

INCLUDING MIGRANTS AND COMMUNITIES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY: EXPERIENCES FROM THE UNDP-IOM PARTNERSHIP

UNDP-IOM seed funding initiative to fast-track joint response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19



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COVER PHOTO: Venezuelan and Peruvian artists painted murals in Lima, Peru to debunk discriminatory and xenophobic discourse during COVID-19. © UNDP Peru 2021/Giulianna Camarena

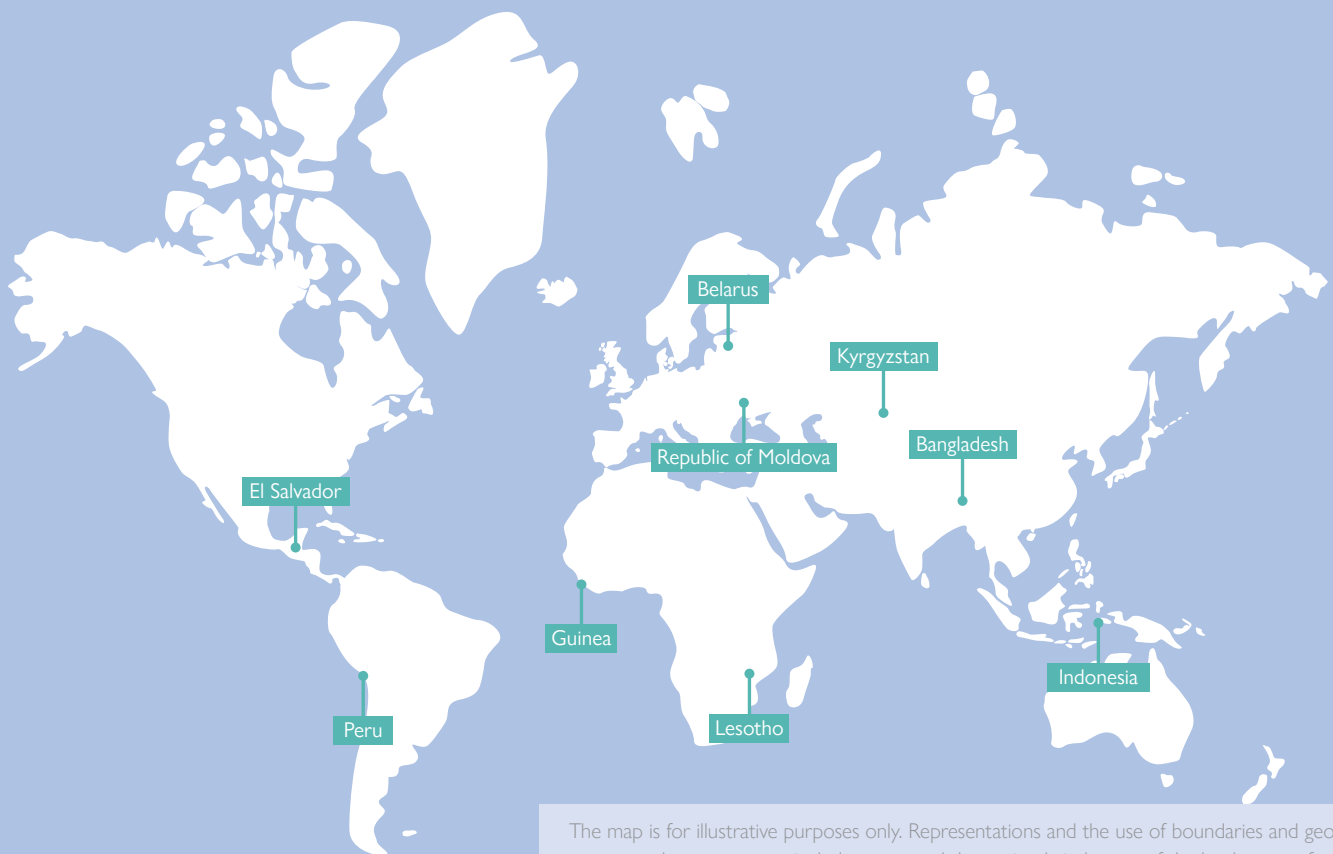
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LEVERAGING MIGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

In October 2020, the Principals of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agreed on priorities for a reinforced partnership between the two agencies at country, regional and global levels. Among the first steps in translating the commitment into practice, both agencies launched a **joint seed funding initiative** in December 2020, preceded by a call for proposals, to support the work of Country Offices in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants and communities in nine countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America (Bangladesh, Belarus, El Salvador, Guinea, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, the Republic of Moldova and Peru). This report is intended to provide a general overview of the initiatives, lessons learned and recommended action points to chart the way ahead to strengthen and amplify the IOM-UNDP collaboration. Working closely as One UN is essential to “build back better” from the pandemic. This seed funding initiative has proven that by working hand-in-hand, we can create more unified, equal and sustainable communities in the wake of COVID-19 on our path towards longer-term socio-economic recovery in line with national and local plans and strategies.



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The pandemic has had immediate and potentially long-term impacts on the attainment of many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with some outlining the risk of a “lost decade for development”.¹ The severe impacts on mobility dynamics, including restrictions on movement, stranded migrants and increased returns, reinforced the socio-economic impact and exposed many migrants and their families to new vulnerabilities, often affecting women especially severely. Migrants play a significant role not only during COVID-19 as key workers, but also beyond by bringing their skills, experience and innovative perspectives to our development efforts. Our ability to develop responses that mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic,

¹ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2021), [COVID-19 Could Lead to a Lost Decade for Development](#).

protect people on the move and their families and harness the positive power of migration for recovering better – as called for in the UN Framework for responding to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19² – depends on a good understanding of the effects of the pandemic on human mobility and development.³ It is therefore essential to identify solutions that enable migrants to efficiently and concretely contribute to socio-economic responses alongside local populations, enabling them to act as agents of change and development. It is important that our global efforts towards sustainable development are turned into context-specific actions in support of national and local authorities, leveraging complementary contributions of partners.

This report includes an analysis of key findings for ensuring success and sustained impact through this joint UN partnership. It also outlines a suggested path forward for integrated approaches to migration, COVID-19 and sustainable development that rests on collaboration between the UN, local and national governments, civil society organizations, diaspora and migrant associations and so many more essential partners.

The general section of the report is complemented by two-page fact sheets of each of the nine projects, including key findings and opportunities for future collaboration. The report is intended to serve as a quick glance at what can be achieved when we work together to empower migrants to build strong, safe, resilient communities that can withstand challenges, such as the current pandemic.

Seed Funding Approach and Methodology

Led by IOM Headquarters' Migration and Sustainable Development Unit and UNDP Headquarters' Crisis Bureau - Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility Team, the seed funding initiative sought to enhance the understanding of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on communities and mobile populations, including returnees and forcibly displaced populations and pilot activities to incorporate their needs and challenges into the wider response. Following a call for proposals, nine country offices received seed funding support and projects were implemented from December 2020 through to April 2021. Through joint knowledge management support, including an “after action review” and a stocktaking workshop with Country and Regional Offices, IOM and UNDP identified key lessons learned and established priorities for further action at the country, regional and global levels.

The joint country initiatives with their different thematic entry points provide snapshots into the impact of the pandemic on mobility and development and its consequences for migrants and societies as a whole. For example, in Lesotho and Guinea, COVID-19 was found to have disproportionate effects on communities living in cross-border regions. Through a consultative process, IOM and UNDP identified the need to build capacities of border officials for ensuring safe mobility and promoting community cohesion during the pandemic. The interventions highlighted the opportunities in leveraging safe and regular migration for sustainable recovery. In other countries, activities included developing municipal-level COVID-19 socio-economic response plans, community awareness campaigns and coordination mechanisms to enhance social cohesion, joint roadmaps for action and partnership to accelerate recovery and more. This showcased the importance of integrating migration into COVID-19 socio-economic recovery programming and the benefits of strong multi-stakeholder partnerships that put mobility and *SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals* at the heart of efforts to recover better from the pandemic.

This seed funding initiatives proved to be a strategic investment and catalyst to produce joint and scalable results and further enhance joint programming between both agencies in support of migrants, communities and member states.

²United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2020), [A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19](#). See also [UN Secretary General, Policy Brief: COVID-19 and People on the Move](#).

³IOM (2020), [Issue Brief: Why Migration Matters for “Recovering Better” From COVID-19](#).

Key Findings: Partnering for Success

Despite tight timelines, IOM and UNDP country offices managed to achieve a great amount of progress in strengthening the partnership on the ground, showcasing how working together can catalyze innovative possibilities and new solutions at the country, regional and global levels.

An analysis of the partnership through a survey and stocktaking workshop in April 2021 showed that the initiative was considered useful by Country Offices to build joint perspectives for COVID-19 recovery, sustainable development and migration (e.g. Moldova, where country offices identified a joint roadmap), strengthen synergies between different analysis and policy tools (e.g. Bangladesh and Indonesia) and set a joint strategic course not only for this seed funding but also to firmly establish a mutually beneficial partnership that is essential for maximizing the potential of migration for sustainable development.

How have these activities impacted operations on the ground? Representatives and technical staff from IOM and UNDP explained in the reflective internal workshops how they will see this initiative take shape in their contexts.

“This initiative helped to pave the way not only for the IOM-UNDP partnership but also to spur partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders, to create a multi-stakeholder platform for policy dialogue. Already, the national COVID-19 Task Force/Coordination Group can be envisaged as a platform for carrying forward the 5 pillars of joint action identified in our plan.”

“The COVID-19 seed funding initiative can be a promising practice to showcase with other UN agencies and to advance the ‘One UN’ approach, so all stakeholders realize just how broad the migration agenda is and how necessary partnership and concerted action are.”

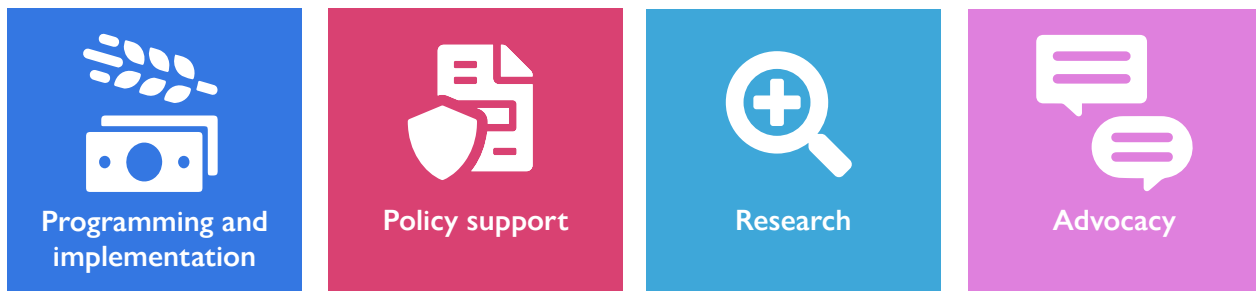
“By sharing our different agencies’ experiences and learning about each other’s work, we realized that the impact of COVID-19 was mostly felt at the local level but that we had almost zero data on what those impacts really were. Our subsequent project helped us to understand that multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms that build trust and collaboration between community members are key for migrants to contribute to sustainable development in their neighbourhoods.”

“These initiatives showed that IOM and UNDP can pool our strengths and work to each other’s comparative advantages. When IOM and UNDP work together, we strengthen credibility for development cooperation opportunities, bringing different expertise from both sides. This can even help to mobilize others from the UN Network on Migration in country and globally.”

However, success is not guaranteed. UNDP and IOM colleagues identified the following key success factors as contributing to the overall collaboration:

- Dividing tasks by “comparative advantage” of each agency
- Co-design of the project and joint review of all Terms of References & outputs
- Frequent & close communication, incl. designating technical focal points in each category
- Coordinated approach to engagement with service providers local and national authorities, civil society, etc.

The seed funding projects also identified opportunities for future joint programming on the ground. As such, the following areas were identified as priorities for further strengthening the partnership:



Recommendations for the main areas for future collaboration and support to governments for strengthened migration and development approaches that arose from these seed funding initiatives were to:

1. Support local and national governments to invest in data collection and national/local data collection strategies, including providing necessary evidence and informing the design process of initiatives, policies and practices;
2. Build capacities of local and national authorities to effectively engage migrants in development, mainstream migration concerns into policies (health, education, etc.) and establish national-local coordination mechanisms on COVID-19 socio-economic recovery;
3. Build on regional and inter-agency networks, to establish cross-border, multi-country or regional initiatives on migration, COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and development in contexts where borders are fluid and migration multi-dimensional;
4. Advocate at the regional or sub-regional levels to share knowledge from one country context to another, foster upscaling of good practices and mobilize cross-regional projects;
5. Share the specific good practices from these initiatives and others in global migration, development and COVID-19 dialogues, including feeding key data, recommendations and learnings into implementation and review platforms for the 2030 Agenda (e.g. through the HLPF 2021, Voluntary National Reviews and Local Voluntary Reviews) and the Global Compact on Migration (UN Network for Migration at national and global levels, International Migration Review Forum, regional GCM reports, etc.) and ongoing national priorities and strategies such as UN Country Team plans, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Common Country Analyses (CCAs);
6. Mobilize non-traditional donors and partners, such as the private sector, for multi-stakeholder and innovative approaches to ensure migrants and mobility are fully included in COVID-19 socio-economic recovery.

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over and recovery efforts take shape in some contexts, partnerships, with joint vision and shared objectives that leverage the comparative advantages of different organizations, are more necessary now than ever. Migrants and our organizations will have a role to play in this recovery and it is essential to get this right if the global community is to re-take our path to the 2030 Agenda.

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COUNTRY INITIATIVES





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BANGLADESH

Displacement monitoring and socio-economic vulnerability mapping

COVID-19 has created unexpected challenges in Bangladesh, including the large number of migrant returnees and exacerbating existing inequalities and the negative effects of climate change. In addition to the pandemic, Bangladesh experienced a super cyclone, recurrent floods, increased unemployment in the informal sector and internal displacement. The joint IOM-UNDP initiative was implemented in hazard prone locations in Chilmari Upazila (Kurigram district) in the north of Bangladesh from November 2020-January 2021 to assess these multi-layered hazards and identify individuals facing exacerbated levels of vulnerability and respond to the need for more robust community data and information systems.⁴

In coordination with local stakeholders, IOM and UNDP assessed displacement experiences from medium- to high-risk households using a combined inter-agency approach that leveraged two distinct data collection tools: UNDP's Digital Beneficiary Targeting (DBT) Platform and IOM's [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) (DTM). DBT is a disaster risk information system for ranking households based on their socio-economic vulnerability and geographical exposure to hazards. DTM is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility to better understand displacement trends. As a result, this assessment enabled both agencies to test and review the practical and sustainable use of both data collection tools and to understand how these systems could be rolled out together on a larger scale, thereby leveraging the potential of each for robust, holistic analyses of migration and displacement dynamics in communities that will allow for a more targeted response.

The project had two main outcomes:

⁴This section of the population has been termed the "new-poor" and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has previously targeted the new-poor families through cash assistance using mobile financial services, but identifying and reaching these families is proving a challenge.

1. Worked with local government authorities to identify high-risk individuals in communities and assess factors that exacerbated vulnerabilities, analyzed the gaps and weaknesses in existing government methodologies and processes for collecting and utilizing disaster-related data, strengthened local government authorities' capacities to respond to disasters and identified interventions to strengthen migration/displacement and disaster-related data processes.
2. Gained a comprehensive understanding of the effects of disasters, including COVID-19 and climate-induced crises, on mobility and the local population in Chilmari Upazila, in order to support local government authorities design policies and projects that can address vulnerability factors, support vulnerable and displaced families, design disaster preparedness plans and recover sustainably from COVID-19.

A key lesson learned was that multiple data collection tools can be used to understand the complex and multi-layered impact of disasters, including COVID-19 and climate-induced migration, to help communities and local government authorities plan, respond to and build back from crises. However, data collection methodologies need to be complemented with wider contextual analysis; for example, there were a high number of returnees to villages in Kurigram who were driven by factors aside from COVID-19 and isolating these caseloads and understanding their movement patterns is challenging.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN BANGLADESH

Strengthen local authorities' capacities and data collection methodologies to enhance policies and interventions related to disaster, environment, displacement and development: IOM and UNDP can strengthen government capacity for disaster risk reduction through improved data on disasters, displacement and vulnerabilities through joint capacity development to enhance data collection practices, including through digitalization. By strengthening capacities to collect, analyse and share data, local authorities will be able to better monitor displacement risks and vulnerabilities, adapt policies for risk reduction and prevention and inform life-saving interventions. Potential areas to enhance local governments' data collection include:



Capacity building to ensure a consistent methodological approach to data collection.



Support for digitalization of disaster data to collect, compile and analyze data.



Developing a network of community-based key informants to rapidly collect accurate data during disasters.

Replicate the joined-up approach in other regions, countries and contexts, using IOM and UNDP data collection tools and build local-national coordination mechanisms: Accurate, timely, risk-informed data related to disasters, climate migration, vulnerabilities and displacement is needed. IOM-UNDP collaboration could contribute to build complementary data collection systems to compile and analyse data before, during and after disasters. Such data would support government and humanitarian partners better prepare for and respond to climate change and other disasters as well as identify durable solutions. IOM-UNDP can leverage their field presence to pilot data systems and share timely and accurate information between the local and the national levels, enabling governments and other relevant stakeholders to base policies and practices in empirical evidence. This approach should be based on local and national ownership, integrated into development plans and with strong community participation to ensure sustainability and systematization.



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BELARUS

Addressing vulnerabilities, stigma and discrimination of migrants in the context of COVID-19

IOM and UNDP conducted an analysis of community attitudes towards migrants during COVID-19 and addressed negative stereotypes and perceptions through a social media information campaign in Belarus in late 2020 and early 2021. The two UN Agencies paved the way for longer-term support to the Government of Belarus to contribute to the socio-economic inclusion and access to services for migrants in the context of COVID-19.

The pandemic has increased xenophobia in many countries and communities, with many migrants facing accelerated violence, discrimination and social exclusion as a result of racialized public discourse, fear, a misunderstanding of how the virus spreads, among other concerns. The initiative therefore addressed vulnerabilities, stigma and discrimination which migrants and their families may encounter in the context of COVID-19 in Belarus, fostering tolerance, positive and unbiased attitudes towards them in the society, particularly at the community level. In addition, IOM and UNDP identified entry points for leveraging a comprehensive and effective programme response to strengthen migrant integration and social cohesion between migrants and local communities.

The project had three main outcomes:

1. A comprehensive understanding of xenophobia and attitudes towards migrants during COVID-19 in Belarus was gained, finding that while there is an overall positive attitude towards migrants, COVID-19 exacerbated some pre-existing negative attitudes towards migrants, especially those from different ethnocultural backgrounds (e.g. from Asia and Africa, rather than Europeans) and that migrants' labour integration is not being supported in the current environment.
2. Based on the findings of the rapid survey, UNDP and IOM conducted awareness-raising activities targeting

professional communities and local populations, to equip people with reliable and facts-based information about migrants and COVID-19 and tailor messages for attitude change by describing their impact and role in local development, community building and knowledge-sharing.

3. Based on the outcomes of the rapid survey, UNDP and IOM developed a set of four joint project proposals to deliver co Government of Belarus to address COVID-19-induced vulnerabilities, integration challenges, stigma and discrimination of migrants in Belarus.

One of the key lessons learned from this short project was the need to think creatively about ways to capitalize interest and partnerships in Belarus for COVID-19 socio-economic recovery moving forward. Engaging with private sector, emerging and existing donors and capitalizing on existing joint IOM-UNDP initiatives and priorities have been identified as some suggestions for reigniting Belarus' ability to build back better and more inclusively from COVID-19, to ensure nobody is left behind, regardless of migration status.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN BELARUS

Capitalize on the existing momentum to work across the migration agenda within national migration policy development:

The UNCT COVID-19 Response Plan in Belarus prioritizes enhancing needs-based social assistance to vulnerable groups, recognizing that nobody is safe until everybody is safe and we can leave no one behind in our COVID-19 response. Additionally, the decades-long partnership between UNDP and IOM in Belarus has created momentum upon which we can now build, through additional a) joint programming in support of vulnerable migrants' rights; b) joint policy advice to the Government in developing its migration policy; c) joint resource mobilization with the SDGs Fund across migration and environment thematic areas. By leveraging these areas of existing work, national migration policies can be strengthened and IOM-UNDP can work with the national government to mainstream migration into other sector policies, such as education and health, two of the most impacted areas of development since the pandemic.

Utilize and implement the four proposed project frameworks as entry points for future development support to Government of Belarus:

The current project has had a catalytic effect on leveraging joint UNDP-IOM programming. The four identified programme frameworks have great potential to be scaled up into full-fledged projects or initiatives and, if funded, would improve the well-being of migrants, leverage their potential as development actors in the communities in which they live and enable migrants to exercise their rights and access to basic services in Belarus. The projects are aligned with and will help achieve the UNCT COVID-19 Response Plan in Belarus, UNDP and IOM country strategies and priorities and the SDGs. These four joint programmes include the following topics:



Addressing stigma and discrimination towards migrants



Enhancing access to social services for migrants



Skills mobility partnerships



Leveraging potential of cooperating with the Belarusian diaspora



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EL SALVADOR

Impact of COVID-19 on households with migrants in La Unión, El Salvador

In El Salvador, IOM and UNDP worked together with local authorities and migrants in La Unión to identify the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on households with migrant families and to address these effects through a local Socio-economic Response Plan focused on migrants in the context of the pandemic. El Salvador is a country of migrants and experiences a variety of intersecting mobility phenomena. La Unión is a department with a long history of migration: 30% of its households have at least one member living abroad (compared to 15% for El Salvador as a whole) and half of their households receive remittances.⁵ La Unión also receives immigrants from Honduras and Nicaragua.⁶ In addition to these migration phenomena, La Unión also has several development-related challenges, with the highest illiteracy rate nationwide (19.9%).⁷ Both the migration dynamics and the development context were highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention therefore focused on conducting joint analysis to formulate a Socio-economic Response Plan that can leverage migration to recover better from the pandemic towards sustainable development.

The project had two main outcomes:

1. The study led to a comprehensive understanding of the effect of COVID-19 on migrants and the community in La Unión, including that the pandemic changed the determinants/deterrents of migration; households with immigrants to El Salvador face greater vulnerabilities from COVID-19 (mainly in the dimensions of income and education); returning and reintegration during a pandemic was more difficult and less support was provided; and yet remittances from family members abroad remained high throughout the pandemic

⁵ Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos (2019), [Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples \(EHPM\)](#).

⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020), [World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapid Changing World](#).

⁷ Within its population aged 10 years and over. Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos (2019). [Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples \(EHPM\)](#).

which underlines the important potential of transnational communities to support long-term recovery from the pandemic.

2. To ensure that the entire community of La Unión can recover better from COVID-19 and rebuild their lives, IOM and UNDP worked with local authorities to develop a local-level COVID-19 Socio-economic Response Plan, building on the findings of the assessment and in synergy with the national and international COVID-19 Response Plans.

The initiative highlighted two important lessons. First, systematic and robust data systems that include migrants are needed from the outset, to enable rapid response to emergencies or shocks like COVID-19 and support sustainable recovery. Second, the absence of migration-specific policies are bottlenecks not only for the success of COVID-19 policies but also sustainable development in general. Based on these learnings, the following opportunities for future action were identified to support La Unión and El Salvador to recover better from COVID-19 and leverage migration for local and national development

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN EL SALVADOR

Establish a national data collection strategy that disaggregates data by migratory status: El Salvador does not have a data collection strategy that considers the migration perspective on economic and social factors. IOM and UNDP therefore suggest developing a national strategy on data that creates systems and processes to collect and disaggregate data on migratory status as well as other factors. Doing so will enable national and local authorities to design public policies with migration lens.

Establish migrant-specific policies and mainstream a migration perspective in national and local development policies and plans, including COVID-19-specific plans: The findings of the above analysis identified how crucial and interconnected migration and development are and how essential it is to ensure that migration is included in all public policies on a range of issues, including education, employment, housing, urbanization, disaster preparedness and response, health, etc. many of which were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not including migrants' needs, voices and concerns in policies and plans hinders COVID-19 recovery and limits the ability of migrants to positively contribute to development. Support to national and local authorities to update policies and ensure the migration perspective is mainstreamed in COVID-19 and development sector policies is a critical area of action for El Salvador.



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GUINEA

Mitigating the COVID-19 impacts on cross-border human mobility through a community-based response in border areas between Guinea and Mali

In Guinea, IOM and UNDP worked together in two local prefectures on the Guinea-Mali border (Mandiana and Siguiri Prefectures) in the early months of 2021 to support both local authorities including border officials and the wider cross-border community. In border communities, lives and livelihoods are intimately intertwined with mobility. Consequently, the COVID-19 crisis and the ensuing border restriction measures have had a negative socio-economic impact on Guinea border communities and on the livelihoods of vulnerable households relying on small and informal businesses. The generalized vulnerability of the population and particularly of youth, women, children and migrant workers limited the capacity of cross-border communities to overcome the ill effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictive measures and lower incomes have also led to the deterioration of relations between the different border communities, thus negatively impacting social cohesion at the border area, increasing the level of inequality and uncertainty and, consequently, leading to increased tension over access to resources which may inadvertently lead to increased irregular and unsafe migration.

To combat these trends, the IOM-UNDP seed funding initiative trained local authorities in integrated COVID-19 safe border management approaches that engaged local communities for successful and participatory decision-making processes. This contributed to easing community tensions and enabling community resilience and livelihoods despite economic pressures brought on by COVID-19.

The project had three main outcomes:

1. To mitigate the severe economic impacts of COVID-19 on these border communities, the project carried out workshops and training to encourage 433 people, including 200 women (entrepreneurs, cooperatives)

and 105 youth, to design business ideas that would improve their income-generating activities, generate savings and access credit.

2. By mobilizing trade unions, transport associations and community and worship leaders to raise awareness of COVID-19 preventive measures and the promotion of social cohesion, 100 moto taxi drivers were trained and community leaders engaged in local radio broadcasts to create dialogue between local authorities and border officials with community members for participatory local decision making.
3. The project trained 142 local authorities including border officials and community leaders on safe and integrated border management during COVID-19, including the protection of vulnerable migrants including victims of trafficking, COVID-19-safe border management procedures and facilitating community engagement and social cohesion to reduce community tension.

The initiative underlined the importance of migration and cross-border trade between neighbouring countries for economies, social cohesion and sustainable development of border regions. Mobility restrictions had far-reaching consequences local economies in Guinea that include, for example, the unavailability of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and herbicides, which are essential to keep food systems running and malnutrition at bay. They also increased social unrest and community conflict over livelihoods and access to resources. COVID-19 has negatively impacted mobility and development, pushing often-excluded groups further behind. For example, women traders were disproportionately affected by the border restrictions, with 90% of women interviewed through this project reporting that their income was significantly reduced due to the pandemic. At the same time, the joint intervention highlighted the opportunities of inclusive policies and integrated border systems to enable safe and regular migration in line with health recommendations and thereby benefit border communities to recover better from the pandemic.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN GUINEA

Facilitate safe cross-border mobility in line with health recommendations to strengthen border livelihoods and ensure migration can contribute to recovering better for sustainable development: Given the above findings that mobility and development are intrinsically linked especially in cross-border communities, governments and local authorities should seek to facilitate cross-border movements whenever safely possible to protect the livelihoods of the communities. Innovative measures for safe and orderly mobility are crucial to ensure that health and safety measures are maintained and enable continuation of socio-economic activities across borders.

Invest in community projects and infrastructure, such as promoting local consumer supply chains linked to agro-pastoral activities, in order to empower women and the most vulnerable people in the community: Community workshops can support entrepreneurs, especially women, youth and often-marginalized members of the community to recover and strengthen the resilience of small businesses. Local seed funding can support new business plans and community projects (agriculture value chain) that adapt to the COVID-19 realities and respond to the challenges faced by border communities to promote sustainable development.

Ensure dialogue between local authorities / border officials, community leaders and members and local business owners to raise awareness among cross-border communities and increase their resilience: Providing safe spaces for community dialogue and ensuring mobile people and their families can actively participate and contribute to policies and programmes will allow effective responses to their realities and needs and contribute to integrated, safe and equal societies. This would include creating a framework for periodic consultation between

government institutions, populations and partners to discuss issues of concern and promote social cohesion, human security and sustainable development.

IOM and UNDP are already looking to implement the above activities through a joint concept note founded on strengthening border livelihoods in Guinea, building capacities of local authorities and reducing social tensions. Additionally, this work showcases how cross-border/regional projects that involve multiple UN agencies and national and local governments from several countries are needed to respond to the complex migration realities. For example, IOM and UNDP also carried out a similar programme in the Guinea-Sierra Leone-Liberia border and other similar projects are being approved through the Migration MPTF,⁸ showcasing strong international willingness to move this work forward and scale up in other contexts.

⁸ Provisional title: "Strengthening border management, social cohesion and cross-border security in the Parrot's Beak area," jointly implemented by IOM, UNDP, WHO and ITC.



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INDONESIA

Supporting evidence-based programming at the village level for addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Indonesian migrant worker households

In Indonesia, IOM and UNDP worked together to contribute to the Government of Indonesia's (GOI) efforts to address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Indonesia, especially among migrant worker households. Return migration was a significant trend in many countries around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, as migrants lost their jobs and restrictions on mobility made migration more challenging and, often, dangerous; in 2020 alone, an estimated 180,000 Indonesian migrant workers returned to their communities of origin.⁹ An initial survey conducted by IOM, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) and Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) from October through December 2020 of some 2,100 returning Indonesian migrant workers showed that 87% of the surveyed migrant workers experienced a drop of between 20% to more than 60% in their household incomes, reflecting a dependence on remittance income by migrant-sending households.

With the support of this seed funding initiative, IOM and UNDP conducted a complementary study to identify the needs, capacity and support mechanisms in migrant worker villages of origin, to identify opportunities for the inclusion of migrant worker households into existing development programming. The study employed a quantitative survey covering 1,082 villages across eight provinces. The study and its policy recommendations will contribute evidence-based data and information that can be used as a foundation to further support the GOI in formulating gender-sensitive policies and programmes to better protect and empower migrant worker households.

The study gathered best practices and lessons learned on COVID-19 responses for migrant workers and their families to support the migration governance and development frameworks in the country. The executive summary of the study may be accessed [here](#). Findings from the study include:

1. The pandemic resulted in the repatriation of migrant workers at an unprecedented scale. Local governments

⁹ Indonesia ranks second among countries with the largest migrant worker population living abroad in South-East Asia, with an estimated 6.5 - 9 million migrant workers.

face new challenges in implementing a response to migration. In addition, the majority of villages surveyed do not fully comprehend the law on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers (Law No.18 of 2017), which affects the availability of related regulations and programming at the village level for the protection and empowerment of migrant workers. More technical capacity support is needed from the national government to equip provincial, district and village governments with capabilities to implement the law.

2. A coordinated national response and supportive budgetary framework is a good practice and has enabled the inclusion of migrant workers and their families in villages' policy measures. Rather than establishing migration as a specific category, integration into the existing blueprints is a more suitable approach for including migration within the developmental framework. Aside from avoiding additional programmatic priorities which potentially overwhelm the village, this integration approach is also meant to avoid the instrumentalization and further politicization of migration.
3. The pandemic has necessitated village-based measures to register and collect data on returnees, which could serve as a stepping stone towards a more integrated migration database that includes the national and village levels. Better data collection on migration further supports the inclusion of migrant workers in the pandemic response and overall development programming.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN INDONESIA

Ensure that migrants' and local communities' needs are well integrated into existing activities of the UN System, including COVID-19 Socio-economic Response and Recovery Plans: The results of the proposed project will provide an improved evidence base and increased focus for IOM, UNDP and the UN Country Team to mobilize resources for the implementation of the UNSDCF 2021-2025 in Indonesia. Additionally, linkages are already being made to support IOM's ongoing work related to the COVID-19 socio-economic recovery response, UNDP's Adaptive Social Protection Initiative and tailoring the support from the UN Network on Migration to the Indonesian government which collectively will enhance capacities on migration governance throughout the country. UNCT Indonesia's pipeline programme under the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund to advance the implementation of the GCM at the national and sub-national level in Indonesia could be one such way of carrying this work forward.

Use evidence-based approaches to improve the implementation of existing national policies on migration and ensure migration is included in other development policies at the national, local and village levels: Ensure national-local coordination mechanisms on migration to enhance the implementation of national legislation in sub-national contexts and build the capacities of local authorities to support the development of local migration-sensitive policies, progressing policy coherence. The Government of Indonesia has already set forth its priorities to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, particularly for migrant workers, including by leveraging the Global Compact of Migration. The initiative increased the possibilities for IOM and UNDP to jointly advocate and promote the integration of migrant workers' needs for social protection and advance inclusive social protection programmes within these plans.

To kick-start this process and spur concrete action, the study was launched through a national webinar on 28 April 2021, which involved government representatives from national and regional ministries, local government authorities and migrant worker communities with an estimated 400 attendees. During the launch, the Minister emphasized the importance of migrant worker household's inclusion in the overall village level COVID-19 response and development planning. Key government ministries also reiterated the importance of concerted efforts among related institutions at the national level to support local and village government capacities in the implementation of related laws and regulations, as well as in integrating migration into the wider COVID-19 response and development framework. A recording of the webinar can be accessed [here](#).



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KYRGYZSTAN

Local authorities’ perceptions towards returned migrants

To tackle numerous pandemic-induced challenges on human mobility in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP and IOM joined efforts to identify the main issues faced by returnees and co-design joint solutions in a timely manner, working together towards a larger country-wide migration agenda. This project aimed to increase the understanding of the needs of returned migrants, the attitudes and readiness of local authorities to effectively reintegrate them, as well as the capacity building needs for a sustainable recovery from COVID-19. In a country with over 1 million of its people abroad, the need for such an intervention occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic’s profound impact on migration patterns, as an estimated 150,000 migrants have returned during the pandemic due to socio-economic challenges in the principal destination countries. Urgent action was needed to support numerous Kyrgyzstani migrants who lost their jobs in destination countries and had to return home, as well as the communities of origin absorbing these large-scale returns.

Recognizing that data is essential to devise effective national and local recovery policies, UNDP-IOM conducted an assessment of ten local communities from four areas affected by migration in the country. This included gathering knowledge of migrants’ challenges and specific needs upon return, the role of local authorities and their readiness to reintegrate them, as well as the capacity needs for sustainable recovery from COVID-19. Such an investment is essential for resilient recovery and building social cohesion in local communities.

The assessment was based on research, analysis and evidence-based policy support to improve social cohesion and include returnees’ specific needs in local and national socio-economic responses/recovery action plans.

The assessment led to several findings which confirmed UNDP-IOM initial understandings, including:

1. There are numerous challenges faced by migrants upon their return back home, but a very low level of reintegration support from local governments to returnees, made worse by as COVID-19 and a systemic lack of local reintegration and support mechanisms. As a result, migrants have a low level of trust towards local governments, as compared to their trust towards other local actors.
2. However, 100% of local authorities revealed strong eagerness to work with migrants, support their reintegration back home and engage them in local development (if properly capacitated). There is therefore a strong need to support migrants during all stages of migration and especially support local authorities to establish mechanisms for reintegration.
3. In addition, even though it was not in the scope of the assessment, the survey provided some positive and surprising insights on the engagement of migrants in local development. 80% of migrants showed a strong interest to engage in local development by investing at home, subject to more transparency, communication, partnership, mutual trust with local governments and proper guidance on available investment opportunities. Yet there is no existing mechanism to engage migrants effectively in encouraging investment in local development.

As a result of this joint exercise, UNDP-IOM have strengthened the evidence-base on the attitudes of local authorities, their readiness to reintegrate returning migrants and their capacity building needs for a sustainable recovery from COVID-19, which will inform future joint strategic responses to enhance the positive contributions of migrants for local development and reduce impediments for their sustainable reintegration back home.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN KYRGYZSTAN

Establish socio-economic reintegration mechanisms for returning migrants: As there is a systemic lack of reintegration and support mechanisms at the local level, UNDP-IOM suggest establishing a comprehensive socio-economic reintegration mechanism for returning Kyrgyzstani migrants, using multi-stakeholder and innovative approaches.

Empower migrants to contribute to sustainable development in their communities of origin: As there is no mechanism to engage migrants effectively in local development processes or to encourage investment in local development and as the trust in the local authorities is very low among migrants in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP-IOM suggest devising a model for empowering migrants as changemakers for local socio-economic development.

Build the capacities of local authorities to mainstream migration into their actions and support migrants at all stages of the migration cycle: In order to effectively reintegrate and engage migrants in development, UNDP-IOM suggest investing in capacity building of local authorities, in order to mainstream migration into policies and programmes, collect data disaggregated by migration status and inform the reintegration process.



LESOTHO

Cross-border trade

The project aimed to assess the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on informal cross-border traders (ICBT), especially female traders, as Lesotho is surrounded by and depends on South Africa for 90% of its consumer goods and services. The assessment also aimed to identify gaps and capacity-building needs for stakeholders, for example duty bearers such as border officials and policy-makers and rightsholders such as ICBT, and to establish key policy recommendations to improve the livelihoods of ICBT affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions. This was done through a rapid assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on ICBT, dissemination and dialogue sessions with key authorities on the key findings and recommendations of the assessment as well as advocacy for targeted inclusion of migrants and ICBT in policy measures.

The survey established the following main findings:

1. ICBT have largely been overlooked in the wider Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and informal support ecosystem, especially in terms of COVID-19 stimulus packages, due mainly to the barriers that traders face in formalising their businesses. Indeed, ICBT has not been integrated into the National Trade Policy and Strategy.
2. Not all ICBT have been affected equally by the pandemic. For example, women ICBT face increased vulnerability to gender-based violence and other harassment at border crossings.
3. Border management from the perspective of small and informal traders needs a more deliberate and focused approach to ensure the protection of human rights for all individuals. This includes ensuring access to health services whilst at the same time contributing to regional trade facilitation and livelihood protection.

Key lessons learned from the initiative include that it is necessary to link projects in Lesotho's border communities with South African teams, given the unique geographical situation of Lesotho. Moreover, support from Regional Offices would be valuable to facilitate the cross-border work and more substantively frame regional concepts, methodological approaches and strategies for human mobility from an informal cross border perspective. Furthermore, the two agencies had a successful joint approach to stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization, which moving forward will inform the elaboration of a common conceptual framework that will guide the implementation of the follow-up actions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN LESOTHO

Strengthen integrated approaches to migration management in border regions, including by working with authorities in several bordering countries: As the ICBT perspective and specific needs have not currently been integrated into the National Trade Policy and Strategy, IOM and UNDP suggest strengthening engagement with Heads of Border Agencies (HOBA), as well as between the agencies in Lesotho and South Africa. These activities should strengthen border/migration management and trade facilitation for MSMEs, including by using digital innovative approaches.

Establish stronger ICBT-related policies and carry out capacity development to implement these policies: Given how integral ICBT are for the wider economic system in Lesotho, it is imperative to include the voices and needs of traders are integrated into the wider MSME & informal support ecosystem and COVID-19 stimulus packages. IOM and UNDP suggest integrating ICBT elements within the MSME policy and undertaking a targeted capacity development programme for ICBT to provide development support to cooperatives and associations, especially targeting female entrepreneurs. As such, communities will establish a more deliberate and focused approach that ensures the protection of human rights, livelihoods and women empowerment.

Expand the knowledge base on remittances and diaspora contributions and empower diaspora communities: The initiative in Lesotho and many other projects in the seed funding initiatives recognized the potential of diaspora and remittances for continued sustainable development especially during the pandemic. Indeed, recent findings suggest that globally, remittances remained highly resilient to COVID-19 even when other funding streams like Foreign Direct Investment slowed.¹⁰ UNDP and IOM therefore suggest a broader multi-country joint discussion on diaspora engagement and how it can support national development, building on existing initiatives such as iDiaspora and experiences of countries with extensive expertise (see Moldova, below). Additional recommendations include integrating informal service providers targeting unskilled/semi-skilled labour migrants into dialogues on financing for SDGs.

¹⁰KNOMAD (2021), [Resilience: COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens. Migration and Development Brief 34.](#)



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THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

A joint roadmap on migration and sustainable development

The project aimed to enhance the framework for UNDP-IOM cooperation in the area of migration in Moldova, including reintegration and development, through developing a joint, multi-year, five pillar roadmap which will support the roll-out of joint programming and fundraising. In Moldova, one in every three working age nationals live abroad. Yet COVID-19 has caused rising unemployment and wage loss among some migrant populations and in turn hindered informal remittance channels. Through a strengthened strategic partnership, coordination and collaboration on the socio-economic response to COVID-19, the roadmap supports Moldova's social and economic measures which are needed for recovery and for establishing better conditions to leverage migration as an accelerator for achieving the SDGs during this Decade of Action.

The roadmap was developed through an inclusive co-design process where main stakeholders such as national and local governments, diaspora and hometown associations and migrants, civil society migration experts and academia, UN agencies and development partners participated in dialogues and consultations to establish priority actions that addressed the needs of all.

The collaboration worked well in terms of communication and implementation and it became apparent that both agencies can gain more by working together. Both agencies have specific expertise areas that complement each other. Dedicated resources are being sought to implement the below five pillars for priority action which, if carried out holistically and in synergy, will work together to advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in Moldova and recovery sustainably from COVID-19, ensuring migrants are not left behind in these efforts.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN MOLDOVA

Thought leadership: Based on the outcome of the inclusive co-design process, IOM and UNDP intend to invest in thought leadership on national and regional data and evidence-based research which addresses drivers and root causes of migration, hence fostering regional engagement and collaboration.

Diaspora engagement: Considering the extensive knowledge and experience that Moldova already has developed on engaging diaspora communities in development, UNDP and IOM envisage consolidating existing diaspora networks to enhance institutionalized diaspora outreach, increase meaningful and diverse civic engagement and enfranchisement.

Economic Development: Given diaspora's potential to support small and medium enterprises (SME) development and financial investment, IOM and UNDP envisage cooperating to create and strengthen mechanisms for channelling remittances and diaspora investment into economic and social development.

Labour Mobility: Acknowledging the importance of facilitating safe and effective labour mobility pathways as called for in the Global Compact for Migration, IOM and UNDP prioritize the need to invest in labour mobility and skills development governance, promoting return and reintegration of migrants and targeted skills retention in Moldova.

Climate Change: Given the linkage between human mobility and environmental objectives and climate changes' large socio-economic consequences in all communities, UNDP and IOM aim to address the migration and climate change nexus for strengthened resilience and adaptation.



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PERU

NextGen integration: Innovative solutions to accelerate socio-economic recovery of refugees and migrants and co-create the future of integrated communities

The project aimed to utilize innovative solutions to accelerate socio-economic recovery of refugees and migrants and to co-create the future of integrated communities in Peru, where 87.6% of refugees and migrants have reported that their basic needs are not met and where xenophobic discourse and openly anti-immigration proposals are on the rise. The initiative complemented UNDP’s work on the Metropolitan Strategy for Human Mobility with a focus on socio-economic integration and IOM’s work collecting and analyzing real-time data on the situation of refugees and migrant populations and their challenges, including through measuring Migration Governance Indicators (MGI).

The initiative had three main outcomes:

1. To foster innovative approaches for effective governance with a human mobility approach, twelve community organizations were registered, georeferenced and trained, with eight more awaiting approval, to empower Venezuelan refugees and migrant populations as changemakers in municipal decision-making mechanisms, together with host communities, through local development plans, participatory budgets and socio-economic recovery plans.
2. The initiative also engaged the changemaking power of grassroots leaders and entrepreneurs. Five co-created social cohesion solutions were awarded through the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima (MML)-led

Innovative Integration Competition, including junior firefighters, digital platforms for COVID-19 health and socio-economic recovery and household first aid and emergency attention to COVID-19.

3. Building on the above, the initiative successfully went beyond traditional communication approaches. Key messages about the opportunities that human mobility and social cohesion bring to COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and local development were spread through multi-stakeholder, artistic expressions to debunk discriminatory and xenophobic discourses, including documentary screenings and designing and painting of murals by Venezuelan and Peruvian artists (pictured on the cover of this report and above).

One key lesson learned is that joint initiatives can result in a more strategic collaboration between UNDP and IOM on local human mobility management and policy, with a focus on socio-economic integration and COVID-19 recovery. Other lessons learned include the importance of “disruptive” co-creating COVID-19 socio-economic recovery initiatives that enhance social cohesion initiatives as well as empower digital actors and entrepreneurs at a grassroots level. Moreover, the initiative showed that local government’s leadership can be transformational, as unmet needs identified during the initiative has led to a realization that the municipality must be empowered to assume its integrator role and push for a greater institutionalization of positive human mobility management as a socio-economic recovery and sustainable development accelerator.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION BETWEEN IOM-UNDP FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN PERU

Innovative communications and social cohesion activities that enhance visibility and change the narrative on migration: Considering the rising xenophobia in Peru and the initiative’s successful results going beyond the traditional types of communication for development (e.g. murals, co-creation documentaries), UNDP and IOM suggest highlighting the triple-win of migration (to migrants, host communities and countries of origin) more visibly in diverse and innovative communication efforts not only in local communities but also at the national and regional levels, especially using interagency platforms.

Scaling up and creating room for social innovation and entrepreneurship: IOM and UNDP suggest combining the co-created social innovations piloted in this initiative with entrepreneurship trainings in the context of Peru’s new “Association of Common Interest and Benefit Law”, mobilizing non-traditional donors and the private sector.

Advance joint regional and cross-border work to achieve better global migration governance: UNDP and IOM find this to be a great opportunity for joint regional and cross-border initiatives on migration, COVID-19 and socio-economic development, to activate subregional working groups as well as regional networks for knowledge sharing on migration and development issues. A similar suggestion arose out of the Lesotho and Guinean initiatives (see above).



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