to set up a local clearing house for credit to other bank mode of remittance, which would make role of middleman obsolete hence reduced fees. It also set up the Philippines Payment and Settlement Scheme to transfer funds to beneficiaries account from other Banks costing 90 % less than using the original process involving couriers hired by commercial banks.

The National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers conducted programs related to Empowerment for return migrants' post-employment which consist financial literacy, technical training and focus on several villages (Wonosobo, Bantul, Garut, and Banjar) The financial literacy activities that aim to encourage the use of remittances for productive purposes emphasize five elements: (i) disseminating information on how to manage remittances; (ii) emphasizing the importance of saving for achieving financial goals upon return; (iii) providing basic knowledge related to loans, including lenders from banking or other financial institutions that are relatively safe and responsible; (iv) disseminating information on sending and managing remittances; and (v) emphasizing the importance of insuring in reducing financial risks before, during, and after employment (Palmira Permata Bachtiar, 2017).

4.11.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka lack of Knowledge on Financial literacy and remittance management are key focusing areas. The remittance market in Sri Lanka is ruled by banks with not much competition arising from MTOs and other entities. Two state Banks namely Bank of Ceylon and Peoples Bank have managed to attract a considerable flow through robust outreach mechanism. Banks have shown a strong initiative to appeal customers with remittance related products such include card-based accounts and remittance linked saving accounts. The two primary MTOs in Sri Lanka operate through partnerships with commercial banks for instance Western Union has significantly increased its outreach into remote areas through an arrangement with Sri Lanka Post.

Families are likely to become remittance-dependent and they exclude from other income earning activities and they faced problems to pay loans and family become indebted. Field experiences gained while implementing a “Helvetas” project have confirmed the importance of financial literacy for sound remittance management (Katrin Rosenberg, 2018).

Sub policy framework of Sri Lanka under the strategy “Promote savings investment and financial management” to address the sub area “Economic reintegration of returnees”, mentioned action plans related to financial literacy of migrant workers are compile information on savings and bank schemes, procedures and educate migrant workers and Key financial institutions and banks establish help desks for migrant workers to obtain information and services (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

The average cost of sending remittances to Sri Lanka is 5.9%, while in the Banking and Money Transfer Organization (MTO) channels is 5.4% and 3.7% respectively. In the case of mobile money, the remittance cost is 2.9%. These empirical evidence points out that Sri Lanka's average cost of remittances is close to the existing estimates of South Asia's 5.2% and lower than the global estimate of 7%. Similarly, the estimates from this study for banking, MTO and Mobile money channels are lower than the corresponding global estimates of 10.5%, 6%, and 3.3% respectively (Bilesha Weeratne, 2020).

For banks, stumbling blocks that render to increasing cost of remittances over MTOs are the dearth of transparency in determining the formula for remittance charges imposed on banks and MTOs have pressured banks to maintain parallel operating systems and exerting a degree of unfair balance of power over. In the case of mobile money, regulator have imposed a remittance cap at LKR 25,000 per transaction and low levels of trust placed on such services tend to low which would into hamper growth potential and ability to capitalize on its advantage as a low-cost avenue.

4.12 Entrepreneurship and Employment

The promotion of entrepreneurship and local employment is a vital factor in encouraging the return decision of the migrants. Factors affecting a migrants return decision can be structural changes and policy interventions and individual factors. The micro level factors like social relations influence the decision to return to home country (Black, et al., 2004) The below section consists of the entrepreneurship opportunities provided for the migrant workers in the return and reintegration stage.

4.12.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

PKB, a state-run institution of the Bangladesh provides small scale loan service for the migrants to start their own business venture upon return which could be small enterprises that are too small for qualify for credit from mainstream credit facilities offered by the banks (BRAC, 2023). During the survey conducted in 2018, 35.5% of the respondents had plans to start their own business upon return to their home country. However, only 18% were able to start their own business due to lack of support from money, support, and facilities. Those who were able to successfully to venture into their own business achieved it through their own initiative (Bangladesh, 2021). The similar services provided in Ghana through micro finance institutions and specific support programmes for micro/ small businesses (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020).

The reintegration services of OKUP offer skills training to women migrants and providing continuous support beyond the initial training and cost of doing business by linking them to the local markets. 400 women in two districts have received training in sewing and livestock farming while 60 received seed money to start their own business in their neighbourhood (Bangladesh, 2021).

Indonesia implemented the ILO's established entrepreneurship development programme, “Start and Improve your Business” in 2010 which has helped in achieving its policy goals of boosting business development and employment in Indonesia (ILO, 2013). Likewise, the Philippine Development Plan (2011-2016) places a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship initiatives, social protection, encompassing

programs for employment opportunities in the labour market, community-based employment initiatives, sustainable livelihood, and social insurance to secure local job opportunities for the returnees (Liu, 2015).

As a measure to promote reverse brain drain in the Home Country, Taiwan has been successful in successfully deploying its incentives. The returnees were provided with housing facilities, low interest-bearing loans, schooling for school children. Special privileges have been offered to returning academics with exposure in foreign countries (D.N. Anh, 2003). Similar success stories are echoed in countries like China and South Korea. However, Jamaica was not successful in combatting the brain drain phenomena through the IOM collaboration talent program (Sampath, 2019).

China has piloted several high-tech zones in different provinces in order to provide entrepreneurs with extensive freedom to form and run private companies and to provide support through cheap office facilities, tax exemptions, and interest-free loans (Debnath, 2016). Further, to aid these high-tech start-ups, more intellectual property rules have been implemented (Jonkers, 2008). As a result, within China 260 high tech zones have been implemented (Chronicle, 2013).

As per the Jonkers (2008), India has followed China's lead and instituted comparable policies to enhance entrepreneurship among its returnees. In 2000, India replicated the Chinese model of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) with the aim of providing a competitive infrastructure for export companies (Debnath, 2016). Even though SEZs do not exclusively target returnees, migrants who want to start a business in India have been given favourable investment opportunities (Jonkers, 2008).

Several other countries, such as Albania, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, have undertaken similar policies and programs (Debnath, 2016). As an example, Tunisia's return migration policy has focused on encouraging Tunisians who are living abroad to invest in their country of origin. Further, Tunisia's government policies allow these entrepreneurs to enjoy tax holidays and provide preferential treatment for the import of capital goods for their businesses. They can also open tax-free accounts while they are overseas and transfer their assets without restriction. Most crucially, Tunisians can use these services without having to wait for a firm return to their country of origin (Bel Haj Zekri, 2007). Further, Algeria has also implemented similar policies to encourage returnee entrepreneurship. As an example, Algeria has exempted returnee entrepreneurs from taxes on imports of capital equipment for their business initiatives. Additionally, they can repatriate all of their belonging's duty free (Saib Musette, 2007).

According to the Albanian national household survey, which was conducted in 2005, there is a strong positive relationship between returnees and business ownership in the country (Kilic, 2007). Further, it highlighted that the absence of start-up capital and a lack of technical skills act as obstacles to the development of small businesses. However, returnees are favourably placed to overcome these hurdles because of their acquired human and financial capital. Additionally, a study that has been carried out in the Maghreb region (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) to understand the link between return migration and the development of small enterprises found that one third of returnees in the sample invested in projects and businesses after their return (Gubert, 2011).

4.12.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

To address the sub area "Economic reintegration of returnees", the sub policy framework of Sri Lanka has dedicated strategy for promoting entrepreneurship among migrants' returnees and their family members with a goal to implement ILO business development model which was pilot tested in few districts in the Island. The returnees from Korea and other high-income earners were targeted for investment initiatives. A purposive sample of 25 returnees from Korea reveals that 60% of the respondents claimed that they were able to attain their objective of setting up their own business ventures (Abeygunawardene, 2018). An online information portal is poised to be implemented on local job opportunities for migrant returnees.

4.13 Financial Services for Migrants

With the migrant population increasing in many countries, the demand for banking and financial services targeting this new segment has received more focus (Anh Tu Chuc, 2022). Financial inclusion can improve the growth projection of country's economy with wider community being included in the banking sector. This section broadly sheds light on the services promoted to the migrants who are in the host country and returned to the home country.

4.13.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

In Nepal, The Foreign Employment Policy seeks to make optimal use of migrants' remittances by establishing financial channels that will enable returning migrants to borrow money at reasonable interest rates. Its purpose is to help attenuate obligations that could reduce consumption. These channels also enable migrants to safely send home and invest their earnings domestically while they work abroad. The Labour Bank was established to provide prospective migrants with subsidized loans to cover the costs of formal migration. The bank would provide a remittance account and assist returning migrants in obtaining additional capital for investment. Before leaving for their destination country, migrants can deposit and invest (\$10) in the Migrant Workers' Welfare Fund, which is managed by the Foreign Employment Promotion Board. After the implementation of these policies a decline in the number of illegal transfer channels was evident. However, the efficacy of this strategy is open to debate. For instance, the Government launched a foreign employment bond in 2010 offering a 9.5 percent interest rate to raise funds for infrastructure development but despite such efforts it failed to deliver desired results owing to insufficient marketing (Ozaki, 2012).

Philippine Diaspora and the Philippine Payments and Settlements System have been successful in increasing savings for development and lowering the fees associated with remittance transfers in Philippines. The Philippines has many rural migrant workers whose access to services are limited. Due to difficult access to bank branches in those locations, branchless banking was established to offer banking and payment services through convenient postal and retail outlets. Customers are able to store cash in the form of e-money, send funds, and make loan repayments through services such as Globe Telecom's G-Cash service. Additionally, Central Bank Published a Circular No. 522 in 2006, which authorized credible Rural Banks or Cooperative Banks to operate a foreign currency deposit. The banks are able to set up foreign currency deposit accounts and foreign currency deposit units of another commercial or thrift bank. Rural Banks are hence given various responsibilities such as servicing foreign exchange remittance and transacting foreign exchange. By allowing migrant workers to save their remittance in foreign currency the services allow them to hedge against exchange risk (Ozaki, 2012).

4.13.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

The sub policy details out the initiatives required to promote savings investment and financial management for migrant workers. A major proportion of Sri Lankan migrant workers hail from low-income families or vulnerable families. So, they are in dire need of financial assistance to fulfil their basic pre-departure requirements such as paying for the passport, other documents, air tickets, agents, and their family expenditure. Although the SLBFE have established financial facilities for migrant workers for various requirements through state banks, the amount is inadequate to meet their expenditure. Because of that, migrant workers have to seek financial assistance from informal sources with punitive interest rates and stressful conditions. Sometimes they lose their properties because of debt distress (NP Dhamikka, Padmakanthi Phd, n.d.).

4.14 Measures undertaken to promote return to home country

Promotion of return migration and reverse brain drain policies acts as combat initiatives that help secure and retrieve a country's main resource which is the people. Many countries follow strategies to attract

its nationals by providing services in different ways and relevant government agencies provide different privileges to migrant workers upon return or to speed up return migration.

4.14.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

In Ghana, staff from relevant agencies ensures that returning migrants are greeted at the airport or bus station, at least for large-scale returns, as well as for any vulnerable migrants who require immediate assistance upon their return. It is ideal to have a migrant reception center where migrants can be given shelter and immediate services to meet their basic needs while they wait for counselling and reintegration assistance. This is especially important during large-scale movements because there may not be enough time to provide personalized information to all returnees upon their arrival (EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020)

China have initiate new service centre for its returnees, with the goal of providing housing allocations and assisting them in purchasing duty-free computers and vehicles. The center also provided airfare assistance to certain student groups (Phyllis Tharenou, July 2014). China launched its National Talent Development Plan in 2010, with the goal of recruiting highly skilled Chinese migrants to work in fields such as education, science, culture, and health and by 2012, 35 industries and 31 Chinese provinces had launched talent programs, attracting over 20,000 highly skilled migrants (Chronicle, 2013).

In addition to encouraging permanent return, China has put in place policies to encourage the temporary return of its highly skilled nationals living abroad. Two Bases and Spring-Bud programs, for example, encourage the temporary return of scientists by providing them with teaching and research opportunities access to Chinese research labs (JONKERS, 2008).

The governments of the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, China have sophisticated return migration policies as well. Korea, Taiwan and China carefully identify their highly skilled scientists working abroad by scrutinizing their credentials, such as the number of years since receiving a PhD, the number of publications, and whether their research is relevant to national priorities. These individuals are then offered lucrative financial packages and assistance with reintegration (Wade, 2001)

Jamaica has also successfully implemented a program to encourage Jamaicans to return. The government offers a variety of services, such as paying for airfare, facilitating, and subsidizing moving costs, providing financial subsidies, and assisting returnees with re-entering the labour market (Thomas-Hope, 2002).

4.14.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

To address broad based positive image building of migrant workers, the sub policy framework of Sri Lanka has dedicated strategies as Entering into agreement with the Dept. of Census and Statistics to capture migrant worker contribution and data in their annual statistical reports, Hold Celebrations of International Migrants Day with State patronage at district level and grant awards and privileges to returnee migrants, Establish migrant friendly reception facility at the Airport to avoid harassment and assist returnees to reach their homes safely and without delays, Implement duty free vehicle permit scheme based on the remittances, Grant duty free concessions for the returnees to import items required for self-employment and livelihood and Launch a reward scheme for the highest remittances sent through official channels by low-skills categories (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.15 Measures undertaken to recognise migrant's contribution

Measures undertaken to recognize migrant's contribution refer to actions taken by governments, organizations, and communities to acknowledge and value the economic, social, and cultural contributions made by migrants to their home country in the living abroad and return and reintegration stages of the migrants.

4.15.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

In Jamaica, in September 2021, a set of communication materials titled “Everyone Deserves a Second Chance” was created and approved. The materials consist of a brochure, two posters, and a flier. They aim to assist individuals in the process of reintegration into society after involvement in the criminal justice system by providing basic information, including a directory of services available through the local authorities’ help desk (Alicia A. Hayman, 2021). But during the final evaluation of the “Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Involuntary Returned Migrants Jamaica” project, it was discovered that the communication materials under the title “Everyone Deserves a Second Chance” were not distributed (Alicia A. Hayman, 2021).

Prottasha project conducted awareness programs in Bangladesh to uplift the lives of returnees. They shared success stories of returnees like Ruma, who was identified by an IOM volunteer as a potential beneficiary. It appears that Ruma migrated to Italy and upon her return, she was classified as a vulnerable returnee and with the guidance provided by the project, Ruma secured a small workshop and sales space where she sells the clothes, she makes (IOM, 2022).

4.15.2 Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka

Sub-policy framework of Sri Lanka, to address the “Social reintegration of returnees” sub area includes actions to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Mass Media and similar establishments to promote a positive image of migrant workers and to issue special identity cards to migrant returnees based on specific criteria, under the strategy of “Broad based positive image building of migrant workers” (Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015).

4.16 Complain mechanism for migrants

Migrant workers who return to Sri Lanka can access complaint mechanism by registering with SLBFE and specialized insurance scheme. However, many migrant workers do not trust the current grievance handling system, and many migrant workers have little faith in the relationship between recruitment agencies and the SLBFE, perceiving the system as biased in favor of the recruitment agencies (ILO, 2019).

4.16.1 Empirical evidence from other countries

BMET in Bangladesh has online complaint management system and lack of data on it is a key issue identified by them. Bangladesh identified, online complaint management system should be checked on a regular basis to see how well complaints filed by male and female victims of fraud are handled in a timely and gender-sensitive manner. Bangladesh have focus on forming alliances with CoDs to improve support for migrant workers in terms of complaint mechanism. Help desk of PKB addresses queries of current returnee migrants on loan services and complaint on irregular practices and they take necessary activities on it (Rashid, 2018).

Nepal has entered into bilateral agreements with destination countries to strengthen the effectiveness of existing policies and underwrite new ones that promote worker well-being (Qatar-Bilateral Agreement 2005, UAE MOU 2007, Bahrain MOU 2007). When workers file a complaint, the majority of disputes are resolved in the private sector with the Qatari Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing, the UAE’s Ministry of Labor, or Bahrain’s labor law before proceeding to the destination country’s courts. The Department of Foreign Employment in Nepal is in charge of receiving complaints and violations of the FEA 2007, conducting investigations, and taking appropriate action (Liu, 2015).

Cambodia has implemented complaint mechanism system in September 2015. From 2012, an assessment was conducted related to initiating complain mechanism by MOLVT (Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training) and PDOLVT (Provincial Department of Labour and Vocational Training) in Kampong Cham, Prey Veng and Battambang locations. Based on consultations with ILO GMS TRIANGLE (Tripartite Action

to Protect Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong Subregion from Labour Exploitation) project partners who provide complaints procedure services: MOLVT, PDOLVTs, MRC implementing partners, trade unions, and legal aid NGOs. Migrant workers have made extensive use of the complaint's mechanism, with 501 complaints cases resolved for 1,524 and over US\$218,638 ordered in compensation in cases of exploitation and abuse (Pacific, 2016).

In terms of migrant worker deployment, ASEAN countries interact quite frequently. Therefore, ILO was able to help create complaint mechanism concerning migrant workers in ASEAN countries (Palmira Permata Bachtiar, 2017)

5. Methodology

This chapter discusses selection of the sample, selection of the geographies for the study, questionnaire, pilot testing and enumerator training, and data collection. Further, the data analysis and limitations of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Selection of the sample

All parameters required in designing of the research study, and the sample size of the KIIs and FGDs to be conducted are predetermined based on the Terms of Reference.

The planned sample of the National level KIIs, District level KIIs and FGDs is listed as below.

Total number of KIIs: 45 numbers

National level: 15 numbers including the below:

- ▶ Relevant officials from Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment - 04
- ▶ Relevant officials from International Labour Organisation - 04
- ▶ Relevant officials from International Organisation of Migration - 04
- ▶ Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment - 01
- ▶ Others - 02

District level: 30 numbers including below:

- ▶ Divisional Secretaries – 06
- ▶ Foreign Employment Development Officers – 06
- ▶ District Employment Coordinators - 06
- ▶ Trade Union and Civil Society Members – 12

Total number of FGDs: One FGD with the expected participation of approximately 15 migrants from each of Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Kandy, and Kurunegala districts.

The selection of the sample for FGDs was carried out as follows:

- 1 An initial meeting was conducted (via MS Teams) with three district partners (Anuradhapura, Kurunegala and Vavuniya) on 13th January 2023 and the remaining two district partners (Kandy, Puttalam) were briefed separately. The objective of the discussion was to obtain insights into the availability of information on the migrants and to communicate the involvement required from project partners.
- 2 KPMG visited the Safe Labour Migration Project Partners (District Partners) on the 02nd of February 2023 as a pre survey visit. The objectives of the pre survey visit are as follows:
 - ▶ Identify characteristics of the return migrants
 - ▶ Identify the availability of data
 - ▶ Familiarise the projects or activities initiated/ carried out by District Partners to implement the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in Sri Lanka
 - ▶ Obtain input to develop the KII and FGD interview guide.

- 3 KPMG then developed a excel template by including the fields of Name of the Migrant, Gender, Age, Marital Status, District, DSD, Address, Contact Details, Skill Type, Employment Type, Country of Destination, Current Profession etc. The excel sheet was circulated among all District Partners for input.
- 4 A data base with migrants' information was developed based on the received responses from the District Partners and the migrants were divided into profiles based on the characteristics to identify different migrant profiles. Migrant profiles for the FGDs were identified based on different criteria as follows:
 - ▶ Gender
 - M - Male
 - F- Female
 - ▶ Age
 - E - Elder (>30 years)
 - Y - Young (<= 30 years)
 - ▶ Skill Type
 - S - Skilled
 - US - Unskilled
 - ▶ Host Country
 - ME - Middle East
 - O - Other Country

As a result, 16 different migrant profiles were identified as illustrated below:

▶ **Figure 8: Migrant Profiles**

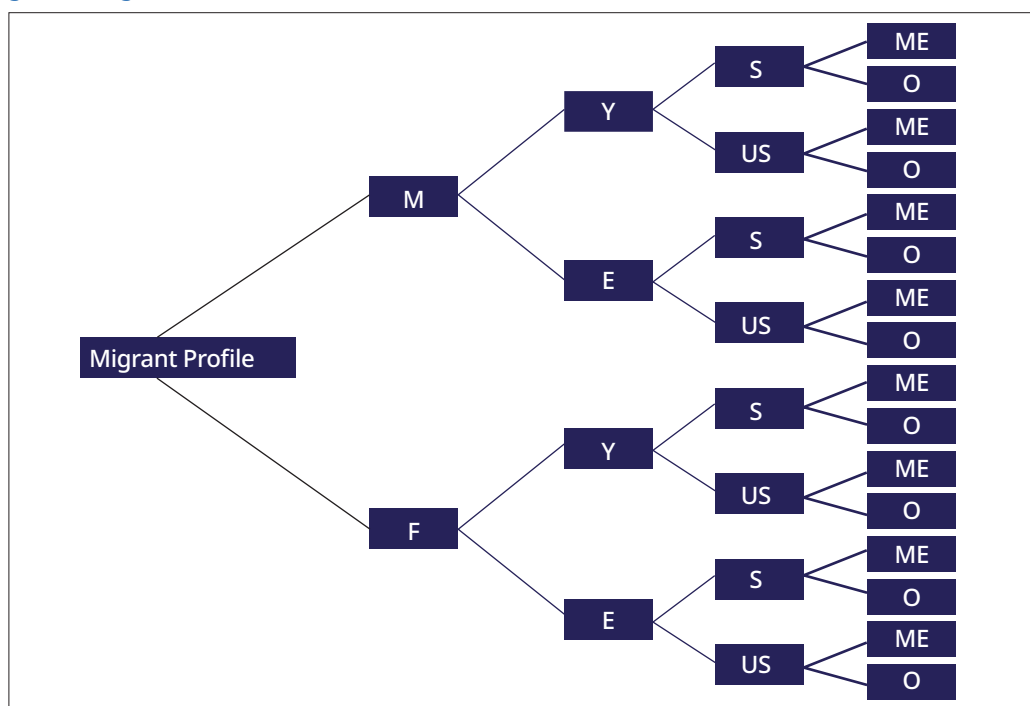


Figure 8: Migrant Profiles

Accordingly, migrants for the FGDs were selected using purposive sampling. The selected migrant details were communicated to the District Partners to coordinate with the selected migrants and to arrange logistics.

5.2 Selection of Geographies

Five districts were selected based on the requirement of ILO including Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Kandy, Kurunegala, Puttalam for the research study and all the district level KIIs and FGDs carried out in those mentioned districts.

5.3 Questionnaire

A guided questionnaire was developed prior to the national and district level KIIs, and details were gathered by considering the action plan and target outputs of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration. The areas considered in developing the guided interview questions are as follows:

1. Awareness of the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy
2. Migrant profile-related information, such as characteristics of the migrants
3. Project involvement related to return and reintegration sub policy
 - ▶ Project timeline
 - ▶ Activities carried out
 - ▶ Criteria that need to be considered during the phase of identifying returnees for these projects
 - ▶ Identification of the returnees' needs
 - ▶ Facilities/ Services provided
 - ▶ Success stories
 - ▶ Project implementation issues
 - ▶ Whether the effectiveness of activities implemented has been checked or not. / If checked, how?
 - ▶ Availability of statistical data
4. Stakeholder involvement
5. Involvement in other projects
6. As per their understanding, what are the areas that have already been addressed through the return and reintegration sub-policy?
7. Areas that need more recognition and other information or comments related to the return and reintegration sub policy

Further, a questionnaire was developed prior to FGDs, and information was gathered by considering the action plan and target outputs of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration by focusing on three different areas as follows:

1. Pre departure stage

- ▶ Awareness of the services which migrants can receive at the pre-departure stage
- ▶ Training/services received at the pre-departure stage
- ▶ Awareness regarding the contract and related matters
- ▶ Suggestions/comments to improve the services provided at the pre-departure stage

2. In-service stage

- ▶ Awareness of the services which migrants can receive in the in-service Stage
- ▶ Services received by the migrant worker's family members and children
- ▶ Special investment opportunities for high-income earning migrant workers
- ▶ How the repatriation happens for the victims who were in the countries during the period of COVID-19?
- ▶ Were they any part of an NGO / labour union?
- ▶ Suggestions/ comments to improve the services provided at the in-service stage

3. Return and reintegration stage

- ▶ Awareness of the services available for returned migrants and their families
- ▶ Services received at the return and reintegration stage
 - ▶ Awareness sessions (e.g.: Financial Literacy)
 - ▶ Services received through financial channels
 - ▶ Entrepreneurship support
 - ▶ Physical well-being support
 - ▶ Psychosocial support
 - ▶ Welfare facility for returnees' family members
- ▶ Awareness of the available channels to find local job opportunities upon return
- ▶ Suggestions/comments to improve the services provided at the return and reintegration stage

Apart from the guided questions listed above, additional situational-based questions were asked during KIIs and FGDs to verify the outcomes of the project.

5.4 Pilot Testing and Enumerator Training

The interviewers allocated for data collection were given a detailed understanding of the project, its background and the objectives of the study by conducting a workshop by the Team Leader/Technical Expert. This was facilitated for the Interviewers to be familiarised with the research questions and to emphasis on how the questions need to be raised to the respondents when conducting the KIIs and FGDs.

Further, the workshop also included a detailed explanation on the data recording and related barriers. The interviewers were also provided with an interview guideline which included the interpretation of each question, its purpose and an interpretation of terminology used in the research questions.

Interviewers with prior experience in conducting KIIs and FGDs were utilized for the data collection.

5.5 Data Collection

Data was collected through the guided questions with the assistance of experienced Interviewers.

The Interviewers physically visited the pre-defined sample collection locations and conducted face-to-face interviews to gather the necessary data. Considering the language requirements in the selected districts, KPMG deployed two teams (Tamil and Sinhala) of Interviewers to conduct the district-wise KIIs and FGDs.

Total number of KIIs: 45 numbers**National level:**

08 KIIs conducted including the below:

- ▶ One key personnel from Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
- ▶ Officials from International Labour Organisation – 02
- ▶ Officials from the International Organisation of Migration – 02
- ▶ Officials from the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment – 02
- ▶ One official from an NGO

District level:

37 members were interviewed including the below:

- ▶ Foreign Employment District Development Officers – 06
- ▶ Foreign Employment Development Officers – 05
- ▶ Trade Union and Civil Society Members – 21
- ▶ Grama Niladhari – 05

Total number of FGDs: 07 numbers**National Level:**

01 FGD with the SLBFE

District Level:

06 FGD sessions as below 88 migrants and host community members.

District	Number of Attendees	Number of FGD sessions
Puttalam	14	01
Kandy	18	01
Anuradhapura	19	01
Vavuniya	26	02
Kurunegala	11	01

5.5.1 Data collection at District Level FGDs

The project team visited all the five selected districts and conducted FGDs with the migrants or family members of the migrants.

► **Figure 9: FGD – Puttalam** © 2023 KPMG | 24th March 2023



► Figure 10: FGD – Kandy © 2023 KPMG | 29th March 2023



► Figure 11: FGD – Anuradhapura © 2023 KPMG | 04th April 2023



► Figure 12 : FGD – Vavuniya © 2023 KPMG | 04th April 2023



► Figure 13: FGD – Kurunegala © 2023 KPMG | 25th April 2023



Out of 16 different migrant profiles identified during the sample selection, only 15 were covered except for the profile of Female-Young-Unskilled-Other. The number of migrants who participated for the FGDs identified based on the migrant profile is as below:

► **Table 3: Migrant Profiles Vs. number of migrants participated for the FGDs**

#	Migrant Profile	Number of Migrants
1	F/E/S/ME	6
2	F/E/S/O	4
3	F/E/US/ME	32
4	F/E/US/O	6
5	F/Y/S/ME	2
6	F/Y/S/O	1
7	F/Y/US/ME	2
8	M/E/S/ME	5
9	M/E/S/O	3
10	M/E/US/ME	9
11	M/E/US/O	6
12	M/Y/S/ME	5
13	M/Y/S/O	1
14	M/Y/US/ME	5
15	M/Y/US/O	1

5.6 Data Analysis

The data is analysed, and the findings presented is disaggregated based on the migrant profiles identified in the sample (gender, skill category, type of employment and country/region of destination) in section 5.1. For data analysis purposes, a master file was prepared by including all the comments and data received through the KIIs and FGDs.

A detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis was be carried out along with a written narrative and content analysis based on the migrant profiles. All findings: quantitative and qualitative analyses related to FCGs are presented by considering 15 profiles mentioned in section 5.1.

5.7 Limitations

- The migrant profile of Female/ Young/ Unskilled/ migrated to other country (F/ Y/ US/ O) was not covered due to lack of migrant information, and availability of the migrants.

6 Outcomes and Impact

This chapter discusses the key observations from the field study including both national level and district level KIIs and FGDs on the effectiveness of the Implementation of Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in Sri Lanka. The chapter is structured into five sections:

- ▶ Section 6.1 discusses on the effectiveness of the implementation of Area 01 of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan which is the social reintegration of the returnees.
- ▶ Section 6.2 presents the discussion on economic reintegration of returnees.
- ▶ Section 6.3 discusses the physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members.
- ▶ Section 6.4 presents the mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees.
- ▶ Section 6.5 discusses the effective management of the return and reintegration process.

6.1 Area 01 - Social Reintegration of Returnees

Social reintegration of the returnees is considered as one of the major components under the sub policy and national action plan on return and reintegration. This area has been addressed through six different strategies as follows:

- 6.1.1 Institutionalization of a mechanism to ensure safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers
- 6.1.2 Measures undertaken to recognize migrant's contribution
- 6.1.3 Measures undertaken to promote return to home country
- 6.1.4 Social security scheme for migrant returnees
- 6.1.5 Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with special focus on children
- 6.1.6 Skills development and career counselling for migrant worker's children

6.1.1 Forging and Institutionalization of a mechanism to ensure safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers

To address the social reintegration of returnees, the return and reintegration sub-policy in Sri Lanka has a focused strategy that centres on the institutionalization of a mechanism. The primary goal of this mechanism is to ensure the safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.1.1 based on the survey study are identified in Table 04 below. The results of the survey shows that the action plans 6.1.1.4, 6.1.1.5, 6.1.1.6 and 6.1.1.8 were not implemented.

▶ **Table 4: Area 01 | Strategy 01 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.1.1	Establish a special unit to support safe and dignified return and reintegration at the SLBFE HQ with adequate staff and a regional and district coordination mechanism with links to other relevant agencies.	Implemented
6.1.1.2	Strengthen and re-establish the migrant resources centres as "One Stop Centres" at the District /Divisional level to provide information and services on economic/health/ financial/skill training etc.	Implemented

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.1.3	Establish Coordination Committees with all relevant stakeholders at divisional level with a link to GN level for effective management of reintegration	Implemented
6.1.1.4	Review the existing housing loan schemes / programmes for migrant workers at district level and make the issue of loans more migrant friendly.	Not Implemented
6.1.1.5	Include adequate information to sensitize prospective migrants on planning for return and re-integration through an information kit on return and reintegration	Not Implemented
6.1.1.6	Provide information on reintegration services to migrants about to return to Sri Lanka through leaflets and other materials to enable smooth return	Not Implemented
6.1.1.7	Ensure employment contract includes clauses on return and repatriation (responsibilities of the worker and employer especially for domestic workers)	Implemented
6.1.1.8	Establish a clear procedure within SLBFE to facilitate smooth return for pre-mature departure to Sri Lanka	Not Implemented

Table 5 indicates the level of understanding and execution of action plans related to this strategy by stakeholders at both national and district levels. These stakeholders include international organizations such as ILO and IOM, government entities such as SLBFE, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/District Partners.

► **Table 5: The level of awareness and implementation of action plans**

Action plan #	Awareness								Implementation				
	National level			District level					District Level				
	ILO	Gov. Bodies	NGOs	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala
6.1.1.1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6.1.1.2	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
6.1.1.3	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.1.4	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.1.1.5	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.1.1.6	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.1.1.7	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
6.1.1.8	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

Source: Through the information received from KIIs and FGDs

As indicated in the Table 5, stakeholders at the district level have undertaken various initiatives to ensure the successful execution of the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration. These activities are designed to align with the objectives of the sub-policy and enhance its effectiveness.

During the FGD conducted with SLBFE, it was identified that a special unit named the Reintegration Unit was effectively established at the SLBFE headquarters to facilitate safe and dignified return and reintegration (action plan 6.1.1.1). The unit comprises 09 staff members, including a Manager and an Assistant Manager. Additionally, a regional and district coordination mechanism has also been implemented, establishing connections with other relevant agencies. During the discussion held with the Reintegration Unit, it was brought to attention that one of the operational challenges faced is the physical distance between the Reintegration Unit and the main SLBFE headquarters. The unit is located away from the HQ due to space limitations, and the level of coordination and communication between the HQ and the unit has to be further improved for effective and efficient operationalization of the unit. The activities conducted by national and district stakeholders demonstrated the successful implementation of establishing specialized units and establishing links with other relevant agencies. While district-level stakeholders, including migrants, were aware about the establishment of the Reintegration Unit, there is a lack of adequate awareness among migrants regarding the specific services and facilities provided such as evaluating and providing non-financial self-employment aids, essential stationary items for migrant returnees etc. by the unit.

The implementation of action plans 6.1.1.2. and 6.1.1.3 at the district level has been successful, with district-level stakeholders undertaking various initiatives to enhance effective coordination between district officials and returning migrants. Migrant Resource Centres have been established at the divisional level, where FEDOs are located to provide services and information to migrant returnees on economic, health, financial and skill training aspects. The level of awareness within the community on the existence of these migrant resource centres is satisfactory. However, based on the FGDs with migrants at district level, it was mentioned that migrants prefer referring for assistance from NGOs/ District Partners rather than referring to the government-operated resource centres.

The following activities were undertaken by district partners for the implementation of action plan 6.1.1.3.

- ▶ Safe Labour Migration awareness session have been initiated in all districts In Puttalam district alone, 1,259 individuals participated in safe labour migration awareness sessions.
- ▶ At the district level, stakeholders have established migrant groups known as SAGs (Self-Autonomous Groups) with the objective of enhancing the knowledge related to migration and the return of migrants in the community. These SAGs have served as the basis for the formation of migrant societies in the process of selecting members for the migrant societies. In Puttalam, 11 migrant groups have been identified, while Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, and Kurunegala have 61, 59, and 76 migrant groups respectively.
- ▶ District partners (NGOs) act as coordinators among the SAG groups and various key stakeholders such as FEDOs, economic development officers, Samurdhi officers, and CRP (Central Reserve Police) officers. Their involvement facilitates effective communication and exchange of messages, concerns, and immigration-related information within the community.
- ▶ Vavuniya district has initiated an information hub for migrants and returnees.

However, through FGDs it was noted that the return migrants from the Middle East were aware of these SAG groups. On the other hand, return migrants from Japan, Korea, Italy, and Malaysia were not aware of these groups. This indicates that this activity primarily has targeted migrants from the Middle East, especially female migrants.

National level stakeholders are currently in the discussion stage to implement housing loan schemes for migrants and to arrange a multi-purpose loan scheme for return migrants with collaboration with banks. The result of the survey shows that the activity 6.1.1.4 is considered to have been not implemented at the time of the study.

Based on the KIIs conducted at district level it is observed that, to achieve activity 6.1.1.5, district level stakeholders including FEDOs, FEDDOs and district partners are conducting pre-departure trainings in collaboration with the government officials. According to migrant profiles, both elderly and young female migrants who travelled to Middle East as housemaids for the first time had received a 21-day pre-departure training. However, as per the district level FGDs, migrant returnees have not received any information regarding the procedure after returning to Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is noted that pre-departure training does not adequately address the aspects of return and reintegration phase of migrants.

During the study, KPMG observed printed material such as leaflets in the Migrant Resource Centres on safe labour migration and human trafficking. However, there was no mention on reintegration services specifically to migrants about to return to Sri Lanka through leaflets and other materials to enable smooth return (activity 6.1.1.6).

During the KIIs, the Kurunegala District Partner highlighted that “majority of the migrants, particularly female migrants, returned before their contract ended since they were compelled to work in multiple households simultaneously, which was not part of their original contractual agreement”. However, during the FGDs conducted in the 5 districts for the study, it was noted that none of the participants had returned to Sri Lanka before the maturity period of the contract, nor have received any knowledge or awareness of premature contract termination services during the pre-departure stage. Return migrants from the Middle East who participated the FGDs, were not aware of the provisions and procedures regarding contract termination.

During the field study, the following individual experience was shared by a return migrant:

- This return migrant was an unskilled female return migrant from the Middle East. She worked as a domestic helper for 4 years in Saudi Arabia. Due to the heavy workload, she had suffered from various non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, heart problems, etc. Therefore, had tried to return to Sri Lanka for further medical treatments before the maturity of the contract. However, the employer has been reluctant to terminate the contract, and has not allocated money for her air ticket as well as her salary for the last three months.

It was highlighted through the FGDs that returnees were unaware of contract termination and its related procedures. This indicates that the activities related to contract termination according to activity 6.1.1.8 is not implemented by the relevant stakeholder.

6.1.2 Broad-based positive image building of migrant workers

To address the strategy of broad-based positive image building of migrant workers under the social reintegration of returnees, the Sri Lankan Return and Reintegration sub-policy framework has outlined several targeted measures. These measures aim to recognize the contributions of migrant workers, facilitate their return and reintegration, and provide tangible benefits to support their livelihoods.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.1.2 based on the survey study are identified in Table 06 below. The result of the survey shows that the action plans 6.1.2.1, 6.1.2.2 and 6.1.2.4 were not implemented.

► Table 6: Area 01 | Strategy 02 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.2.1	Establish a MoU with Ministry of Mass Media and similar establishments to promote a positive image of migrant workers	Not Implemented
6.1.2.2	Enter into agreement with the Dept. of Census and Statistics to capture migrant worker contribution and data in their annual statistical reports	Not Implemented
6.1.2.3	Hold celebrations of International Migrants Day with State patronage at district level and grant awards and privileges to returnee migrants.	Implemented
6.1.2.4	Issue special identity cards to migrant returnees based on specific criteria	Not Implemented
6.1.2.5	Establish migrant friendly reception facility at the Airport to avoid harassment and assist returnees to reach their homes safely and without delays	Implemented
6.1.2.6	Implement duty free vehicle permit scheme based on the remittances	Implemented
6.1.2.7	Grant duty free concessions for the returnees to import items required for self-employment and livelihood	Being Implemented
6.1.2.8	Launch a reward scheme for the highest remittances sent through official channels by low-skills categories	Being Implemented

During the FGDs with SLBFE, it was indicated that Department of Census and Statistics have included 4-5 questions to capture information on migrant in the household survey conducted in 2019 to capture information related to migrants. However, they have not been able to cover the entire scope of migrants and there is no agreement signed with the Department of Census and Statistics to capture migrant worker contribution and data in their annual statistical reports to achieve action plan 6.1.2.2.

National-level stakeholders, including ILO and government organizations, reported that the Reintegration Unit of the SLBFE arranges different inspiring events, award ceremonies, and evaluation programs on a yearly basis to recognize migrants. The purpose of these events is to highlight and showcase the achievements of returnees who have successfully achieved in their professions after coming back to Sri Lanka. Therefore, action plan 6.1.2.3 can be considered to have been 'implemented'.

The national-level stakeholders indicated that specific measures have been implemented to establish migrant-friendly reception facilities at airports. Upon arrival, a dedicated team from the IOM is dispatched to the airport to offer reception assistance to migrants who expect assistance to solve their issues. This includes facilitating their interactions with the CID and other intelligence officers, as illegal migrants may lack the capability to respond effectively. Additionally, in some cases, transport arrangements are also made to ensure their safe journey back home. In terms of District Stakeholders, "Samadanam" facilitate the return of a vulnerable woman who migrated to the middle east by providing financial support for air ticket. The result of the survey shows that the action plan 6.1.2.5 is considered as implemented.

In reference to the implementation of a duty-free vehicle permit scheme based on remittance levels (action plan 6.1.2.6), national-level stakeholders stated that the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment has implemented the issuance of vehicle permits as an additional benefit for migrants who send money through official channels. For instance, Sri Lanka's cabinet of ministers has approved a proposal to provide an additional duty concession and electric vehicle import allowance to migrant workers based on the amount they remit to the country through official channels from August 2022.

In terms of granting duty-free concessions to returnees for importing items necessary for self-employment and livelihood (action plan 6.1.2.7), national level stakeholders have already conducted a survey to identify the needs of migrants. However, based on the observation this action plan is still at the discussion stage.

Based on the KIIs conducted at national level, it was observed that action plan 6.1.2.8. is at the implementation stage. Initiatives have been made to introduce additional duty-free allowances and other benefits based on the foreign currency remitted by migrants through proper financial channels. This initiative involves multiple stakeholders such as Sri Lanka Customs and Banks. Additionally, the stakeholders highlighted that the SLBFE provides an allowance of YEN 600,000 to returnees from Japan for over three years under the TITP (Technical Intern Training Program) visa. This allowance is granted by the Japanese government specifically for individuals with a valid three-year TITP working visa. It was also noted that after receiving this allowance, many returnees choose to remigrate to Japan under the Supplementary Skilled Worker (SSW) visa category for an additional two-year period.

6.1.3 Social security scheme for migrant returnees

To address the social reintegration of returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka integrates a focused strategy that aims to implement a social security scheme for migrant returnees. To achieve this strategy, two primary objectives have been established. One of these objectives is to review the existing insurance schemes for migrant workers and ensure more benefits and migrant-friendly access is in place. Secondly, to establish systems and procedures for a social security/pension scheme to benefit low-skilled migrant workers.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.1.3 based on the survey study are identified in Table 07 below. Based on the survey study results the action plan 6.1.3.2 is not implemented at the time of the study.

► **Table 7: Area 01 | Strategy 03 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.3.1	Review the existing insurance schemes for migrant workers and ensure more benefits and being migrant friendly to access	Implemented
6.1.3.2	Establish systems and procedures for a social security /pension scheme to benefit low skilled migrant workers	Being Implemented

When considering action plan 6.1.3.1, as evidenced by the field study, the national-level stakeholders are aware of the objectives of this strategy and government institutions like the SLBFE have already introduced and maintains an insurance scheme for the returnees. Further, under the pre-departure training of SLBFE, migrants are informed about the insurance scheme and the participants of the FGDs also confirmed the same. According to the KIIs conducted with national level stakeholders it was observed that migrant who have registered with SLBFE are eligible for insurance schemes, and SLBFE pays bulk payments based on the migrants' contract period. The following are the benefits highlighted at the FGD:

- In the event of a death, family members of the deceased are entitled to a sum of LKR 600,000.
- In the event of a permanent disability, a sum of LKR 400,000 is entitled to the affected migrant returnee.
- In the event of an illness or an accident, the SLBFE provides the cost of the air ticket to return to Sri Lanka and cover the hospital bills.

As per the national level KIIs, this scheme has been reviewed and updated. Among the district-level stakeholders, District Partners play a vital role as an intermediary by conducting awareness sessions and guiding potential migrants and returnees for such services offered by the government. Further it was also noted through national level KIIs that migrants who have migrated after 2015 are aware of the insurance scheme since there is an essential requirement to have pre-departure training prior to migration and SLBFE provides awareness for migrants on the existing insurance schemes to the migrant workers. Although registration under the SLBFE is mandatory for migration, according to the district level FGDs, extensive time required for claim processing time and lengthy documentation process for claiming the

insurance are the main reasons for which the migrants are not interested in registering under SLBFE when migrating for foreign employment.

When considering action plan 6.1.3.2, there is an established system and procedure called “Manusaviya” for a social security scheme to benefit low-skilled migrant workers which is introduced by the Social Security Board in September 2022. However, at the time of the study it was not active according to the input received from the district level stakeholders. Further it was also noted that developments/updates on this project have not been adequately communicated to the district level stakeholders. The result of the survey shows that, this activity as ‘being implemented’.

6.1.4 Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with special focus on children

This approach places a strategy on ensuring the well-being and safeguarding of family members, especially children, of migrant workers. The action plans associated with this strategy include creating profiles of migrant families to understand their specific circumstances and requirements, identifying and addressing related issues through the coordination of service provisions, compiling a directory of public and other available support services for returnees, which can be referred to by relevant officials, engaging with returnee families to identify their needs and concerns for appropriate referrals, introducing a child vulnerability scorecard to Development Officers, establishing a collaborative mechanism at the district level involving all stakeholders to guarantee the welfare and protection of children belonging to migrant worker families, and coordinating efforts with relevant agencies.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.1.4 based on the survey study are identified in Table 08 below. The results of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.1.4.2 and 6.1.4.4 have not been implemented at the time of the study.

► Table 8: Area 01 | Strategy 04 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.4.1	Prepare migrant family profiles; identify issues that need attention and coordinate provision of services	Implemented
6.1.4.2	Develop a directory of public and other support services available for returnees for referrals by relevant officers	Not Implemented
6.1.4.3	Development Officers engage with returnee families and identify issues and needs for referrals	Implemented
6.1.4.4	Introduce the child vulnerability score card to Development Officers	Not Implemented
6.1.4.5	Establish a collaborative mechanism with all stakeholders at district level to ensure welfare and protection of children of migrant workers, and coordinate with relevant agencies	Implemented

The below table displays the level of awareness and implementation of activities under the action plan for this strategy among stakeholders at the national and district levels. These stakeholders include ILO, government bodies, and district partners of Puttalam, Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Kandy and Kurunegala.

► **Table 9: The level of awareness and implementation of activities under the action plan of Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with a special focus on children**

Action plan #	Awareness								Implementation				
	National level			District level					District Level				
	ILO	Gov. Bodies	NGOs	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala
6.1.4.1	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
6.1.4.2	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
6.1.4.3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.4.4	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.1.4.5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Through the information received from KIIs and FGDs

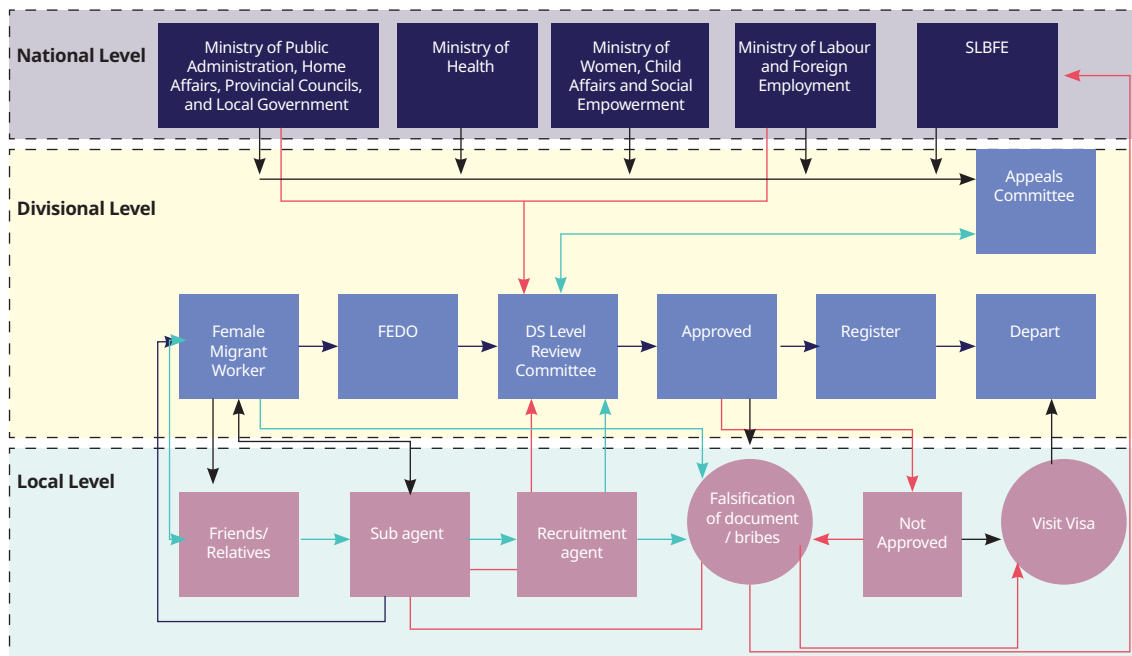
To accomplish the action plan 6.1.4.1, involving the preparation of migrant family profiles, identification of issues, and coordination of service provisions, national-level stakeholders have highlighted the requirement for women migrant workers to obtain the Family Background Report (FBR) from the Divisional Secretariat. According to the KIIs conducted with district-level stakeholders it was noted that, the issuance of FBR is handled by FEDOs at the field level and referred to required authority where necessary. As a requirement of the sub policy implementation, the FEDOs used to personally visit households to assess the family background before issuing the FBR. However, as at the time of the research study conducted, personal visits to households for background checks were discontinued, and only document verification is carried out.

Before granting approval for the FBR, FEDOs examine various documents, including:

- Passport
- Birth certificate of the child
- Affidavits from the child's parent (the person planning to migrate) and the individual responsible for taking care of the child.

The Figure 14 provides an illustration of the process of obtaining a FBR.

► Figure 14: The process of obtaining a FBR



To execute action plan 6.1.4.3, engaging with returnee families to identify their needs and concerns for appropriate referrals effectively, district-level stakeholder KIIs indicated that Development Officers interact with families with migrants and also with return migrants to identify their problems and requirements for appropriate referrals. One of the Grama Niladhari Officers from Puttalam district also highlighted the importance of the role of Development Officers and confirmed their active involvement in the field work.

It was also identified during the Survey Study that the Development Officers have engaged with the families during the FBR process where the officers emphasized the need of clarifying the objective of migration from the migrant worker and preparing care plans for their children which have been made mandatory.

Engaging the Development Officers with returnee family members has been implemented at the ground level, however, interviewed migrants are dissatisfied with the level of involvement of the FEDOs and believe they should reach out to the NGOs/CSOs for better assistance. Further it was also highlighted that facilities provided for FEDOs to carry out the field visits were not sufficient since only Rs.2,000 were given for a month as travelling allowance

To successfully execute action plan 6.1.4.5, national and district-level stakeholders have undertaken several actions. At the national level, the following activities have been undertaken:

- Care plan program - Under the Care Plan program, DOs visit each family and assess the presence of vulnerable children. If vulnerabilities are identified, the DOs create a personalized care plan that addresses various aspects such as assigning a responsible caregiver and ensuring access to education and nutrition, among others.
- Providing school kits, other relevant materials, and scholarships for the children of migrant workers.
- Provide counselling programs for children who need the psychosocial support
- Having a mechanism under the SLBFE to reimburse up to a maximum of LKR 100,000 if the migrant workers' children want to follow different educational courses such as diplomas.
- Initiated discussions with KDU to provide educational opportunities to the children of migrant workers

and the cost will be borne by the government. Furthermore, in the implementation stage, migrant workers who are abroad with their children can send their children to Sri Lanka for higher education.

District-level stakeholders have taken action to implement the initiatives proposed by national-level stakeholders. They have initiated various projects and programs within their districts. These include scholarship projects, educational programs focusing on IT and English language skills, distribution programs for stationery supplies, and child protection programs.

Based on the national-level interviews conducted, there is an ongoing program to provide school kits, other relevant materials, and scholarships for the children of migrant workers. As a result of that, returnees who benefited from Rs.10,000 worth essential stationery aids so far are as follows:

► **Table 10: Returnees who benefited from essential stationery aids**

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Essential stationary Aids	815 ¹	83	28	88	-	-	-

Source: Statistical information received from the Reintegration Unit, SLBFE

Further, based on the national level KII conducted with the Reintegration Unit, SLBFE, it was observed that the availability of this facility is not promoted during the period of 2019 to 2021 due to a lack of availability of resources. Further, it was mentioned that all these grants provide coverage for all the districts in Sri Lanka, although owing to a lack of resources, SLBFE has occasionally been unable to spread these supporting systems to all the districts. However, it is aware that these services have not been equally promoted and carried out in all the districts due to several reasons such as lack of development officers etc. (E.g.: North Central Province)

However, according to FEDOs, children of returned migrants have received stationery supplies worth LKR. 8,000 within five years of their return to Sri Lanka while some of the children received LKR. 10,000 worth of school kits. Further, it was also mentioned that school kits and stationery supplies are provided to lower-income migrant families. During the KIIs conducted at the district level, it was highlighted by the migrants that in some cases, the child will only receive a school bag, or a set of books, after a representative of SLBFE visits the migrant's house and checks their family background. Further, it was also mentioned that although the returnees submitted applications for stationery kits, they are yet to be received.

During the FGDs, it was revealed that out of the 88 migrant participants, only 05 (5.68%) returnees had received assistance for their children with school kits and scholarships, while 04 (4.55%) returnees have applied for assistance but have not yet received. 94.31% of the migrants who participated for the FGDs indicated that the migrants have not received government services such as student counselling, stationery kits, and scholarship schemes for their children, and some even expressed that their family members were unaware of these services. During the field study, the following individual experience was shared by a return migrant: An elderly-female-unskilled migrant who migrated to a Middle Eastern country, stated that her son received 05 days of veterinary training through the Veterinary Training Unit in their area while she was working in the host country.

The result of the survey shows that the activity 6.1.4.5 has been implemented but the effectiveness of the implementation at the ground level is not adequate due to limitations in government funding.

6.1.5 Skills development and career counselling for migrant workers children

To address the social reintegration of returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka incorporates a targeted strategy that aims to develop skills and provide career counselling for children of migrant workers. To achieve this strategy, three main objectives have been established as follows:

² After the promotion campaign carried out last year the number of essential stationery aids issued has drastically increased.

- ▶ 6.1.5.1 - Appointing student counsellors in schools and enhancing their capacity to counsel students in distress and those in need of assistance
- ▶ 6.1.5.2 - Assisting in establishing procedures for educational scholarships for children of migrant workers and allocating financial provisions
- ▶ 6.1.5.3 - Providing vocational skills training and career guidance, along with financial assistance, for early school leavers from migrant families at nearby vocational training centers

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.1.5 based on the survey study are identified in Table 11 below. The result of the survey shows that the all the action plans of strategy 6.1.5 are implemented.

▶ **Table 11: Area 01 | Strategy 05 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.1.5.1	Appoint student counsellors in schools and build their capacity to counsel students in distress and those who need assistance	Implemented
6.1.5.2	Assist and establish procedures for educational scholarships to migrant worker children and make financial provisions.	Implemented
6.1.5.3	Provide vocational skills for early school leavers of migrant families in nearby vocational training centres with financial assistance and career guidance	Implemented

When considering action plan 6.1.5.1, based on the survey study it can be deduced that national and district-level stakeholders demonstrate awareness on this subject matter. Based on the information gathered from KIIs and FGDs, schools have appointed certified counsellors to counsel students who were in distress and trouble in concentrating in their studies due to the issues with their parents or guardians. These counsellors were capacitated by the District Partners. In addition to the external counsellors, schools are equipped with teachers who were capacitated to act as student counsellors. However, the awareness among the community on this subject matter is low since none of the participants for the FGDs at district level were aware of such initiatives.

When activity 6.1.5.2 is taken into consideration, various types of financial aid have already been offered for the children of migrant workers who have passed the grade 5 scholarship examination, Ordinary Level and Advance Level examinations. Further, SLBFE is planning to offer scholarships for children of migrant workers' who are planning to pursue higher studies in private universities. At district level, District Partners have played a crucial role in assisting and guiding both adults and children of migrant families regarding the available scholarship opportunities offered by national and international-level organizations.

As per the results of the study, the awareness of activity 6.1.5.3 is at a satisfactory level. Awareness sessions have been conducted at community level to publicise these initiatives. Migrants also highlighted that a programme to create awareness among returnees about the vocational training was offered by TVEC in Panadura with around 800 participants. Participants with different backgrounds have participated this session including early school leavers of migrant families.

Summary

1. Institutionalization of a mechanism to ensure the safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers is one of the key strategies focused on the social reintegration of returnees. Several actions were undertaken at the national and district levels to coincide with the eight action plans indicated in the return and reintegration sub-policy. Establishing a special unit to support safe and dignified return and reintegration at the SLBFE HQ is implemented at a physical location away from the HQ due to space limitations, however the level of coordination

and communication between the HQ and the unit has to be further improved for effective and efficient operationalization of the unit. The establishment of SAG groups to connect various agencies and coordinate among migrants and officials has been initiated by district-level partners. However, it was identified through the survey study that the groups mostly consisted of female migrants from Middle East. The housing loan scheme has not been operationalised however it is in the discussion stage. It was also identified through the survey study that, there is a significant gap in information sharing to the prospective migrant, in particular, and awareness on job contracts prior to departure from Sri Lanka.

2. The national level stakeholders discussed certain initiatives aimed at acknowledging the contributions of migrant workers and promoting a positive image. It is observed that the district-level stakeholder awareness in this area needs to be elevated. Further, it was identified through the survey study that the recognition of migrants' contribution needs to be further improved in a way that will motivate them to increase their contribution. It was further identified that the MoU with the Ministry of Mass Media and other relevant organizations to collaborate and promote a favourable and positive interpretation of migrant workers has not been implemented.
3. It was identified through the survey study that the national-level stakeholders have made efforts to establish migrant-friendly reception facilities at airports to ensure the safety and convenience of returnees, implement a duty-free vehicle permit scheme based on remittance levels, provide duty-free concessions for returnees to import items for self-employment and livelihood, and launching a reward scheme for the highest remittances sent through official channels by low-skilled migrants. However, the remaining action plans, which included entering into an agreement with the Department of Census and Statistics to capture migrant worker contributions, organizing district-level celebrations of International Migrants Day with state support and granting awards, and issuing special identity cards to migrant returnees based on specific criteria, were not addressed by either the national or district-level stakeholders
- 4 It was identified through the survey study that efforts have been made to review the existing insurance schemes for migrant workers and ensure more benefits and migrant-friendly access are in place to establish systems and procedures for a social security /pension scheme to benefit low-skilled migrant workers, focusing on both action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy.
- 5 There have been efforts to ensure the welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers, with a particular emphasis on children. Three out of the five action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy have been implemented. These actions include creating profiles of migrant families to understand their specific circumstances and needs, addressing related issues through coordinated services, engaging with families to identify their needs and concerns, and establishing a collaborative mechanism at the district level to ensure the welfare and protection of children from migrant worker families. However, it is important to note that the action plan of introducing a child vulnerability scorecard for Development Officers and compiling a directory of available support services for returnees has not been properly addressed in the implemented activities by the stakeholders.
- 6 Efforts have been made to develop skills and provide career counselling for children of migrant workers, focusing on one out of the three action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy. The stakeholders have executed the action plan of assisting and establishing procedures for educational scholarships to migrant worker children and making financial provisions. However, the two remaining action plans, which involve appointing student counsellors in schools and building their capacity to counsel students in distress and those in need of assistance, as well as providing vocational skills for early school leavers of migrant families in nearby vocational training centers with financial assistance and career guidance, were not satisfactorily addressed in the activities carried out by the stakeholders.

6.2 Area 02 - Economic reintegration of returnees

Economic reintegration of returnees is considered as one of the major components under the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration. This area has been addressed through four different strategies as follows:

- 6.2.1. Quality standardization and certification of skills of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return
- 6.2.2. Promote savings investment and financial management among migrant workers
- 6.2.3. Promote entrepreneurship, among migrant returnees and family members
- 6.2.4. Secure local employment for returnees through public-private partnerships
- 6.2.1 Quality standardization and certification of skills of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return

To address the economic reintegration of returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka outlines a strategy focused on quality standardization and certification of migrant workers' skills both before their departure and upon their return.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.2.1 based on the survey study is identified in Table 12 below. The result of the survey shows that all the action plans under the strategy have been implemented.

► **Table 12: Area 02 | Strategy 01 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.2.1.1	Establish required country-specific skill standards and facilitate relevant agencies to set up required skills testing methods. [Assessment and certification at pre-departure level (NVQ 3 minimum) and matching/in line with host country requirements].	Implemented
6.2.1.2	Setting up an information desk at the airport to provide guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Skills Upgrading.	Implemented
6.2.1.3	Enter into Mutual Skills Recognition (MSR) Agreements/ minimum skills requirements with the destinations.	Implemented

To achieve the action plans of 6.2.1.1 several activities have been carried out at the national level such as conducting advanced housekeeper programs and caregiver programs for potential migrants. As a result, under caregiving category, the training program at Sapugaskanda NYSC is currently accommodating 50 trainees with a focus on the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) category. Additionally, a total of 250 caregivers have been dispatched to job markets in Israel, Hong Kong, and the Middle East through the SLBFE. To assess the vulnerability of migrants, three individuals with disabilities have been enrolled in the SSW caregiving sector training and those individuals have already secured employment opportunities.

Another project to enhance the skills of migrant returnee individuals to acknowledge the skills they acquired while overseas, align their skills with local job requirements, and help with their re-migration was highlighted during the study. This project encompasses two categories of migrant workers; returned migrant workers and aspiring migrant workers who were unable to migrate due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Data on 17,000 individuals had been collected from the SLBFE and the Department of Manpower by regional staff members to identify potential beneficiaries for this program. The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- ▶ Identify the needs of returned migrant workers and guide them towards local employment, self-employment, or re-migration.
- ▶ Provide a skills passport based on their skill level, which can be obtained through the NVQ process.

Further, the ILO received support from the EFC to assist individuals who possess the skills passport in finding suitable employment connections.

In addition, the National-level key stakeholders mentioned the importance of enhancing the skills of migrant workers before their re-migration and maximizing the utilization of training facilities and centres located in Tangalle, Pannipitiya, Badulla, and Mathugama. If a person has a NVQ Level 3 qualification with professional work experience, the NVQ level could be upgraded based on an assessment on their knowledge. This could result in access to jobs with better remuneration upon remigration.

It was identified through the survey study that the district-level stakeholders are directed towards enhancing the skills of migrant workers. To achieve this goal, they have collaborated with various vocational training institutions to organize multiple skill development training sessions. For example, a vocational training institute has conducted plumbing training sessions that enable migrant workers to obtain an NVQ-3 certificate upon completion. Acquiring this certification requires two and a half years of prior experience.

NGOs/District Partners, on the other hand, have implemented skill assessment programs tailored to the individual skill levels of migrants. These programs consider qualifications such as NVQ levels and provide information regarding suitable employment opportunities based on their skills. Additionally, vocational training programs are offered to migrants with the support of AG officials, Foreign Service Officers, and Grama Niladari Officers. These initiatives aim to empower migrants and improve their prospects in the job market. The result of the survey shows that the action plan 6.2.1.1 can be considered 'implemented'.

Regarding the implementation of the action plans of 6.2.1.2, the national-level stakeholders emphasized the establishment of an information desk at the airport, which would serve the purpose of providing guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Skills Upgrading. They primarily collaborate with the Technical and Vocational Colleges (TVC) to develop a digitized RPL System. In this context, it was mentioned that the NAITA has already issued 1,500 RPL certifications within a span of 2.5 to 3 months across 12 districts where the project is focused. Furthermore, national-level stakeholders reported that they have engaged in discussions with the VTA sector and TVC to speed up the RPL process. The aim is to ensure that candidates receive certificates that can contribute to their skills passport, enhancing their employment prospects.

Through the KIIs conducted at district level, the district-level stakeholders highlighted certain challenges related to the RPL process. One of the major obstacles is the lack of enthusiasm among returnees to obtain RPL certificates. It was also mentioned that this unwillingness is, because of the complexity of the procedure, as well as their relatively lower level of education. FEDO of Kurunegala shared their experience of organizing a program that aimed to provide NVQ certificates through the RPL certification system. They collected data from 553 prospective migrants and returnees, covering 30 divisional secretariates. However, only 93 participants attended the program conducted with the NAITA, indicating a relatively low turnout. A female-unskilled migrant, who has worked in multiple Middle Eastern countries for 27 years, mentioned that she is aware of the RPL system. After returning, she has taken the initiative to apply for the RPL certification. Currently, she is undergoing the process of obtaining the certificate, intending to utilize it for future migration purposes. Thereby, action plan 6.2.1.2 can be considered implemented.

Based on the KIIs conducted at the national level, it has been emphasized that the execution of the action plan 6.2.1.3, highlights the importance of having Mutual skills recognition (MSR) agreements or having minimum skills requirements with the different destinations. However, during the KIIs it was identified that the district stakeholders are aware about this action plan but they also highlighted the importance of having a proper mechanism to identify the minimum skill requirements for different countries and prepare migrants according to requirement.

Some of the gaps highlighted by the national-level stakeholders are as follows:

- ▶ Israel has demanded 2,000 female caregivers. However, Sri Lanka was not able to meet this demand due to limited supply of female caregivers. Majority of the caregivers in the training programs were males and it was highlighted that there is less awareness among females on the training programs.
- ▶ At present, there are many job opportunities for skilled migrants in Middle East for Quantity Surveyors and Accountants, and for in Singapore there are job opportunities for ICT experts.

Thereby, action plan 6.2.1.3 can be considered implemented. However, based on the survey study it was identified that the awareness among the relevant stakeholders and the effectiveness of the activities carried out in district level is not adequate.

6.2.2 Promote savings investment and financial management among migrant workers

To address the economic reintegration of returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka incorporates a targeted strategy that aims to promote savings, investment, and financial management among migrant workers. The main objectives of this strategy are to compile information on savings and bank schemes, procedures, and educate migrant workers (6.2.2.1), and to establish help desks for financial institutions and banks specifically designed for migrant workers to access information and services (6.2.2.2).

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.2.2 based on the survey study is identified in Table 13 below. The result of the survey shows that the action plan 6.2.2.2 under the strategy has not been implemented and the implemented action plans are further discussed below.

▶ **Table 13: Area 02 | Strategy 02 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.2.2.1	Compile information on savings and bank schemes, procedures and educate migrant workers.	Implemented
6.2.2.2	Key financial institutions and banks establish help desks for migrant workers to obtain information and services	Not implemented

Table 14 below shows the awareness of the strategy of 6.2.2 among national and district-level stakeholders and the implementation of the action plans.

▶ **Table 14: The awareness Vs. implementation of different activities under the action plan**

Action plan #	Awareness								Implementation				
	National level			District level									
	ILO	Government Institutions	NGOs	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala
6.2.2.1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2.2	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source: Through the information received from KIIs and FGDs

According to the Table 14, all national and district-level stakeholders are aware of the action plan of 6.2.2.1. However, it is evident was identified through the survey study that the some national-level stakeholders (ILO and government institutions) are aware of the action plans of 6.2.2.2 being considered in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy while the district-level stakeholders and NGOs lack the awareness about this action plan.

To achieve the action plans of 6.2.2.1, government institutions and NGOs have implemented financial literacy training sessions for migrants with collaboration with financial institutions and industry experts. The financial literacy trainings encompass a range of inclusive topics, aimed at equipping migrants with essential knowledge and skills. As per the inputs received from FGDs, the key areas covered in these training are as follows:

- ▶ **Opening NRFC account:** Provide comprehensive guidance on the procedures and requirements involved in setting up a Non-Resident Foreign Currency (NRFC) account. This enables migrants to securely manage their earnings and engage in international transactions.
- ▶ **Managing earnings and savings while in the host country:** The training emphasizes effective strategies for managing their earnings and savings during their stay in the host country. Participants receive awareness on budgeting techniques and the significance of maintaining a healthy financial position.
- ▶ **Maintaining expenses records:** The training highlights the importance of maintaining accurate daily financial records. Trainees are taught how to keep a budget book to track their income, expenses, and savings. This practice enables migrants to gain a better understanding of their financial situation and make informed decisions.
- ▶ **Obtaining loans upon returning:** The training equips migrants with knowledge on accessing loans upon their return to their home country. Trainees are educated on loan application processes, eligibility criteria, and the various options available to them. This empowers migrants to make informed decisions regarding financial assistance for their future endeavours.

Table 15 below indicates the number of return migrants who participated in the FGDs and have received financial literacy training provided by different organizations including government institutes such as SLBFE and other institutions such as NGOs.

▶ **Table 15: The number of return migrants who participated in focus group discussions and have received financial literacy training provided by different organizations.**

Migrant Profile	Financial Literacy Training		Total
	Received	Not Received	
F/E/S/ME	5	1	6
F/E/S/O	-	4	4
F/E/US/ME	15	17	32
F/E/US/O	-	6	6
F/Y/S/ME	2	-	2
F/Y/S/O	-	1	1
F/Y/US/ME	1	1	2
M/E/S/ME	2	3	5
M/E/S/O	1	2	3
M/E/US/ME	3	6	9
M/E/US/O	1	5	6

Migrant Profile	Financial Literacy Training		Total
	Received	Not Received	
M/Y/S/ME	4	1	5
M/Y/S/O	-	1	1
M/Y/US/ME	3	2	5
M/Y/US/O	-	1	1
Total	37	51	88

Source: Through the information received from FGDs

According to the data presented in Table 15, out of the total 88 return migrants interviewed, only 37 individuals have received financial literacy training either during their pre-departure stage or upon their return. Notably, most of these trained migrants (95%) specifically have migrated to Middle Eastern countries. Further, out of those who received the training 62% are noted to be female.

The financial literacy training for this group was primarily provided by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) and various non-government organizations functioning in each selected district. However, it is important to note that a significant proportion of return migrants (90%) who migrated to countries other than the Middle East have not received any financial literacy training from any organization. This highlights a notable gap in the provision of financial literacy support for these individuals.

Based on the survey study, it was also identified that skilled migrants and professionals who could potentially transfer high foreign remittances were not targeted by this training. This indicates the need to address the financial literacy needs of this specific migrant group to ensure effective financial management and utilization of remittances.

Based on interviews conducted with return migrants, it was observed that individuals who received financial literacy training or possessed a proper understanding of financial management were able to effectively manage their earnings. These financial literacy training have resulted in a significant increase in migrants' knowledge and awareness. Following is one of the success stories shared during the FGDs:

- ▶ During the financial literacy awareness session conducted under pre-departure training, an elderly female unskilled migrant who had the intention to migrate to a Middle East country was asked to mention the financial goal that she needs to achieve during the training. She had the objective of purchasing a three-wheeler and she managed to achieve her target after returning to Sri Lanka with the use of her savings.

However, despite the provision of financial literacy training, migrants encounter challenges in managing their earnings, as revealed during the FGDs. One of the experiences shared by the migrants is as follows:

- ▶ An elderly unskilled female migrant who worked as a housekeeper in Dubai for approximately two years mentioned that she transferred her entire salary to her spouse. Unfortunately, her spouse lacked adequate financial knowledge and misused the funds.

Challenges faced by migrants

Returned migrants emphasized the lack of necessary resources for financial management, which posed significant challenges during their time in host countries. The following are additional stories shared during the FGDs:

- ▶ One of the unskilled elderly female migrants who migrated to Singapore highlighted that despite banks providing awareness about their services and facilities, she was unable to find the mentioned local banks or branches in the host country.

- One of the unskilled elderly male migrants received information from financial representatives of a Sri Lankan state bank regarding the opening of an NRFC account with USD 5. However, he was unable to find any branches of the specific state bank in the host country and has thereby given up the process.

The above scenarios highlight the issues faced by return migrants, including the challenges related to the availability of resources and the lack of awareness among migrants' family members regarding accessing appropriate financial services whilst residing in their host countries. Although Action plan 6.2.2.2 is considered as implemented, further attention is required to fully encompass the objective of promoting savings, investment, and financial management among migrant workers.

6.2.3 Promote entrepreneurship, among migrant returnees and family members

The Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka has incorporated a targeted approach to address the economic reintegration of returnees. This approach focuses on promoting entrepreneurship among migrant returnees and their family members.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.2.3 based on the research study is identified in Table 16 below. The result of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.2.3.5 under the strategy have not been implemented and the implemented action plans are further discussed below.

► **Table 16: Area 02 | Strategy 03 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.2.3.1	Coordinate among the DS level officers handling economic development in order to identify and support migrant returnees and family members with potential for undertaking S & M enterprises.	Implemented
6.2.3.2	Establish a credit and loan scheme to cater to the needs of selected migrant entrepreneurs in collaboration with financial institutions.	Implemented
6.2.3.3	Promote and replicate ILO business development model/ SIYB and others experimented and tested in selected districts for accessing vital services.	Implemented
6.2.3.4	Establish and promote networks among the migrant worker entrepreneurs for sharing of knowledge, experience, and marketing information.	Implemented
6.2.3.5	Develop collaborative investment initiatives with private sector especially for Korean returnees and high-income earners.	Not Implemented
6.2.3.6	Develop a special entrepreneur development programme for lower skilled female returnees and establish entrepreneur societies and networks for them.	Implemented

The table presented below displays the level of understanding and execution of action plans concerning this strategy by stakeholders at both the national and district levels. These stakeholders include international organizations such as ILO and IOM, government bodies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

► **Table 17: The level of understanding and execution of action plans.**

Action plan #	Awareness								Implementation				
	National level			District level					District Level				
	ILO	Gov. Institutions	NGOs	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala
6.2.3.1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
6.2.3.2	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
6.2.3.3	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.2.3.4	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
6.2.3.5	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
6.2.3.6	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓

Source: Through the information received from KIIs and FGDs

According to the above table, district-level stakeholders have taken various initiatives to ensure the successful implementation of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration. These activities are aimed at aligning with the objectives and effectiveness of the plans.

When considering the awareness of the action plan, ILO and IOM are fully aware of all action plans whereas government organizations and NGOs have a relatively limited understanding of the action plans. At the district level, none of the stakeholders are aware of the action plans of 6.2.3.5. Except for Anuradhapura and Kurunegala districts, other districts lack awareness of the action plans of 6.2.3.6.

Awareness of these action plans was achieved through participation in self-employment training, attending awareness sessions, and engaging in entrepreneurship development programs and financial management programs. These programs encompass training sessions that promote self-employment opportunities, such as poultry farming and banana plantations. In parallel, the district-level project partners also cover skills development sessions such as soap production, broom-making business, and chilli sauce production. However, national-level stakeholders are aware of the district-level support functions and the importance of connecting migrant workers with other entrepreneurs who are dealing with these businesses in terms of the successful implementation of the mentioned action plan.

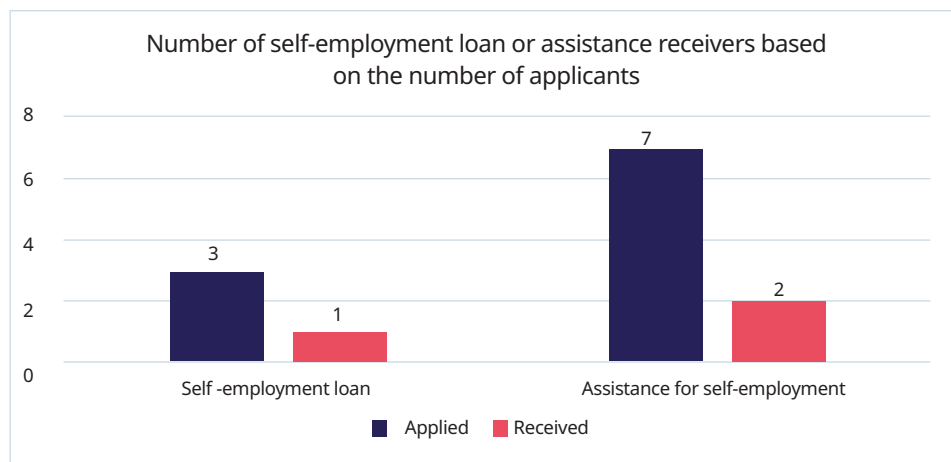
To achieve the target output of promoting and nurturing enterprises of migrant workers at the district level, various activities have been implemented. These activities align with the action plan of coordinating among officers responsible for economic development to identify and support migrant returnees and their family members who have the potential to undertake small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The implemented activities include providing non-financial aid worth LKR. 50,000, organizing entrepreneurship awareness programs and training programs, offering loans for self-employment, and providing other forms of assistance for self-employment. The findings derived from the FGDs conducted in the selected five districts are as follows:

- Based on the findings, among the 88 individuals who took part in the focus group discussions, only 09 were aware of the non-financial aid worth LKR 50,000 provided by the government, but none of them had received it. Out of these 09 returnees who were aware of the aid, 08 had migrated to Middle East countries.

- The majority of the returnees mentioned that they are aware of the entrepreneurship training programs which are conducted at the stage of reintegration. As a result, many of them participated in those programs, which were organized by either the government or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Further, an analysis has been carried out based on the received information, to identify the number of service receivers based on the number of service applicants including self-employment loans and assistance for self-employment. The summary of the number of self-employment loan or assistance receivers based on the number of applicants is illustrated as follows:

► **Figure 15: Number of self-employment loan or assistance receivers based on the number of applicants of the survey group**



Based on Figure 15, among the 88 participants, only 3 individuals have applied for a self-employment loan, and out of those, only 1 person has received a loan from an NGO. Furthermore, 7 participants have applied for self-employment assistance for the equipment and machinery they require, but only 2 individuals have received this assistance. Specifically, one person received a sewing machine from an NGO for their business, while the other person received a fertilizer grant from the government. The result of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.2.3.1 can be considered implemented. However, the effectiveness of the services provided in district level is not adequate.

To fulfil the action plan of 6.2.3.2, the district partner in Kandy has organized an awareness program on financial management. This program was conducted by a bank, and returnees who attended the program subsequently opened bank accounts. These accounts provide access to various loans specifically designed for migrants, including housing loans and self-employment loans. An elderly-unskilled-female returnee who had migrated to a Middle Eastern country mentioned that upon returning to Sri Lanka after completing a two-year stay, she was informed that she could seek assistance for a credit facility to start her own business. However, the travel agent has informed her that there were no such facilities available for returnees like her. At the time of the discussion, her plan was to establish a small restaurant, but she lacks the necessary finances to fund the business. Although based on the survey study, the action plans of 6.2.3.2 can be considered implemented, the awareness among the relevant stakeholders and the effectiveness of the activities carried out is not adequate.

To fulfil the objective of the action plan aimed at promoting and replicating successful business development models, such as the ILO's SIYB (6.2.3.3), national level stakeholders have devised a division of returnees searching for self-employment into two distinct teams:

- The first team is directed to the Small Enterprise Development Division (SED) of the Ministry of Youth, where they receive skills development training.
- The second team is provided with SIYB training through the SIYB association, which has supported 200 individuals in initiating their businesses through this initiative.

However, it was evident from the FGDs, out of 15 migrant profiles only the participants of 07 profiles received any form of entrepreneurial support through the government or NGOs. The following-mentioned profiles have not received any sort of support:

- ▶ Female young skilled migrants who migrated to Middle Eastern countries and other countries
- ▶ Male elderly skilled migrants who migrated to Middle Eastern countries and other countries,
- ▶ Male elderly unskilled migrants who migrated to Middle Eastern countries
- ▶ Male young skilled migrants who migrated to Middle Eastern countries and other countries
- ▶ Male young unskilled migrants who migrated to other countries

Further, it was noted that, in the Anuradhapura district, among the 19 participants, 10 individuals successfully started their own businesses with the assistance mentioned above. Besides, 07 participants expressed their desire to initiate self-employment. The result of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.2.3.3 can be considered implemented.

To achieve the action plan of 6.2.3.4, NGOs and government officials have undertaken several activities for returnees. These activities include skill development programs and sharing of technical expertise in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority. Additionally, awareness sessions have been conducted to familiarize returnees with initiatives such as fairs organized by the Ministry of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development. Notably, a chilli sauce production factory has been established in Thirappane. NGOs also play a vital role in directing potential entrepreneurs to relevant government officers, such as district-level coordinators, small enterprise development officers, and human resource officers, in order to assist them with better support. Further, returnees expressed their involvement in Self Help Groups (SHGs). As per the migrants interviewed, the SHGs provide space for returnees who are entrepreneurs, to share their knowledge and experience. It was noted that many returnees were unaware of the existence of such groups, but those who were connected with relevant NGOs had knowledge about SHGs and were members of these groups. The result of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.2.3.4 can be considered implemented.

To achieve the target output of having functioning women entrepreneur societies and networks supported with business skills (6.2.3.6), NGOs have undertaken various activities in the district level. These activities include the establishment of a food processing center in Mahavilachchiya, which is managed by women from women-headed households and migrants. Additionally, the NGOs have implemented the GLTW project, a women empowerment initiative, and facilitated the Asian Women's Forum, where individuals can share their knowledge and experiences with others. Based on the survey study, action plans of 6.2.3.6 can be considered implemented.

However, none of the returnees were aware of or have participated in specific entrepreneur development programs that are specifically designed for female returnees.

6.2.4 Secure local employment for returnees through public-private partnerships

To address the economic reintegration of returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka incorporates a targeted strategy that aims to secure local employment for returnees through public-private partnerships.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.2.4 based on the research study is identified in Table 18 below. The result of the survey shows that all the action plans have been implemented and the implemented action plans are further discussed below:

► Table 18: Area 02 | Strategy 04 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.2.4.1	Conduct labour market surveys and identify job market opportunities for returnees (domestic workers, care givers, cleaners, construction sector workers, technicians, etc.	Implemented
6.2.4.2	Facilitate online skill matching for job opportunities.	Implemented

Based on the observations regarding the action plans of 6.2.4.1 it was identified though the study that both national and district-level stakeholders are aware of this objective. At the national level, the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the Department of Manpower, has made efforts to develop a mechanism for matching the qualifications of returnees with local job availability in the country. However, when it comes to ground-level implementations, it was observed that NGOs in some districts assist and guide migrants towards local job opportunities based on their own awareness rather than proper surveys. Even though, based on the feedback obtained from FGDs, it is evident that returnees have not gained sufficient advantages or found suitable employment in the local job market that aligns with their skills and previous experiences. This indicates that even though national and district-level stakeholder awareness is there, the implementation of the action plan for this area has not been effectively executed.

Considering the second objective of facilitating online skill matching for job opportunities (6.2.4.2), which is established under the strategy of securing local employment for returnees through public-private partnerships, it was identified that both national and district-level stakeholders are informed about this objective. Even though there are online facilities provided by national-level stakeholders such as providing information on foreign job opportunities through the SLBFE website, returnees are not aware of those facilities. Instead, the returnees relied on social media or close associates to find jobs. Although, action plans of 6.2.4.2 can be considered implemented, the implementation of the action plan has not been effectively executed since the returnees are not fully aware of the available channels, or the online skill-matching facilities implemented by the national and district-level stakeholders.

Summary

1. Significant efforts have been taken in standardizing and certifying the skills of migrant workers before their departure and upon their return. These efforts have primarily focused on all action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy. The first action involves the establishment of country-specific skill standards, accompanied by the facilitation of relevant agencies in devising suitable methods for skills testing. The second action encompasses the creation of an information desk at the airport to provide guidance on RPL and Skills Upgrading. Third action plan involves engaging in Mutual Skills Recognition (MSR) agreements or establish minimum skills requirements with the destination countries.
2. The emphasis on promoting savings, investment, and financial management among migrant workers is primarily limited to the action plans of compiling information on savings and bank schemes, as well as procedures and educating migrant workers. However, the remaining action plan, which pertains to the establishment of help desks by key financial institutions and banks to offer information and services to migrant workers, has not been implemented.
3. Efforts have been made to promote entrepreneurship among migrant returnees and their family members in Sri Lanka, focusing on five out of the six action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy. These actions include coordinating with district-level officers to identify and support potential small and medium enterprises, establishing a credit and loan scheme in collaboration with financial institutions, creating networks for migrant worker entrepreneurs

to share knowledge and marketing information, developing a specialized entrepreneurship program for lower-skilled female returnees along with establishing entrepreneur societies and networks for them and involve promoting and replicating business development models and accessing vital services. However, the remaining action plan, which is developing investment initiatives with the private sector for Korea returnees and high-income earners, were not sufficiently addressed in the activities carried out by the stakeholders.

4. Through the survey study it was identified that that efforts have been made to conduct labour market surveys and identify job market opportunities for returnees and facilitate online skill matching for job opportunities, focusing on both action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy. However, the activities carried out to address those action plans are insignificant and the returnees are not fully aware of the available channels, or the online skill-matching facilities implemented by the national and district-level stakeholders.

6.3 Area 03 - Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members

The physical and psychological well-being of returnees and their family members is considered one of the major areas under the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration.

This area has been addressed through the following strategies:

- 6.3.1 Ensure accessibility to health (primary, secondary, and tertiary) services stipulated under the Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy.
- 6.3.2 Development of a psycho-social support programme for migrant workers and their family members.
- 6.3.1 Ensure accessibility to health (primary, secondary, and tertiary) services stipulated under the Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy.

The return and reintegration sub-policy in Sri Lanka incorporate a targeted strategy that aims to improve the physical well-being of returnees by initiating different types of activities at the national and district levels.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.3.1 based on the survey study are identified in Table 19 below.

► **Table 19: Area 03 | Strategy 01 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.3.1.1	Develop national guidelines for health and fitness for job assessment of migrant workers at pre-departure stage and develop Personal Health Records (PHR) for each migrant worker	Implemented
6.3.1.2	Incorporate a comprehensive health awareness component in pre-departure training, include counselling and information on voluntary testing for STDs including HIV & AIDS.	Implemented
6.3.1.3	Pilot review of coordinated care plans of 30 selected households of migrant workers at DS level by SLBFE staff and health personnel.	Implemented
6.3.1.4	Strengthen the medical response and facilities at the airport including Sahanapiyasa and equip with qualified medical staff and counsellors on roster basis for easy access by migrant workers	Implemented

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.3.1.5	Assist migrant workers upon return to access a health assessment and referrals if necessary.	Implemented
6.3.1.6	Implement special programmes and referrals for trafficked, abused and exploited returnees that need special attention upon their return and after return.	Implemented
6.3.1.7	Carry out community follow-up programmes for migrant returnees with special needs	Implemented

The objective of the first two action plans is to develop Personal Health Records (PHR) for each migrant worker by establishing national health guidelines for health and fitness for job assessment at the pre-departure stage and improve health awareness by conducting counselling and information on voluntary testing for STDs including HIV and AIDS.

National-level stakeholders are aware of establishing national guidelines on health and fitness for the job assessment at the pre-departure stage and other relevant activities related to the subject matter. However, based on survey study, district-level stakeholders are not fully satisfied with national health guidelines for migrants during the pre-departure stage. Some of the incidents highlighted during the field study are as follows:

- ▶ Kurunegala district stakeholders have carried out a study to assess the effectiveness of the health policy, with a sample size of 153. At the end of the study, they concluded most government officials were not fully aware of the policy and the public had not properly received the benefits of the policy.
- ▶ Majority of the return migrants interviewed were not fully aware of the facilities offered by the government in terms of health.
- ▶ One female unskilled migrant who went to the Middle East underwent a medical examination before departure had no follow-up done to assess her health after her return.
- ▶ Based on the migrant profiles considered in the field study, migrants who went to other countries such as Korea, and Japan are aware of the health guidelines available and the requirement of passing the physical test to get accepted for a job.

Based on the survey study, the implementation of action plans 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2 has taken place; however, the effectiveness is low.

Taking into consideration the action plan, 6.3.1.3, national-level stakeholders from ILO and government authorities are aware of this action plan and stated that efforts have been made with the assistance of FEDOs at the district level. However, based on observations gathered from KIIs and FGDs, district-level stakeholders are not satisfied with the initiative carried out by the FEDOs in terms of making family care plans. Following are some notable incidents highlighted during the study related to the subject matter:

- ▶ Some migrants have left the country by presenting forged documents even though their children were less than 2 years old due to their poor financial status. Particularly, based on the KIIs conducted in district level it was identified that even though the government has updated its policy related to the care plan, migrants haven't adhered to that effectively.
- ▶ Stakeholders from Kandy stated that most female migrants have faced various issues such as their children falling victim to drug addiction and being school dropouts due to the violation of care plan regulations given by the government and migrating with a visit visa to another country.

However, earlier the Grama Niladari (GN) Officer had the responsibility and the authority to check the family background prior to the approval of a Family Background Report and without the approval of the GN, women with children below 5 years cannot migrate. At present, migrants do not have to get approval

from the GN. Instead, the GN only needs to confirm the migrant's residence. According to the GN's point of view, this has created a negative impact in terms of the social security aspect of the family members of the migrant, especially the children. According to the migrants interviewed, noted below are a few points, related to the subject matter:

- ▶ The government does not constantly follow up on the child safety by checking the guardians of the migrants' children.
- ▶ Some children are not entrusted with a proper guardian. For example, a migrant may provide the authority/responsibility of his/her child to a guardian (to a cousin sister who is living in a different province) before migrating. But the child may actually stay with the father with no proper protection and supervision.

Therefore, based on the survey study it was identified that preparing care plans by SLBFE staff and health personnel is important in order to make sure the child's safety and well-being. However, with the observations, it was noted that the implementation of this action plan needs a continuous follow up to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation.

The result of the survey shows that the activity 6.3.1.3 is executed in the form of incorporating care plans, but it is not implemented effectively.

Based on the responses gathered through KIIs, awareness of national and district level stakeholders regarding the objective 6.3.1.4, is at a satisfactory level. Both ILO and government stakeholders have highlighted that they initiated several activities related to the subject matter specially services carried out in "Sahanapiyasa", but through the district level KIIs it is identified that although the migrants are aware of the existence of the Sahanapiyasa facility, they are not aware of the services that the Sahanapiyasa can provide them. According to the FGDs, majority of migrants were unaware of the resources available at the airport for vulnerable returnees. It was also evident from FGDs that an unskilled female migrant received LKR 2,000 from "Sahanapiyasa upon her return due to illness. Facilities provided by Sahanapiyasa are essential for the vulnerable migrants, and this facility needs to be further improved and awareness of the services available among migrants need to be elevated.

According to the above, although, activity 6.3.1.4 is implemented and the effectiveness of that activity is at a satisfactory level, the awareness of the services to the migrants need to be improved.

To address the activity 6.3.1.5, in district level, stakeholders such as NGOs manage many cases to facilitate migrants by coordinating with relevant authorities. Based on the FGDs conducted at district level, awareness among the migrants on such programs was identified.

When considering the action plans, 6.3.1.6 and 6.3.1.7, it was identified that national-level stakeholders are somewhat aware of the action plan and international authorities initiate different set of activities which align with the subject matter. In district level, stakeholders such as NGOs manage many cases to facilitating migrants by coordinating with relevant authorities. However, due to a lack of implemented actions by government bodies, the migrants are dissatisfied, as they have not received any kind of service or benefit from national or district-level institutions related to the subject matter. However, migrants who are members of the migrant societies created by NGOs have received proper guidance and assistance from the respective NGOs. Further, it was also mentioned by the migrants who faced such situations that it was easy for them to obtain satisfactory assistance via NGOs rather than directly approaching relevant staff of SLBFE or the District or Divisional Secretariat Office since it reduces the turnaround time.

Activities, 6.3.1.6 and 6.3.1.7 are implemented however their effectiveness can be further improved by initiating community awareness programs.

6.3.2 Development of a psycho-social support programme for migrant workers and their family members.

The Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka has implemented a targeted approach to address the physical and psychological well-being of returnees and their family members. This approach specifically focuses on the psycho-social well-being of returnees and their family members.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.3.2 based on the survey study is identified in Table 20 below. Based on the survey study, 6.3.2.2 action plan is not implemented under this strategy.

► **Table 20: Area 03 | Strategy 02 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.3.2.1	Review existing psychosocial support programmes at national level including that of Sahanapiyasa and strengthen capacity to cater to the needs of returnee migrants.	Implemented
6.3.2.2	Based on information collected by diplomatic missions arrange for the prioritized return of victims and /or treatment in host country and upon arrival and carry out referrals as stipulated in the SOP	Not Implemented
6.3.2.3	Link existing counselling services at district and DS level for services.	Implemented
6.3.2.4	Coordinate among government and other service providers for effective psycho-social support to migrant workers.	Implemented

To achieve the action plan 6.3.2.1, national-level stakeholders have incorporated mental health and psychosocial support elements into specific skills training programs. They also provide assessments and scoring in terms of psychosocial support, followed by referrals to experts when necessary. In addition, individual counselling is offered, utilizing various tailored interventions based on individual needs. At the district level, it was noted that 14 participants are familiar with the existence of “Sahanapiyasa,”. These migrants belong to the F/E/US/ME migrant profile which indicates female elderly unskilled migrants who migrated to Middle Eastern countries.

Some of the incidents highlighted by the return migrants interviewed are as follows:

- One of the elderly unskilled male migrants, who had worked in South Korea, mentioned that on one occasion when he returned to Sri Lanka, “Sahanapiyasa” provided transportation support to help him reach his home.
- Similarly, another elderly unskilled female migrant, who had migrated to a Middle Eastern country shared that upon her return, she informed the airport staff about her financial difficulties. In response, she was directed to meet a representative from “Sahanapiyasa” at the airport, who then gave her 500 rupees to cover her transportation expenses back home after considering her concerns.
- An elderly unskilled female migrant who had travelled to a middle eastern country shared a contrasting experience. She revealed that she suffered from COVID-19 while residing in the host country and requested assistance from the SLBFE and the embassy to facilitate her return to Sri Lanka. However, she has been informed that she would need to pay LKR 400,000 in order to be repatriated. As a result, she was compelled to stay at her employer’s residence for over three months due to financial constraints.

Additionally, they mentioned the presence of a counsellor in the AG office who assists returnees in addressing their psychosocial challenges and improving their overall quality of life. Based on the survey study, action plan 6.3.2.1 is implemented and the effectiveness of this action plan is at a satisfactory level.

Through national level KIIs, it was identified that to accomplish the action plans 6.3.2.3 and 6.3.2.4, there is a requirement to develop systematic plans for achieving social and psychosocial reintegration in addition

to economic reintegration. They have recognized the presence of counselling programs for migrant workers and their family members; however, the success of these programs cannot be guaranteed due to resource limitations, including a shortage of qualified counsellors. Additionally, it was noted that migrant workers tend to seek psychosocial counselling only when the situation is critical, and the lack of tangible effects in psychosocial reintegration compared to economic reintegration may contribute to this tendency.

District-level stakeholders, including NGOs, have emphasized their commitment to addressing the grievances of vulnerable migrant children by taking necessary actions such as making appropriate referrals and implementing aftercare programs for children facing similar circumstances. Some of the incidents noted during the FGDs are as follows:

- ▶ An example highlights the urgency of this issue, where a child in Gagawatakorlaya was subjected to physical abuse by their father, leading to the child's hospitalization in the ICU. Reportedly, the child's mother is residing overseas. In response, an NGO dispatched a team to visit the child, gather relevant information, and subsequently reported the case to both the police and the Attorney General's office for further investigation and appropriate action.
- ▶ Another case highlighted by the stakeholders involved the identification of 30 young individuals, aged 12 to 25, who were found to be using the illegal drugs. In response, they promptly notified the counselling office to make arrangements for their rehabilitation.
- ▶ Furthermore, they shared a distressing incident of a 15-year-old girl who was subjected to violence, and they collaborated to report the incident to the police. It was revealed that the girl's mother is currently employed overseas. The stakeholders also drew attention to a systemic issue regarding the implementation of policies at the grassroots level. Despite the presence of counselling policies, there are challenges in providing adequate facilities for counselling, which discourages individuals from seeking it even if they require it.

Based on the survey study, activities 6.3.2.3 and 6.3.2.4 have been implemented and their efficiency can be considered satisfactory.

During discussions with stakeholders at the national or district level, as well as returnees participating in the FGDs, different activities were carried out to ensure the implementation of activity 6.3.2.2. Some experiences shared by returnees who participated in the FGDs are as follows:

- ▶ A female elderly skilled migrant who had migrated to a Middle Eastern country mentioned that she received assistance with the air ticket fee to return to her home country after her spouse passed away during the COVID-19 period.
- ▶ Most of the other migrants who were interviewed stated that they did not receive any services or grants from either the government or non-governmental organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is identified based on the survey study that activity 6.3.2.2 is not implemented as the above activities are not carried out as per a SOP.

Summary

1. From the national and district level KIIs and FGDs conducted, it was identified that efforts have been made to elevate the physical well-being of returnees and their family members, focusing on seven action plans outlined in the return and reintegration sub-policy. The national-level stakeholders are aware of establishing national guidelines on health and fitness for the job assessment at the pre-departure stage and other relevant activities related subject matter.
2. Although creating care plans for migrant family members by SLBFE staff and health personnel are implemented, it is not effective at the ground level since many social issues arise after the sub-policy is implemented such as females migrating without appointing a proper guardian to take care of their children.

3. Strengthening the medical response and facilities at the airport including Sahanapiyasa is also implemented however, it needs to be further improved and awareness of the services available under this facility among migrants needs to be elevated, since majority of migrants were not fully aware of its facilities.
4. The subsequent three action plans involving assisting migrant workers upon return to access a health assessment and referrals if necessary, implementing special programmes and referrals for trafficked, abused and exploited returnees that need special attention upon their return and after the return, carry out community follow-up programs for migrant returnees with special needs were implemented however they have not been operationalised through the activities carried out by the National level/ district level stakeholders.
5. From the four action plans listed in the sub-policy, only three action plans were implemented for ensuring the psycho-social well-being of returnees and their family members. These action plans are, review existing psychosocial support programs at the national level, including Sahanapiyasa, and enhancing their capacity to meet the needs of returning migrants; establishing links between counselling services at the district and divisional secretariat levels; and coordinating efforts among the government and other service providers to effectively deliver psycho-social support to migrant workers. However, the action plan related to arranging prioritized returns or treatment in the host country based on information gathered by diplomatic missions and following the stipulated SOP was not properly implemented.

6.4 Area 04 - Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees

Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees is addressed under the below mentioned strategies in the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration:

- 6.4.1 Empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness
- 6.4.2 Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return
- 6.4.3 Promote safety and protection of migrant workers
- 6.4.1 Empowerment of migrant workers through rights awareness

In terms of mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees, Sri Lanka's Return and Reintegration Sub Policy has formulated a comprehensive strategy to empower migrant workers through rights awareness.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.4.1 based on the survey study are identified in Table 21 below. Based on the survey study, action plans 6.4.1.2 and 6.4.1.3 were not implemented.

► **Table 21: Area 04 | Strategy 01 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.4.1.1	Conduct safe migration and rights awareness particularly in pre-departure training, among migrant workers for ensuring decent work standards	Implemented
6.4.1.2	Establish collectives and encourage migrant workers to be active members of collectives and labour unions that voice concerns of migrant workers to influence policy and practices	Not implemented
6.4.1.3	Carry out advocacy on securing voting rights of migrant workers by collectives.	Not implemented

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.4.1.4	Negotiate with Labour Unions and CSO Networks to grant membership to returnee migrant workers.	Implemented

To effectively carry out the action plan 6.4.1.1, national level and district stakeholders highlighted importance of having awareness of safe migration. The feedback gathered from FGDs reveals that migrants received pre-departure trainings from different entities, such as the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) and non-governmental organizations such as VOICE, Safe foundation, FIRM, Samadanam and CHR-CD. These trainings have aimed to equip migrants with the necessary knowledge and awareness pertaining to safe labour migration practices. The SLBFE trainings are mentioned in the below table, as reported by participants in the FGDs.

► **Table 22: The SLBFE trainings as reported by participants in the FGDs**

Organization	Trainings	Duration	Target group
SLBFE	Language training	Ranging from 3 to 21 days	Potential migrants
	Housemaid training		
	Practical training		
	Equipment handling training		
	Training for tidiness		
	Awareness training for safety matters (e.g., human trafficking and smuggling)		

Source: Through the information received from FGDs

However, as reported by the return migrants, they have encountered several challenges during their service period as a result of a discrepancy between the trainings they received and the practical application. The following are some of the issues experienced by migrants while residing in host countries:

- The equipment used in the training program are outdated or different from the actual equipment used in the foreign countries for similar work
- The chemicals used during the training differed from the actual chemicals used in the cleaning job. Migrants mentioned that the chemicals they used for the respective cleaning tasks were stronger than the ones they were trained on and could adversely impact their health
- Despite receiving language training, migrants found it challenging to adapt to the host country's language until they had spent at least three months there, as what they had been taught in training and the language used in the host country were different.

In terms of district partners of all five districts have established Self Automated Groups (SAGs) as migrant societies. These SAGs consist of returnees, potential migrants, returnees planning to remigrate, and returnees aiming to reintegrate into society. The primary objective of these groups is to disseminate information and enhance awareness among individuals regarding safe labour migration. To achieve this objective, various activities have been employed by the SAGs, including role-plays, creation and presentation of banners, and group discussions. The experiences shared by district-level stakeholders indicate that these awareness sessions and trainings have had a significant impact in reducing the percentage of migrants who resort to illegal migration methods. Moreover, it serves as effective means to promote proper awareness and understanding of safe labour migration practices. Based on the observations made during FGDs, it is evident that potential migrants who specifically intend to migrate to Middle Eastern countries exhibit a higher level of engagement compared to migrants who intend to migrate to countries other than the Middle Eastern countries.

Based on the survey study, to fulfil the action plan 6.4.1.4 national-level stakeholders possess an understanding and awareness of this subject. However, as national-level stakeholders, they are yet to establish appropriate mechanisms to address these activities effectively.

6.4.2 Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return

To effectively address the mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka encompasses a comprehensive strategy that focuses on the legal empowerment of migrant workers both in destination countries and upon their return.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.4.2 based on the survey study are identified in Table 23 below:

► Table 23: Area 04 | Strategy 02 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.4.2.1	Map legal service providers at home and at host countries and develop linkages.	Implemented
6.4.2.2	Provide legal assistance through State institutions/ NGOs/ Trade Unions and other service providers.	Implemented
6.4.2.3	Set up systems for special legal assistance provision to plantation sector migrant returnees to claim/secure contractual obligations.	Mutually agreed to be considered for the study

In relation to the action plan 6.4.2.2, it was identified that both national and district level stakeholders are aware regarding this matter. However, the activities implemented under this action plan have not been sufficient to fully achieve this objective. According to information gathered from representatives of state institutions at the district level, it was identified that migrants who require legal assistance during their migration or return phase are predominantly those who have undertaken migration through illegal channels. These migrants often face various legal challenges and complexities due to their irregular migration status. The need for legal support arises from the necessity to address issues related to documentation, employment disputes, human rights violations, and other legal matters arising from their irregular migration status. In such instances, with the support and collaboration of state institutions and other relevant stakeholders, these problems are addressed and resolved. District partners play a crucial role in providing essential legal assistance and support to migrants who are in need. They often serve as intermediaries between state institutions and migrants, facilitating communication and addressing the legal concerns of the migrant population. Evidence provided by a representative from the FIRM organization which acts as the District Partner in Vavuniya supports this observation. According to the representative, state institutions do not always prioritize complaints made solely by migrants who require legal assistance. As a result, NGOs step in as intermediaries when migrants file complaints or seek legal support. Through their involvement, NGOs help to amplify the voices of migrants, ensuring that their concerns receive the attention and consideration they deserve. By bridging the gap between migrants and state institutions, NGOs facilitate a more effective and responsive approach to addressing the legal needs of migrants, ultimately promoting their rights and access to justice.

The District Level Partners have extended their support to the migrant workers in directing and linking the migrant workers to the relevant institutions for necessary legal aids. Few migrants have given positive feedback for the support bestowed by the NGOs. According to the results of the survey study, action plan 6.4.2.2 is implemented and the effectiveness is satisfactory.

When considering the action plan 6.4.2.1, through the discussions of the national level stakeholders, it was evident that country level linkages are in place between Sri Lanka and Middle Eastern Countries. However, the migrants are of the view that necessary aids and legal assistances from these institutions have either been unhelpful or delayed. Based on the survey study it was identified that although the activity 6.4.2.1 is implemented, it is not effectively executed.

6.4.3 Promote safety and protection of migrant workers

To effectively address the mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka includes a strategy specifically focused on promoting the safety and protection of migrant workers.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.4.3 based on the survey study are identified in Table 24 below.

► Table 24: Area 04 | Strategy 03 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6. 4.3.1	Regularize the standard employment contracts for female domestic workers in Gulf countries in collaboration with GCC.	Implemented
6. 4.3.2	Review existing labour agreements/ employment contracts and include provisions for ensuring safety and dignity of migrant workers.	Not Implemented
6.4.3.3	Monitor compliance with/ implementation of standard employment contracts in the host countries	Implemented

In relation to the action plan 6.4.3.2, both national and district level stakeholders demonstrate awareness of this subject. However, when it comes to the implementation of activities by national level stakeholders, it is highlighted that significant efforts have not been taken to fulfil this objective. Despite their understanding of the importance of enhancing labour agreements and contracts, there is a lack of substantial action to revise and update these agreements with the necessary provisions. In contrast to national level stakeholders, district level stakeholders have demonstrated a relatively higher level of effort in addressing the objective of providing awareness on employment contracts among migrant workers. As per the feedback provided by return migrants during the FGDs, it was revealed that they had received an awareness on employment contracts through the training conducted by the SLBFE prior to their migration. However, the return migrants have highlighted several deficiencies in the training, which are as follows:

- 1. Lack of awareness regarding contract language:** Migrants were not provided with awareness on signing the contracts in their preferred language. Many of them signed the contract in the given language without understanding its terms and conditions. It was identified that most of the migrants who migrated to the Middle East countries signed contracts in Arabic, where none of the migrants had the opportunity to sign the contract in their preferred language. Contracts were mostly received in English or Arabic language, sometimes with an English translation.
- 2. Mismatches in the contract details:** This is a prevalent issue among migrants, as they shared their distressing experiences of encountering significant discrepancies that directly affected their livelihoods. The contracts, which were meant to protect their rights and ensure fair treatment, instead hide deceptive elements that left many migrants in distress. Migrants reported discrepancies in the contract details, including salary amounts and job specifications. Some migrants did not receive the salary amount mentioned in the contract during their actual employment. Additionally, agencies did not provide adequate information on workload and the number of household members, leading to difficulties for housemaids in managing the actual workload. For instance, an elderly female migrant who migrated to Oman for a housemaid job in a house with 4 members found that there were

actually 22 members in the house. The consequences of such mismatches extend far beyond financial hardships, impacting the physical and mental well-being of individuals who find themselves trapped in harsh work environments. Urgent action is needed to address these issues and ensure that migrants are protected from such destructive practices, fostering a fairer and more equitable system for all.

Furthermore, NGOs play a significant role in providing awareness about how to negotiate employment contracts between employers and employees prior to their migration. Through the Self Automated Groups (SAGs), which include potential migrants, returnees planning to remigrate, and returnees, are actively involved in providing awareness on employment contracts to these individuals. However, it can be identified that even these stakeholders have not effectively utilized proper mechanisms to disseminate the necessary information regarding employment contracts to migrants.

In terms of the regularizing the standard employment contracts for female domestic workers in Gulf countries in collaboration with GCC, the contracts of Migrants Workers have been standardised in collaboration with GCC including a standard contract for domestic female workers. The contracts have been effective in upholding the rights of the female domestic workers. Further, to address the action plan to monitor compliance with/ implementation of standard employment contracts in the host countries, the standard contracts of domestic female workers are monitored by the SLBFE based on Salary, Food, Accommodation and Transport clauses in the employment contract before a domestic worker is approved by the SLBFE to travel to the destination country.

In conclusion, it can be noted that national and district level stakeholders have made efforts to achieve the action plan of reviewing existing labour agreements/employment contracts and including provisions for ensuring the safety and dignity of migrant workers. However, it has not been adequately addressed. Further, when considering the action plans of regularizing the standard employment contracts for female domestic workers in Gulf countries in collaboration with GCC and monitoring compliance with and implementing standard employment contracts in the host countries, it is evident that different activities have been carried out by either the national level or district level stakeholders.

Summary

1. Efforts have been dedicated to empowering migrant workers through rights awareness, with a specific focus on one of the four action plans outlined in the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy. The implemented action plan revolves around conducting safe migration and promoting rights awareness, particularly through pre-departure training programs, aimed at ensuring decent work standards for migrant workers. Further, to fulfil the action plans aimed at advocating for the voting rights of migrant workers through collectives and negotiating with Labour Unions and CSO Networks to grant membership to returnee migrant workers, national-level stakeholders possess an understanding and awareness of this subject. However, as national-level stakeholders, they are yet to establish appropriate mechanisms to address these activities effectively. It is important to note that the remaining two action plans, which entail establishing collectives and promoting active membership of migrant workers in collectives and labour unions to voice their concerns and influence policies and practices and advocating for the voting rights of migrant workers through collective efforts, have not been adequately addressed in the activities carried out by the stakeholders.

Through the discussions of the national level stakeholders, it was evident that country level linkages are in place between Sri Lanka and Gulf Countries. However, the migrants are of the view that necessary aids and legal assistance from these institutions have either been unhelpful or delayed. The District Level Partners have extended their support to the migrant workers in directing and linking the migrant workers to the relevant institutions for necessary legal aids. Few migrants have given positive feedback for the support provided by the NGOs. In conclusion, it is evident that both action plans were implemented but not properly addressed at the ground level.

2. It was identified that national-level and district-level stakeholders have made effort to achieve the action plan of reviewing existing labour agreements/employment contracts and including provisions for ensuring the safety and dignity of migrant workers. However, it has not been adequately addressed. Further, when considering the action plans of regularizing the standard employment contracts for female domestic workers in the Middle Eastern countries in collaboration with GCC and monitoring compliance with and implementing standard employment contracts in the host countries, it is evident that different activities has been carried out by either the national level or district level stakeholders.

6.5 Area 05 - Effective management of the return and reintegration process

Effective management of the return and reintegration process is considered one of the major areas under the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration.

This area has been addressed through the following strategies of the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka:

- 6.5.1. Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle
- 6.5.2. Capacity building of all key stakeholders in the labour migration sector
- 6.5.3. Inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination for effective management of return and reintegration
- 6.5.1. Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle

To effectively manage the return and reintegration process, the Return and Reintegration Sub Policy in Sri Lanka includes a focused approach that emphasizes the management and dissemination of information related to migration throughout all stages of the migration cycle.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.5.1 based on the research study is identified in Table 25 below. Based on the survey study, action plans of 6.5.1.2 under the strategy have not been implemented and the implemented action plans are further discussed below.

► **Table 25: Area 05 | Strategy 01 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.5.1.1	Develop channels for collecting information on returnees from available sources and feed into the overall SLBFE database.	Implemented
6.5.1.2	Update SLBFE web page with latest data on returnees	Not implemented
6.5.1.3	Make the data accessible at One Stop Centres at district level and at national level for use by other sectors and stakeholders (common data sharing system)	Implemented

The table provided below illustrates the awareness and implementation levels of action plans related to this strategy by stakeholders at both national and district levels. These stakeholders encompass ILO, government entities, and district partners.

► Table 26: The level of understanding and execution of action plans.

Action plan #	Awareness								Implementation				
	National level			District level					District Level				
	ILO	Government	District partners	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala	Puttalam	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Vavuniya	Kurunegala
6.5.1.1	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.1.2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6.5.1.3	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓

Source: Through the information received from KIIs and FGDs

National-level stakeholders, including ILO and government entities such MOL&FE, SLBFE, did not make any references to the action plans when discussing their awareness of them. However, NGOs and stakeholders at the district level were aware of the action plan of 6.5.1.1 and had carried out activities to its objectives. It was also identified that the district level stakeholders also did indicate any awareness on both second (6.5.1.2) and third (6.5.1.3) action plans listed above.

In order to accomplish the objectives outlined in the action plan of 6.5.1.1, district-level stakeholders and NGOs had conducted surveys and gathered comprehensive information on migrants and returnees. Further it was mentioned that this was necessary since the Divisional Secretariat Offices did not possess a dedicated database specifically for this purpose. An NGO in Puttalam specifically mentioned utilizing an online application called “Cobo Collect App” to collect relevant data, including basic information and GPS locations of the returnees. This application can be used in both online and offline modes, meaning it can be accessed and updated without an internet connection. For instance, if they needed to locate a specific individual within their database, all the necessary information would be readily available. This project was initiated in September 2022 by VOICE, which is an NGO in Puttalam. Kurunegala district partner, CHR-CD also mentioned that they have introduced an application to collect migrant-related information and to give updates about the services provided by them. They have also introduced the same to the Divisional Secretariat Office of Kurunegala in 2020.

Kandy district partner, Samadanam reported their data collection approach for returnees, involved conducting monthly meetings where returnees would attend and provide updated information. This allowed them to maintain an up-to-date list of returnees. In Vavuniya district mobilizers gather data and information on migrants.

Kurunegala district partner, CHR-CD have reported that they have established a database to store information relating to members of the SAG (self-automated groups). Initially, they had relied on a manual system to gather data on migrants and returnees. However, they have recently transitioned to utilizing an automated system, specifically Google Forms are used by mobilizers to streamline the data collection process.

Based on the KIIs conducted at district-level the absence of a comprehensive and reliable database for migrants was identified, in addition to the lack of available data on migrants and returnees. The stakeholders highlighted that even though data regarding migrants leaving the country is updated and recorded, there is a lack of maintenance for details relating to returnees. As highlighted by the FEDO and CHR-CD (district partner) in Kurunegala another challenge encountered during the data collection process is the utilization of Google Sheets, as some officers lack digital literacy.

Project manager of the Safe foundation, which is the district partner of Anuradhapura, proposed that as migrants and returnees typically pass-through airports, there exists an opportunity to collect information at this stage and create an accurate database. In terms of implementing the sub-policy framework, FEDO interviewed from Anuradhapura district suggests the establishment of a regional unit that consolidates all relevant data on migrants, which would enhance the effectiveness of data management. Additionally, they also proposed to register migrants at the regional level and to implement strict and proper regulations among agencies. The result of the survey shows that the action plan of 6.5.1.1 considered implemented since district-level stakeholders have undertaken activities to gather information on returnees from available sources. However, it is evident that the action plan has not been fully accomplished, as there is no mention of integrating the collected data, centrally into the SLBFE database.

When considering the action plan of 6.5.1.3, national level stakeholders are aware of the action plan. NGOs in Kandy, Anuradhapura and Kurunegala have confirmed that they receive data from the Divisional Secretariat, specifically identifying villages or areas with high numbers of migrants. Regarding data sharing, all district partners have emphasized that information on migrants and returnees is not accessible to the public. However, the District Partners have informed about the establishment of migrant service centres, SAGs, and migrant societies that provide various services to support migrants and returnees. As a result, they are currently compiling a database of migrants and returnees that can be utilized by their collaborative partners. Though, this action plan is implemented, it is not functioning properly since district stakeholders do not use that data effectively. However, District partners (NGOs) use such data efficiently in terms operating various types of projects. Thereby, action plans of 6.5.1.3 considered implemented since NGOs in Kurunegala, Kandy and Anuradhapura have confirmed that they obtain data from the divisional secretariat office, specifically and identifying the villages or areas with the highest concentration of migrants. In terms of data sharing, all district partners highlighted that, data on migrants and returnees are not publicly available.

6.5 2 Capacity building of all key stakeholders in the labour migration sector

To successfully manage the process of return and reintegration, return and reintegration sub policy in Sri Lanka includes a specific strategy focused on capacity building of key stakeholders in labour migration sector.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.5.2 based on the research study is identified in Table 27 below. Based on the survey study, action plans of 6.5.1.2 under the strategy have not been implemented and the implemented action plans are further discussed below.

► **Table 27: Area 05 | Strategy 02 | Action plan wise implementation summary**

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.5.2.1	Identify stakeholders and their capacity needs and develop and implement a HR development plan.	Implemented
6.5.2.2	Carry out periodic monitoring of the performance of all the stakeholders.	Not implemented

When addressing the action plans of 6.5.2.1, national level stakeholders including ILO, IOM and government entities, did not make any references to the action plans regarding the Identification of stakeholders and their capacity needs as well as the development and implementation of a HR development plan. SLBFE mentions that they have a qualified group of instructors as well as industry specialists. They provide an annual ToT program for stakeholders and instructors now work on an hourly basis, with plans to organize more programs in the future. However, the Kandy stakeholders stated that, there is a scarcity of experienced professionals for various sessions and projects conducted by government. It was identified that, although

this action plan is being implemented at the national level, it is not being completely addressed at the district level. Based on the survey study the action plans of 6.5.2.1 can be considered implemented since several initiatives are being implemented at the national level however, they have not been completely addressed at the district level.

To accomplish the objectives outlined in the action plans of 6.5.2.2, which involve conducting periodic monitoring of the performance of all the stakeholders, national level stakeholders have indicated that they have taken preliminary steps to monitor the performance of all stakeholders. These measures include monthly meetings, reports, and participation on steering committees. District stakeholders hold the responsibility of coordinating activities and organizing monthly progress meetings as well as quarterly meetings. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the District Secretariat office also attend these quarterly meetings, and the outcomes are documented and submitted to the Ministry. As a result, there is a direct link between district stakeholders and national level in terms of monitoring their performances. The result of the survey shows that the action plans of 6.5.2.2 have been implemented in both national and district levels. Additionally, there is a direct link between district stakeholders and national level in terms of monitoring performance.

6.5.3 Inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination for effective management of return and reintegration

To effectively manage the process of return and reintegration, the Sri Lankan Return and Reintegration Sub Policy includes a specific strategy focused on inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination. This strategy aims to promote collaboration among various entities involved in the return process.

The implementation status of action plans of strategy 6.5.3 based on the research study is identified in Table 28 below. Based on the survey study, all the action plans have been implemented, and the implemented action plans are further discussed below;

► Table 28: Area 05 | Strategy 03 | Action plan wise implementation summary

Action Plan #	Action Plan Description	Implementation Status
6.5.3.1	Promote effective engagement of civil society organizations, trade unions, religious organizations, licensed foreign employment agencies in the return process	Implemented
6.5.3.2	Establish an inter-sectoral/ ministerial coordination mechanism within the reintegration unit of SLBFE for coordination at all levels- international, national, and sub-national.	Implemented
6.5.3.3	Develop a contingency plan for emergency evacuation of migrant workers with the involvement of Government agencies and international organizations.	Implemented

Among the action plans outlined in this strategy, national-level stakeholders are familiar with the action plans of 6.5.3.1, which involves facilitating the active involvement of civil society organizations, trade unions, religious organizations, and licensed foreign employment agencies in the return process. Additionally, they are also aware of the second action plan which entails establishing an inter-sectoral and ministerial coordination mechanism within the reintegration unit of the SLBFE. On the other hand, in district level, FEDOs from Kandy and Vavuniya district partners reported that they are also engaged in activities associated with the first action plan, reflecting their involvement in facilitating the participation of relevant organizations. Further, the Anuradhapura district partner highlighted activities carried out in relation to the second action plan, demonstrating their efforts to establish the inter-sectoral and ministerial coordination mechanism within the SLBFE which will be explained later in this chapter.

To implement the first action plan (6.5.3.1), national-level stakeholders have emphasized the collaborative efforts at the divisional secretariat level, where different entities work together towards a common goal. For instance, the Small Enterprise Development Division is recognized as an expert in preparing business plans. To strengthen this initiative, the Ministry of Labour provides training to Development Officers on developing family development plans and business plans. Additionally, the ILO has designed an Intersectoral Steering Committee that operates at the national, provincial, and district levels to ensure effective monitoring and implementation. On the other hand, FEDO from Kandy has mentioned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' intention to establish migrant worker societies aimed at empowering and safeguarding the welfare of migrants across the country. District partners across the country will be engaged in this endeavour. However, they highlighted that the previous attempt to establish migrant worker societies were delayed due to political interference.

To fulfil the action plans of 6.5.3.2, which involves establishing an inter-sectoral/ministerial coordination mechanism within the reintegration unit of the SLBFE to facilitate coordination at various levels (international, national, and sub-national), national-level stakeholders mentioned that there are approximately two to three Foreign Employment Development Offices (FEDOs) and Skills Development Offices at each Divisional Secretariat office to facilitate the migrants. However, they have also noted that many returnees are unaware of the existence of the SLBFE's reintegration unit. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also plays a crucial role in referring returnees to the relevant government authorities. At the district level, Anuradhapura district partner has reported the establishment of two forums as part of the efforts to address the second action plan:

- ▶ The Divisional Migrant Forum aiming to foster connections between government officials, migrant worker societies, and representatives from the Divisional Secretariat, the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, and other smaller groups.
- ▶ The District Migration Forum is currently in the process of reaching out to district migrant representatives. At present, it involves other stakeholders such as SLBFE officers and government officials in top management.

These forums serve as platforms for coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders at the district level.

To fulfil 6.5.3.3 different initiatives has been carried out such as international organizations such as IOM working with government agencies for the emergency evacuation of migrant workers. Based on the survey study that the action plan of 6.5.3.3 is considered implemented.

Summary

1. The first action plan, which involves establishing channels to collect information on returnees from various sources and integrating it into the comprehensive database of the SLBFE, district-level stakeholders have undertaken activities to gather information on returnees from available sources. However, it is evident that the action plan has not been fully accomplished, as there is no mention of integrating the collected data into the SLBFE database. Regarding the third action plan, which aims to ensure easy accessibility of this information through One Stop Centres at both the district and national levels, and creating a unified data sharing system, NGOs in Kurunegala, Kandy and Anuradhapura have confirmed that they obtain data from the divisional secretariat office, specifically and identifying the villages or areas with the highest concentration of migrants. In terms of data sharing, all district partners have highlighted that, data on migrants and returnees are not publicly available. On the other hand, no progress has been reported regarding the second action plan, which involves regularly updating the SLBFE website with the latest data on returnees.
2. Among the action plans under the strategy of capacity building of all key stakeholders in the labour migration sector, both national and district-level stakeholders have acknowledged and implemented activities related to two of the action plans. To identify stakeholders and their capacity needs as well as the development and implementation of a HR development plan, initiatives are being implemented at the national level, but are not completely addressed at the district level. To accomplish the second action plan, which involves carrying out periodic monitoring of the performance of all the stakeholders, has been successfully implemented in both national and district levels. Additionally, there is a direct link between district stakeholders and national level in terms of monitoring performance.
3. Among the three action plans under the strategy of inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination for effective management of return and reintegration, both national and district-level stakeholders have acknowledged and implemented activities related to two of the action plans. These action plans are promoting the active engagement of civil society organizations, trade unions, religious organizations, and licensed foreign employment agencies in the return process, establishing an inter-sectoral/ministerial coordination mechanism within the reintegration unit of the SLBFE to facilitate coordination at all levels, including international, national, and sub-national. Further it was identified through the KIIs conducted with national level stakeholders the existence of contingency plan for emergency evacuation of migrant workers with the involvement of Government agencies and International organizations.

7 Conclusion

The following table depicts the summary of the 05 Areas and their strategies which addresses the sub-policy and national action plan on return and reintegration. Subsequently, the percentage of implementation of each Area under the Sub Policy, and the percentage of Implementation of Action Plans under each of the Strategies will be analysed and compared as depicted in Figure 16.

► **Table 29 : Areas, strategies, and action plans of the sub policy on return and reintegration - 2015**

	Area in the Sub Policy				
	Area 01 Social reintegration of returnees	Area 02 Economic reintegration of returnees	Area 03 Physical and psychological well- being of returnees/ family members	Area 04 Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees	Area 05 Effective management of the return and reintegration process
Strategies	Forging and Institutionalization of a mechanism to ensure safe and dignified return and reintegration of migrant workers.	Quality standardization and certification of skills of migrant workers at pre-departure and upon return.	Ensure accessibility to health (primary, secondary, and tertiary) services stipulated under the Sri Lanka National Migration Health Policy	Empowerment of migrant worker through rights awareness.	Management and dissemination of information on migration at all stages of the migration cycle.
	Broad based positive image building of migrant workers	Promote savings investment and financial management among migrant workers	Development of a psycho-social support program for migrant workers and their family members.	Legal empowerment of migrant workers in destination countries and upon return	Capacity building of all key stakeholders in the labour migration sector
	Social security scheme for migrant returnees	Promote entrepreneurship, among migrant returnees and family members		Promote safety and protection of migrant workers	Inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination for effective management of return and reintegration
	Welfare and protection of family members of migrant workers with special focus on children	Secure local employment for returnees through public private partnerships			
	Skills development and career counselling for migrant workers children				

Figure 16 below depicts the percentage of implementation of each Area under the Sub Policy, and the percentage of Implementation of Action Plans under each of the Strategies.

► **Figure 16: The percentage of implementation of each Area under the Sub Policy, and the percentage of Implementation of action plans of each strategy**

	Area 01	Area 02	Area 03	Area 04	Area 05
% of Area wise Implementation of Sub Policy	54%	85%	100%	78%	75%
Strategy 01	50%	100%	100%	50%	67%
Strategy 02	38%	50%	100%	100%	50%
Strategy 03	50%	83%	NA	100%	100%
Strategy 04	60%	100%	NA	NA	NA
Strategy 05	100%	NA	NA	NA	NA

2

Accordingly, Area 03 (Physical and psychological well-being of returnees and their family members) has the highest implementation percentage of 100% while Area 02 (Economic reintegration of returnees) is the second highest with an implementation percentage of 85%. Area 04 (Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees) and Area 05 (Effective management of the return and reintegration process) comes as the third and fourth highest with 78% and 75% respectively. Area 01 (Social reintegration of returnees) has the lowest implementation percentage of 54% which indicates that Area 01 requires the highest attention in terms of policy implementation compared to other Areas.

Further, it is identified that Strategy 02; Broad-based positive image building of migrant workers of Area 01, with an implementation percentage of 38% needs more attention since only three action plans have been implemented out of a total of eight. Moreover, action plans of Area 01 – Strategy 01, Area 01 – Strategy 03, Area 02 – Strategy 02, Area 04 – Strategy 01 and Area 05 – Strategy 02 are only partially implemented with a percentage completion of 50%. Area 01 – Strategy 02 has the lowest implemented action plans with an implementation completion percentage of 38%.

Subsequently, through the KIIs and FGDs conducted at the national level and district level, it was observed that the return migration of skilled migrants is not adequately addressed through the implementation of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration since most of the strategies and action plans included are to address the return migrants from the Middle East. Further, it was also identified that activities such as (1) Availability of 24 hours hotline to lodge complaints, (2) Availability of SLBFE contact email to lodge complaints, and (3) Availability of mobile application since 2022 have been carried out at the national level report complaints related to migration and related matters, a well-defined complaint mechanism is not addressed through the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration.

² The number of action plans implemented out of the total number of action plans under each strategy were considered to compute the percentage of strategy wise implementation of action plans. Further total number of action plans implemented out of total number of action plans under each area were considered to compute the percentage of area wise implementation of sub policy.

8 Key Discussion Points through KIIs and FGDs from the Field Study

This chapter includes the key discussion points highlighted during the key informative interviews and focus group discussions related to areas of the Sub Policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration in Sri Lanka.

8.1 Area 01 - Social reintegration of returnees

To address the social reintegration of returnees, the following key discussion points were highlighted for future improvements during the KIIs and FGDs. They are listed as below:

- ▶ Establish a comprehensive database of individuals who have returned to ensure proper record-keeping and management.
- ▶ Introduce an effective mechanism for returnees to directly communicate with their former employers regarding the issue of unpaid salaries. This would enable them to seek compensation and potentially facilitate their remigration.
- ▶ Establish a well-functioning system to provide assistance to migrants who have developed illnesses or disabilities, as existing insurance schemes often fail to adequately support them.
- ▶ Implement a system that requires migrants to maintain a minimum amount of funds in their accounts for a specified duration until their return to their home country.
- ▶ Introduce a pension scheme for returned migrants, similar to the EPF and ETF schemes in Sri Lanka. This would involve deducting a portion of the migrant workers' monthly salary during their employment period, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of a pension scheme upon their return to Sri Lanka.
- ▶ Enhance the level of awareness among migrants regarding safe labor migration procedures.
- ▶ Revise the pre-departure training curriculum to incorporate the latest technological devices and updated operating methods, ensuring that migrants are equipped with the most recent knowledge and skills before embarking on their journeys.
- ▶ Include comprehensive information during pre-departure training programs regarding the return stage, ensuring that migrants are well-informed about the necessary preparations and procedures for a smooth return to their home country.
- ▶ Enhance the knowledge of individuals, particularly those who anticipate migrating to middle eastern countries for housekeeping jobs, by providing comprehensive information on various aspects including, rules and regulations, cultural norms, social issues, and other relevant subjects.
- ▶ Improve the awareness of migrants and their families regarding the society and social issues in the host country during pre-departure training
- ▶ Establish an effective system during the pre-departure stage to adequately educate migrants about the essential legal documents and requirements they need to be aware of and possess.
- ▶ Make necessary regulatory provision to provide the employment contracts in a language understandable by the migrant, and a copy of the agreement should accompany the worker throughout the migration cycle.
- ▶ Enhance awareness regarding safety and social issues that may potentially arise for the children of migrant workers.

- ▶ Introduce a rating system for agencies allowing migrants to share feedback and rate their experiences with the agencies that facilitated their migration process.

8.2 Area 02 - Economic reintegration of returnees

To address the economic reintegration of returnees, the following key discussion points were highlighted for future improvements during the KIIs and FGDs. They are listed as below:

- ▶ Identify job sectors that are currently experiencing high demand and inform the public about the available opportunities proactively. The authorities could identify suitable community members who can disseminate this information and utilize the RPL system to assign these individuals to relevant awareness sessions.
- ▶ Clear the backlog and issue more RPLs.
- ▶ Prioritize youth and provide training opportunities to enhance their language skills through IELTS certification.
- ▶ Establish a proper banking system to efficiently manage the remittances of migrants, with the special unit within SLBFE overseeing and monitoring this service to ensure its effectiveness.
- ▶ Government agencies to consider collaborating with suitable enterprises to foster an environment that encourages returnees to venture into entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Government authorities to prioritize the allocation and utilize of the self-employment funds.
- ▶ Support self-employment initiatives among returnees by implementing a favourable loan scheme that offers assistance and financial support.
- ▶ Improve awareness sessions for migrant workers and their families to receive comprehensive awareness on financial management, including the implementation of limits on withdrawals of remittance funds.

8.3 Area 03 - Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees and their family members

To address the Physical and psychological wellbeing of returnees, the following key discussion points were highlighted for future improvements during the KIIs and FGDs. They are listed as below:

- ▶ Establish an effective system for tracking the health records of migrants both during the pre-departure stage and upon arrival.
- ▶ Amendment on the permit for mothers with children over 2 years old to work abroad to be extended back to at least 5 years of age.
- ▶ Further enhance the involvement of government officers at the district level in implementing childcare plans for migrants.
- ▶ Assign the responsibility and authority to Grama Niladari officers for conducting background checks on families prior to issuing of a FBR.
- ▶ Increasing the monthly allocation of LKR 2,000 allowance for field trips for DOs.

8.4 Area 04 - Mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees

To address the mobilization and empowerment of migrant returnees, the following key discussion points were highlighted for future improvements during the KIIs and FGDs. They are listed as below:

- ▶ Conduct regular informational sessions to provide migrants with detailed information on security regulations, laws, cultural norms, and the language of the destination country.
- ▶ Use return migrants as resource personnel to conduct training sessions for migrants.
- ▶ Establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive database that tracks information related to female migrants and their employment including a continuous monitoring mechanism.

8.5 Area 05 - Effective management of the return and reintegration process

To address the effective management of the return and reintegration, the following key discussion points were highlighted for future improvements during the KIIs and FGDs. They are listed as below:

- ▶ Since migrants and returnees' transit through the airport, gather information and develop an accurate database, that can be linked to district-level stakeholders for subsequent actions
- ▶ Create a regional unit that consolidates all relevant data on migrants would significantly enhance data management effectiveness.
- ▶ Regular assessments or consultations with key stakeholders such as the District Secretariat and the NCPA.

9 References

- Mohamed, M. A., 2020. Push-pull factors influencing international return migration intentions: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Enterprising Communities People and Places in the Global Economy*, p. 17.
- Abeygunawardene, H. D. K. a. K., 2018. *Reintegration of Sri Lankan Returnee Migrant Workers from the Republic of Korea*, s.l.: s.n.
- Alicia A. Hayman, P., 2021. *Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Involuntary Returned Migrants Jamaica Project*, s.l.: s.n.
- Ammassari, S., 2004. From nation-building to entrepreneurship: the impact of élite return migrants in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. *Population, Space and Place*, 10(2), pp. 133-154.
- Anh Tu Chuc, W. L. N. T. M. P. Q. T. L. N. Y. F. T.-H., 2022. *The necessity of financial inclusion for enhancing the economic impacts of remittances*, s.l.: Borsa Istanbul Review.
- Anon., n.d. Social reintegration assistance | Reintegration Handbook. [Online] Available at: <https://uat.reintegrationhb.iom.int/module/social-reintegration-assistance> [Accessed 06 February 2023].
- Aydemir, . A., 2004. *Explaining the Deteriorating Entry Earnings of Canada's Immigrant Cohorts: 1966-2000*, Ontario: authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada.
- Baaz, M. E. & Akesson, L., 2015. *Africa's Return Migrants: The New Developers?*, s.l.: Zed Books.
- Bangladesh, I., 2021. Bangladesh IOM. [Online] Available at: <https://bangladesh.iom.int/news/first-ever-digital-data-platform-improved-reintegration-returning-migrants> [Accessed 06 02 2023].
- BEAL, D. J., GOYEN, M. & PHILLIPS, P., 2005. Why Do We Invest Ethically?. *The Journal of Investing*, p. 13.
- Bel Haj Zekri, A., 2007. *La migration de retour en Tunisie. Étude du cadre législatif, du contexte socioéconomique et des processus de réinsertion des migrants de retour*, s.l.: s.n.
- Berggren, N., Ljunge, M. & Nilsson, T., 2019. Roots of tolerance among second-generation immigrants. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 42(2), pp. 197-216.
- Bernas, J. C. L., 2017. A RESEARCH ON RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: CASE STUDY OF OFWs IN TAIWAN. In: *Monograph Series 2017-14*. s.l.:Institute for Labor Studies, p. 50.
- Bilesha Weeratne, 2020. *A Comprehensive Annalyiss of Remittances from Srilanka*. s.l.:s.n.
- Black, R., Koser, K. & Munk, K., 2004. *Understanding voluntary return*, s.l.: Sussex Centre for Migration Research.
- Bolognani, M., 2007. The Myth of Return: Dismissal, Survival or Revival? A Bradford Example of Transnationalism as a Political Instrument. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(1), pp. 59-76.
- BRAC, 2023. Small-Enterprise Loans. [Online] Available at: <http://www.brac.net/program/microfinance/small-enterprise-loans/> [Accessed 2023].
- Capio, C. M., Sit, C. H. P. & Aberne, B., 2014. Physical Well-Being. In: *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. s.l.:s.n.
- Carling, J. & Pettersen, S. . V., 2014. Return migration intentions in the integration-transnationalism matrix. *International Migration*, 52(6), pp. 13-30.
- Cassarino, J. P., 2004. Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(2), pp. 253-279.
- Cerase, F. P., 1974. Expectations and Reality: A Case Study of Return Migration from the United States to Southern Italy. *International Migration Review*, 8(2), pp. 245-262.

- Chand, M., 2016. Leveraging the Diaspora for Africa's Economic Development. *Journal of African Business*, 17(3), p. 273–290.
- Charry, C., Goig, . R. & Martínez, I., 2020. *Psychological Well-Being and Youth Autonomy: Comparative Analysis of Spain and Colombia*, s.l.: Frontiers in Psychology.
- Christou, A., 2006. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(5), pp. 831-845.
- Chronicle, U., 2013. "China's Return Migration and Its Impacts on Home Development. [Online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/chronicle/article/chinas-return-migration-and-its-impact-home-development/> [Accessed 14 february 2023].
- Chronicle, U., 2013. *China's Return Migration and Its Impacts on Home Development*. [Online] Available at: <http://unchronicle.un.org/article/chinas-return-migration-and-its-impact-homedevelopment/> [Accessed 13 2 2023].
- CODEV-EPFL, IDSK, JNU & ILO, 2013. *Migration, Scientific Diasporas and Development: Impact of Skilled Return Migration on Development in India*, Lausanne: Dr. Gabriela Tejada and Prof. Jean-Claude Bolay.
- Constant, A. & Massey, D. S., 2002. Return Migration by German Guestworkers: Neoclassical versus New Economic Theories. *International Migration*, 40(4), pp. 5-38.
- D.N. Anh, J. G. F. G. R. I. L. K. H. P. S. R. C.-I. T., 2003. *Return Migration in the Asia Pacific*, Cheltenham, UK: s.n.
- Daana, L. P., 1996. Boomerang entrepreneurs: Hong Kong to Canada and back. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 34(2), pp. 79-83..
- Dana , L. P., 1997. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 14(1), p. 17.
- Dana, L. P., 1995. Entrepreneurship in a remote Sub-Arctic community. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 20(1), pp. 57-72..
- Debnath, P., 2016. *Leveraging Return Migration for Development*; s.l.: KNOMAD.
- Economy Next, 2023. *Crisis-hit Sri Lanka sees record labour migration as rupee collapse, high inflation weigh*. [Online] Available at: <https://economynext.com/crisis-hit-sri-lanka-sees-record-labour-migration-as-rupee-collapse-high-inflation-weigh-108055/> [Accessed 7 February 2023].
- Elbanna, S. & Fatima, T., 2022. *Quantifying people in the GCC region: the uses, challenges, and efficacy of the quota system policy*, s.l.: Human Resource Development International.
- Eldering , L. & Knorth , E. . J., 1998. Marginalization of Immigrant Youth and Risk Factors in Their Everyday Lives: The European Experience. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 27(3), pp. 153-169.
- Employment, M. o. L. &., 2022. *Social Security benefit for migrant workers*. [Online] Available at: <https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/PIB1797243.pdf> [Accessed 06 February 2023].
- Employment, S. L. B. o. F., 2021. *Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment* , s.l.: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment.
- Erdal, M. B., 2020. International Encyclopedia of Human Geography. *sciencedirect*, pp. 105-110.
- EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, 2020. *The Standard Operating Procedures for Reintegration of Returnees in Ghana*, s.l.: s.n.
- Faini , R., 2005. Migration, Remittances and Growth. In: G. J. Borjas, ed. *Poverty, International Migration and Asylum*. London: Print ISBN, p. 171–187.
- Ferrer, A. M. & Riddell, W. C., 2006. The effect of literacy on immigrant earnings. *The Journal of Human Resources*, p. 47.
- Galarneau , D. & Morissette, R., 2004. Immigrants: Settling for less?. *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Volume 5, p. 12.

- GIANNETTI, M., LIAO, G. & YU, X., 2015. The brain gain of corporate boards: evidence from China. *The Journal of Finance*, 70(4), pp. 1629-1682.
- Gillespie, K., Riddle, L., Sayre, E. & Sturges, D., 1999. Diaspora interest in homeland investment. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 30(3), pp. 623-634.
- Gubert, F. C. J. N., 2011. *Return Migration and Small Enterprise Development in the Maghreb*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Guo, R. I. a. F., 2001. The Transforming Role of Skilled and Business Returnees: Taiwan, China and Bangladesh. *The Transforming Role of Skilled and Business Returnees*, p. 22.
- Harvey, W. S. S., 2009. British and Indian scientists in Boston considering returning to their home countries. *Population, Space and Place*, 15(6), pp. 493-508.
- Hugo, G., Rudd, D. & Harris, K., 2003. *Australia's Diaspora: Its Size, Nature and Policy Implications*, s.l.: Committee for Economic Development of Australia.
- ILO, 2013. *10 Years of Work on Labour Migration in Indonesia*, Jakarta: International Labour Organization.
- ILO, 2019. FAIR RECRUITMENT COUNTRY BRIEF: SRI LANKA. *ILO Geneva*, p. 12.
- ILO, 2021. *Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families*, Geneva 22, Switzerland: International Labour Organization.
- ILO, 2022. *International Labour Organisation*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/fairway/WCMS_776362/lang-en/index.htm [Accessed 09 02 2023].
- ILO, 2022. *International Labour Organization*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/colombo/info/pub/WCMS_849803/lang-en/index.htm [Accessed 6 2 2022].
- International Organisation for Migration, 2013. *Country Migration Report : The Philippines*. s.l.:s.n.
- IOM, 2018. *The Mapping and Scoping of Services for The Migrant Workers of Bangladesh at Various Stages of Labour Migration Cycle*, Dhaka: International Organization for Migration.
- IOM, 2019. *international Migration Law - Glossary on Migration*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.
- IOM, 2021. *Sustainable Reintegration And Improved Migration Governance (Prottasha)*, s.l.: 2023.
- IOM, 2022. *BANGLADESH: SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION AND IMPROVED MIGRATION GOVERNANCE (PROTTASHA) : Monthly Update September 2022*, s.l.: IOM.
- IOM, n.d. *Reintegration assistance at the individual level*, s.l.: s.n.
- Jain, S., 2013. For love and money: second generation Indian-Americans 'return' to India. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(5), pp. 896-914.
- Jonkers, K., 2008. *A Comparative Study of Return Migration Policies Targeting the Highly Skilled in Four Major Sending Countries*, Florence: MIREM Analytical Report, European University Institute.
- JONKERS, K., 2008. A Comparative Study of Return Migration Policies Targeting the Highly Skilled in Four Major Sending Countries. *European university institute*.
- Katrin Rosenberg, B. K. a. R. K., 2018. Financial literacy is key to sound remittances Mangament. *Heletas Swiss international cooperation/international journal for rural development*.
- Kilic, T. C. G. B. D. a. A. Z., 2007. *Investing Back Home: Return Migration and Business Ownership in Albania*, Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Kılıç, Z. & Menjívar, C., 2013. Fluid adaptation of contested citizenship: second-generation migrant Turks in Germany and the United States. *Social Identities*, 19(2), pp. 204-220..

- King, R. & Christou, A., 2014. Second-generation 'return' to Greece: new dynamics of transnationalism and integration. *International Migration*, 52(6), pp. 85-99.
- King, R., Christou, A. & Ahrens, J., 2011a. "Diverse mobilities': second-generation Greek-Germans engage with the homeland as children and as adults. *Mobilities*, 6(4), pp. 483-501.
- Koser, K. & Salt, J., 1997. *The geography of highly skilled international*. London: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF POPULATION GEOGRAPHY.
- Krumme, H. B., 2013. Returning, staying, or both? Mobility patterns among elderly Turkish migrants after retirement. *Transnational Social Review*, 3(1), pp. 11-29.
- Kunuroglu, F., Yagmur, K., Fons J.R. van de Vijver, F. J. v. d. & Kroon, S., 2015. Consequences of Turkish return migration from Western. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, p. 14.
- Lansakara, M., 2022. Labour migration research. *International labour organization*, p. 128.
- Leighton, M., 2020. HOW TO FACILITATE THE RECOGNITION OF SKILLS OF MIGRANT WORKERS. *ILO*, Issue 2, p. 109.
- Lin, X., 2010. *The Diaspora Solution to Innovation Capacity Development: Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the Contemporary World*, Toronto: Wiley InterScience.
- Liu, S. (., 2015. *Exploitation of Overseas Migrant Labor: Analysis of Migration Policy in Nepal and the Philippines*, s.l.: s.n.
- Ministry of Foreign Employment, 2015. *Sub policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers Sri Lanka*, s.l.: s.n.
- N.P.D. Padmakanthi, P., 2022. *Social Protection for Migrant Workers: The Case of Sri Lanka*, s.l.: s.n.
- NP Dhamikka , Padmakanthi Phd, n.d. *Social Protection for Migrant Workers : The case of Srilanka*. 2022: s.n.
- O'Neil, K., 2004. *"Labor Export as Government Policy: The Case of the Philippine*. s.l.:s.n.
- Ojo, S., 2017. Interrogating returnee entrepreneurship in the Nigerian context. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, p. 37.
- Olivius, E., 2018. *Beyond awareness: Learning from local experiences to move forward in fighting*, Chiang Mai: Interact Asia.
- Organization, I. L., 2021. *Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families*, Geneva 22, Switzerland: s.n.
- Ozaki, M., 2012. *Worker Migration and Remittances in South Asia , South East Asia Working Paper Series: Asian*. s.l.:s.n.
- Özerdem, A. & Sofizada, A. H., 2006. Sustainable reintegration to returning refugees in post-Taliban Afghanistan: land-related challenges: analysis. *Conflict, Security and Development*, 6(1), pp. 75-100.
- Pacific, I. R. O. f. A. a. t., 2016. Assessment of the complaints mechanism for Cambodian migrant. *Tripartite Action to Protect the Rights of Migrant Workers within and from the Greater Mekong*, p. 56.
- Palmira Permata Bachtiar, D. D. P., 2014. The Return Migration and Various Reintegration.
- Palmira Permata Bachtiar, D. D. P., 2017. Return Migration and Various Reintegration Programs for Low-Skilled Migrant Workers in Indonesia. *SMERU*, p. 62.
- Papakyriakou , M. D., 2005. Potentiale älterer migranten und migrantinnen. *Zeitschrift Für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, 38(6), pp. 396-406.
- PEKKALA, S., 2016. MIGRATION FLOWS IN FINLAND: REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN MIGRATION DETERMINANTS AND MIGRANT TYPES. *International Regional Science Review*, 26(4), p. 17.

- Phillips, J. & Potter, R. B., 2009. Quality of Life Issues and Second-Generation Migration: the Case of 'Bajan-Brit Returnees'. *Population Space and Place*, 15(3), pp. 239-251.
- Phyllis Tharenou, P.-S. S., July 2014. China's Reverse Brain Drain. *International Studies of Management and Organization* , 44(02), pp. 55-75.
- Picot, G. & Sweetman, A., 2005. *The Deteriorating Economic Welfare of Immigrants and Possible Causes: Update 2005*, Ottawa: authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada.
- Pogonyi, S., 2014. Four patterns of non-resident voting rights. *Ethnopolitics*, 13(2), pp. 122-140.
- Potter, R. B. & Phillips, J., 2006. *"Mad Dogs and Transnational Migrants?"*. s.l.:Taylor & Francis, Ltd..
- Prasetyo, P. P. B. & D. D., 2017. *Return Migration and Various Reintegration Programs for Low-Skilled Migrant Workers in Indonesia*, s.l.: The SMERU Research Institute.
- Ramadani, V. & Gerguri, S., 2011. Innovations: principles and strategies. *Strategic Change*, 20(3/4), pp. 101-110.
- Rashid, S. & A. A., 2018. *The Mapping and Scoping of Services for The Migrant Workers of Bangladesh at Various Stages of Labour Migration Cycle*, Dhaka: International Organization for Migration.
- Rashid, S. R. & Ashraf, A. A., 2018. *A Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration of International Labour Migrants from Bangladesh*. Dhaka: International Organization for Migration.
- Ratha, D., 2002. Workers' Remittances: An Important and Stable Source of External Development Finance. In: s.l.:s.n., p. 19.
- Ratha, D., 2005. Workers' Remittances: An Important and Stable Source of External Development Finance, in Global Development. *Striving for Stability in Development Finance*. World Bank .
- Reynolds, T., 2007. Friendship networks, social capital and ethnic identity: researching the perspectives of Caribbean young people in Britain. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10(4), pp. 383-398.
- Richard Perruchoud, J. R., 2011. *Glossary on Migration, 2nd Edition*, Geneva 19, Switzerland: IOM International Organization for Migration.
- Riddle, L., 2008. *Diasporas: Exploring their Development Potential*, s.l.: s.n.
- Saib Musette, M., 2007. *Migrant de retour en Algérie : Une nouvelle stratégie en perspective?*, s.l.: s.n.
- SALEH, A. R., 2017. *An Innovative Approach to Promoting Safe Migration: Three Lessons Learned from Bangladesh*. [Online] Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/innovative-approach-promoting-safe-migration-three-lessons-learned-bangladesh> [Accessed 2022].
- Sampath, F. P. J., 2019. *The Relationship between Brain Circulation and Industry Growth: A Case Study of the Knowledge Services Industry in Sri Lanka*, s.l.: s.n.
- Secretariat, T. A., 2016. *ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection*. Jakarta: The ASEAN Secretariat.
- Silverstein, P. A., 2005. Immigrant Racialization and the New Savage Slot: Race, Migration, and Immigration in the New Europe. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34(1), pp. 363-384.
- Skrobanek, J., 2009. Perceived Discrimination, Ethnic Identity and the (Re-)Ethnicisation of Youth with a Turkish Ethnic Background in Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(4), pp. 535-554.
- SLFBE, n.d. SLFBE. [Online] Available at: <http://www.slbfe.lk/page.php?LID=1&PID=113?> [Accessed 07 February 2023].
- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, 2021. *Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment*, s.l.: s.n.
- Thomas-Hope, E., 2002. Return Migration to Jamaica and its Development Potential. *willey online library*.

Tsuda, T., 2009. *Diasporic Homecomings: ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective*. s.l.:Stanford University Press, Stanford..

UNDESA, S. D., 1998. Glossary of statistical terms. In: s.l.:s.n., p. 94.

Valatheeswaran, C. & Rajan, S. I., 2011. Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India: rehabilitation mechanisms, livelihood strategies, and lasting solutions. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 30(2), pp. 24-44.

Wade, R. H., 2001. "A New-Old Approach to Industrial-cum-Immigration Policy. *Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science*.

Waldorf, B., 2010. *Determinants of International Return Migration Intentions*. London: Routledge.

Wessendorf, S., 2007. Roots migrants': transnationalism and 'return' among second-generation Italians in Switzerland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(7), pp. 1083-1102.

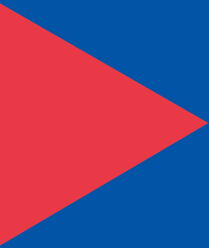
Wickramasekara, P., 2019. Effective return and reintegration on migrant workers with special focus on ASEAN Member States. *ILO*, p. 46.

Wolff, V., Owusu, S. O. & Bloer, D., 2016. *Diaspora engagement on country entrepreneurship and investment-policy trends and notably practices in the rabat region*, Bamako: International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

Yaroch, . A. L. et al., 2009. Acculturation and Sun-Safe Behaviors Among US Latinos: Findings From the 2005 Health Information National Trends Survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(4), pp. 1-765.

zinccone, g., penninx, r. & borkert, m., 2011. *Migration Policymaking in Europe: The Dynamics of Actors and Contexts in past and Present*, s.l.: Amsterdam University Press.

Zivin, J. G. & Small, A., 2005. A Modigliani-Miller Theory of Altruistic Corporate Social Responsibility. *Topics in Economic Analysis & Policy*, 5(1), p. 21.



ISBN 9789220393956



9 789220 393956