

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN MOROCCO

YEARLY REPORT 2021



WHAT IS THE ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION (AVRR) PROGRAMME?

Implemented for four decades by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme provides humanitarian, administrative, logistical, and financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants in a vulnerable situation in order to voluntarily return to their country of origin.

Since 2005, thousands of stranded migrants who wish to return to their country are supported under the AVRR programme. Also, hundreds of Moroccans who return voluntarily are assisted towards a sustainable reintegration.

The AVRR program is based on seven key principles:



WHO ARE THE AVRR IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS IN MOROCCO?

As Morocco is a country of origin, transit, and destination, IOM Morocco implements the AVRR programme in close collaboration with the **Moroccan Government**, particularly the **Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates**, and the diplomatic representations of countries of origin or reception of assisted migrants.

This programme supports the Moroccan Government's migration management strategies. Accordingly, IOM supports the implementation of efficient migration policies in Morocco by, for example, participating in the steering committees and sub-committees of the **National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA)**, which includes the «return migration» component among the cross-cutting programs.

IOM has also developed an extensive network of partnerships with **international organizations** active in Morocco, **NGOs**¹ and specialists in legal, medical or research fields. This network of partners continues to grow thanks to the migrant orientation points and IOM consultants in various cities in Morocco (Casablanca, Oujda, Khouribga, El Kelaa des Sraghnaa, etc.).

¹ Among many others: Association de Lutte contre le SIDA (ALCS), Association Tissaghnaa pour la Culture et le Développement (ASTICUDE), Association Bayti, Association Maroc Solidarité Médico-Sociale (MS2), Association Marocaine de Planification Familiale (AMPF), etc.



TODAY, I AM A DIFFERENT MAN FROM THE ONE WHO TOOK ON THE ADVENTURE OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION. I AM GRATEFUL TO STILL BE ALIVE, TO BE REUNITED WITH MY FAMILY AND TO EARN A DECENT LIVING.

Around G., several neighbors, friends, and other complete strangers had a common dream: to go to Europe and change their lives. He also wanted to have this life. Going abroad, working hard, coming back with a lot of money and a great promise of the future for his family.

After hesitating for some time, he decided to sell his motorcycle, and borrowed here and there to buy a one-way ticket with his best friend to Turkey, which was going to be his entry point to the Eldorado.

In Turkey, he began to perceive the harsh reality. He had almost no money left and had to find a job. Life was hard and he lost contact with his family.

G. had heard that he could get help at IOM through the AVRR programme. Prior to his departure, IOM conducted a vulnerability assessment, a medical examination, and a fit-for-travel examination for him. He also received pocket money to meet his most urgent needs.

A few weeks after his return to the country, he contacted IOM Morocco. Several counselling sessions were organized to identify his needs and highlight his expertise and strengths before assisting him to set up his microproject of delivery and transportation.



NOW I FEEL LIKE I'M LATE BUT EVERYTHING GOD DOES IS GOOD. I WILL FINALLY GO BACK TO FOCUS ON WORK AND MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME.

Two years after obtaining her baccalaureate, F. made the decision to come to Morocco and try to cross to the European continent. She abandoned her training in banking and insurance in Guinea and landed in Morocco where she found herself facing a combination of obstacles and difficulties. Having been a victim of harassment, abuse, and discrimination, her stay in Morocco became too difficult. This adds also to the lack of work opportunities for people in her situation, which made her daily life more difficult to endure.

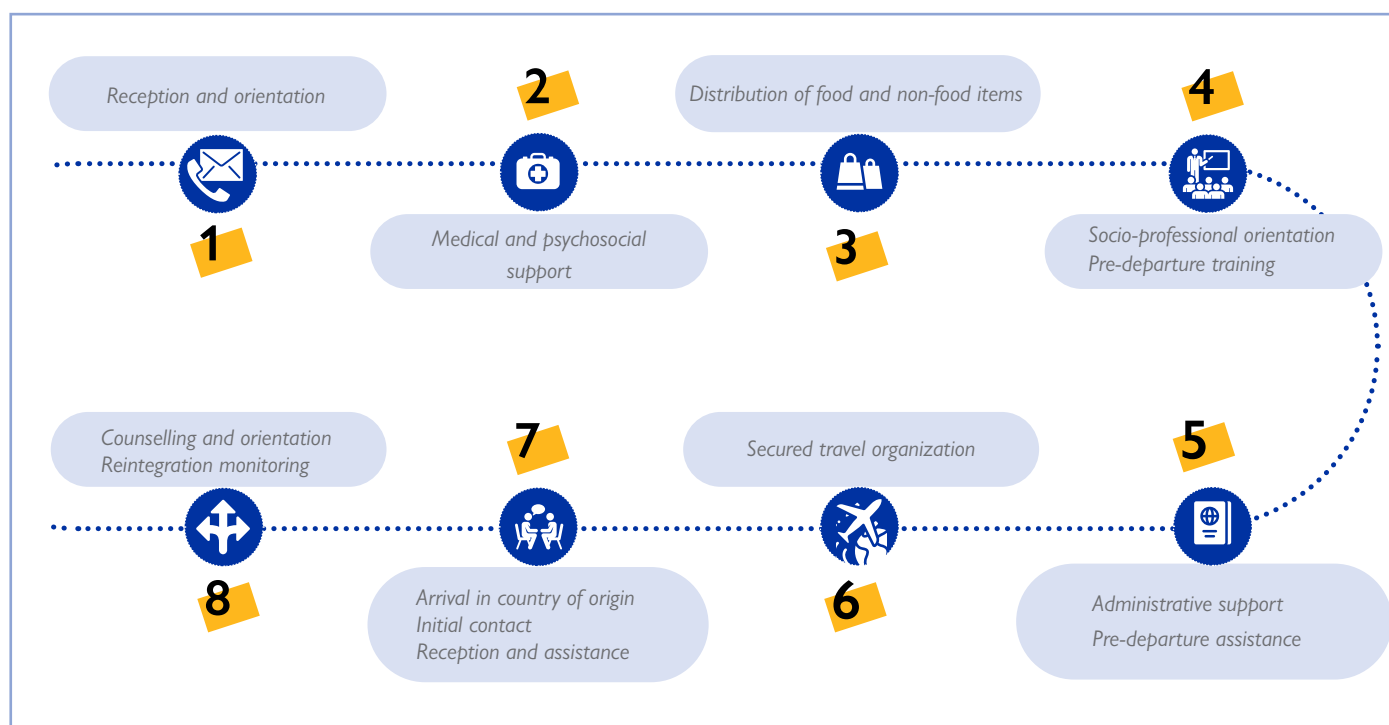
After four years of suffering, she decides to return home, but she does not have the means to do so. It is through a friend that she learns about IOM's voluntary return programme and reintegration opportunities after her return. After her registration in the programme, she also benefited from the short-term training offered by the organization, allowing her to better prepare her return and her project after returning to Guinea.

Once back to her country, F. intends to return to her family and establish her own income-generating activity, confident in her skills acquired through her migration experience and the tips learned during the trainings.

ASSISTANCE FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN FROM MOROCCO

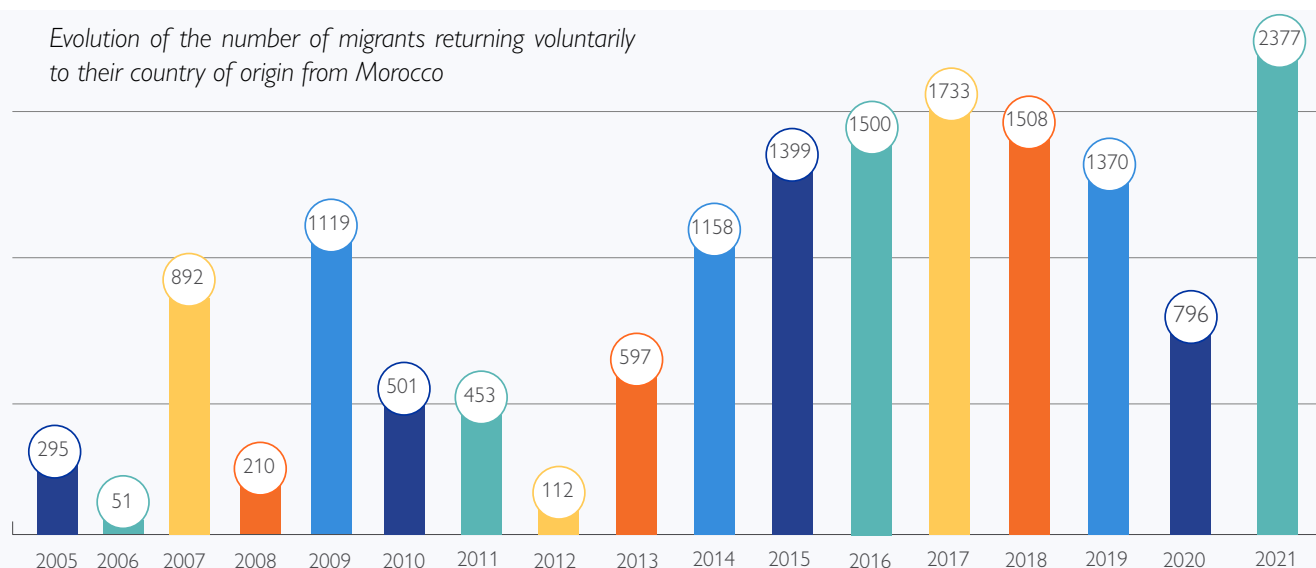
Since 2005, IOM Morocco has offered an alternative to more than 18,000 migrants in vulnerable situations to return, in a dignified and safe manner, to their countries of origin from Morocco through the AVRR programme. Once back in their countries of origin, IOM continues to assist migrants by accompanying them for sustainable reintegration into their communities.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS OF THE AVRR PROGRAMME FROM MOROCCO?



Reintegration is implemented in collaboration with IOM offices in the countries of origin and their respective partners.

Evolution of the number of migrants returning voluntarily to their country of origin from Morocco





In 2021, **3,798** migrants (**2,741** men and **1,057** women) requested assistance for voluntary return.

IOM and its partners were able to **organize the safe and dignified return of 2,377 of them (1,767 men and 610 women)** to 22 countries of origin. The number of migrants assisted has almost tripled compared to the numbers of migrants assisted in 2020. This increase is mainly due to the availability of sufficient funds to meet the requests for voluntary return and the lifting of mobility restrictions and reopening of borders installed since 2020 to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Depending on their vulnerabilities, beneficiaries enrolled in the voluntary return programme received **pre-return assistance such as medical care, food and non-food items, accomodation assistance, and support for administrative procedures**. In 2021, the AVRR programme adapted its response to continue to meet the socio-economic needs of migrants, increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in close collaboration with IOM partners and national and local authorities.

Breakdown of direct assistance by type



2491

Food baskets and vouchers



2389

Medical assistance



247

Accomodation assistance



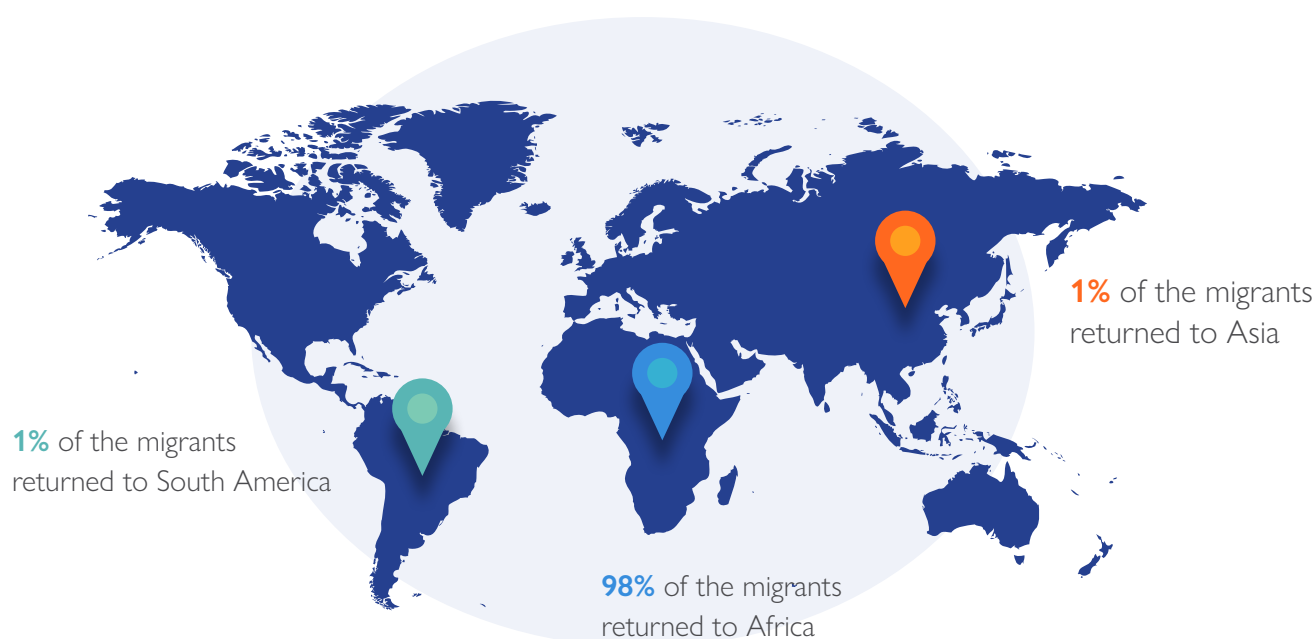
In 2021, **1,925** migrants (**1,487** men and **438** women) registered to the AVRR programme attended pre-departure orientation sessions on reintegration challenges and opportunities in countries of origin delivered by IOM in Rabat, Casablanca and Oujda. 664 migrants, (476 men and 188 women) attended at least one pre-departure short training on personal development and entrepreneurship and commercialization aiming at strengthening beneficiaries' technical and motivational skills to help them succeed in their personal and professional lives upon their return.

In this sense, IOM Morocco has published a capitalization manual, a personal development guide, an entrepreneurship and marketing manual as well as 4 videos to ensure the sustainability of the project.



Breakdown of returnees by country of origin and gender:

Country of Origin	F	M	Total
GUINEA	129	537	666
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	269	334	603
SENEGAL	65	416	481
MALI	9	161	170
CAMEROON	29	138	167
NIGERIA	39	34	73
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	22	29	51
CONGO	16	18	34
GAMBIA	3	30	33
GHANA	4	23	27
PHILIPPINES	14	4	18
BURKINA FASO	3	7	10
GUINEA-BISSAU	3	7	10
SUDAN	-	8	8
LIBERIA	1	5	6
VENEZUELA	1	4	5
SIERRA LEONE	-	4	4
TOGO	1	3	4
SRI LANKA	-	3	3
GABON	1	1	2
GUYANA	1	-	1
MAURITANIA	-	1	1
Total	610	1767	2377



PROFILES OF AVRR BENEFICIARIES IN 2021



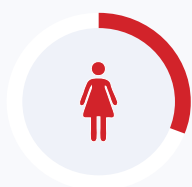
The majority of migrants who received assisted voluntary return were young men whose age varied between 19 to 35 years old and who returned alone to their countries of origin. Three out of four beneficiaries were men. The ratio of women to men has remained substantially unchanged since 2017.

In a survey administered to the beneficiaries after return, **99% of migrants interviewed declared that they were satisfied with the return** and 96% of migrants stated that their specific needs were taken into account during the trip.

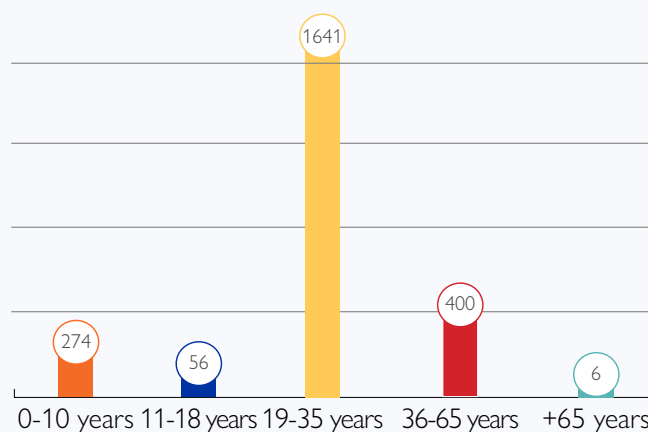
Gender and age breakdown of returnees



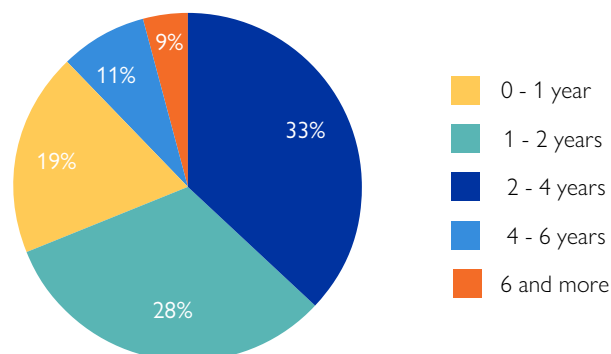
74%



26%



In 47% of cases, **the decision of the beneficiaries to return** to their countries of origin was **taken quickly** (less than two years after arrival in Morocco) because of their vulnerable situation. However, in 2021, the number of beneficiaries requesting return after more than 2 years to Morocco increased due to the partial closure of borders in Morocco following the COVID-19 pandemic.

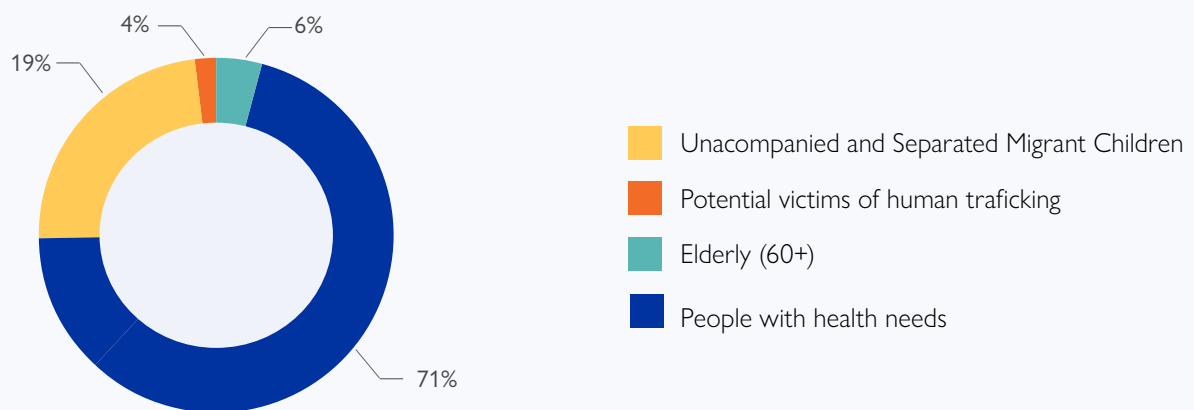


During the individual interview and counselling sessions that were held with the beneficiaries, **several vulnerability factors were identified**. IOM Morocco and its partners have worked to address the most pressing needs identified during the pre-departure phase in order to facilitate a safe and dignified return.

Various cumulative reasons motivated the beneficiaries' decision to apply for assisted voluntary return : **68% of beneficiaries mentioned the difficult living conditions in Morocco** (lack of housing, lack of food, health problems, etc.). This situation explains the pressing and urgent needs expressed during the preparation of the return, particularly regarding medical assistance.



Vulnerability factors among migrants assisted from Morocco



The organization of the return of potential victims of human trafficking was subjected to specific national and international protection standards aimed at ensuring not only their protection during the preparation of the travel, but also after their arrival to the country of origin by making sure they are not exposed to any risks.

ASSISTANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

Reintegration is considered sustainable when returning migrants reach levels of **economic self-sufficiency**, **social stability** within their community of return and **psychosocial well-being** to cope with the levers of (re)migration. Returning migrants who have achieved **sustainable reintegration** are able to make migration decisions by choice rather than necessity.

Migrants who voluntarily return to countries covered by the “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for migrant protection and reintegration” receive a tailored support reintegration assistance whether it is individual, collective, or community-based. In 2021, 95% of returns from Morocco took place to one of these countries.

Another **63 migrants** (29 men and 34 women) who have benefited from voluntary return to other countries not covered by this initiative have received assistance funded by the AVR programme implemented in Morocco. 36 migrants have been able to prepare a reintegration plan with the help of their advisers in 2021 and their plans are detailed as follows:

Types of reintegration assistance breakdown



2 Agriculture and livestock projects



23 Food and non-food sales projects



2 Construction projects



2 Computer services projects



7 Transportation and Mechanical projects



1 Housing assistance



3 Fashion, cosmetics, and ready-to-wear projects



2 Vocational training assistances



2 Assurances for schooling



1 Assistance for medical needs



27 Reintegration assistance granted in cash

Some returnees may combine several projects.

ASSISTANCE TO MOROCCAN RETURNEES

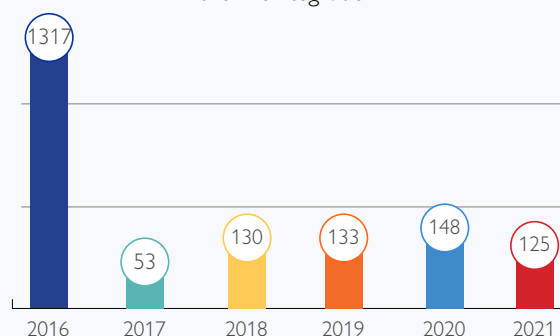
More than **1,900 returning Moroccans** have been assisted by IOM Morocco and its partners, including more than 350 migrants in vulnerable situations since the start of the programme in 2005. The assisted Moroccans returned from more than 25 countries on all continents.

The five steps of the AVRR programme to Morocco



In 2021, 125 returning Moroccans (108 men, nine women, six girls and two boys) received reintegration assistance. The main host countries for these beneficiaries were Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, and Greece.

Evolution of the number of Moroccans assisted for their reintegration



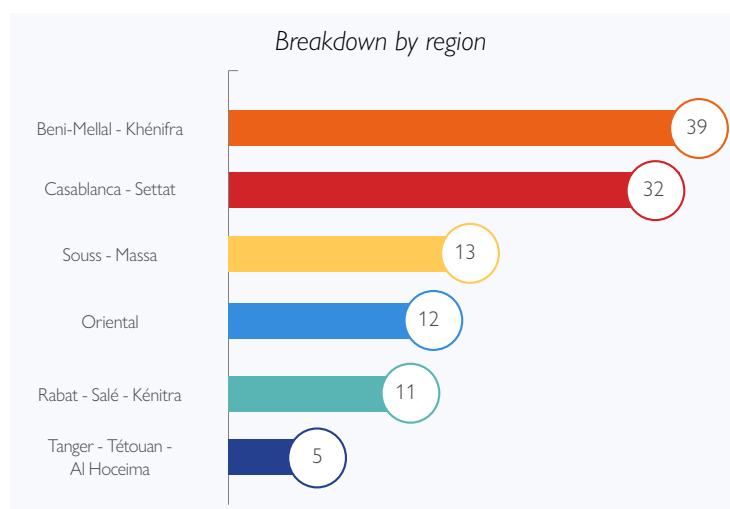
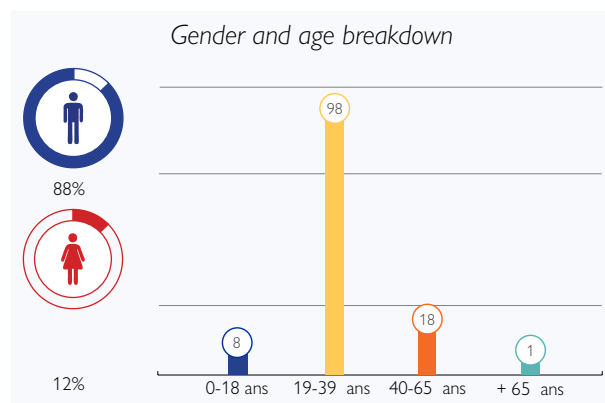
Distribution of beneficiaries by host country and gender:

Host Country	F	M	Total
Tunisia	6	38	44
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	28	28
Germany	4	11	15
Greece	1	11	12
Spain	0	6	6
Belgium	0	4	4
Turkey	2	2	4
Switzerland	0	2	2
Georgia	0	2	2
Serbia	0	1	1
Bulgaria	0	1	1
Netherlands	0	1	1
Montenegro	0	1	1
Norway	1	0	1
Romania	0	1	1
Switzerland	1	0	1
Luxembourg	0	1	1
Total	15	110	125

PROFILES OF MOROCCAN RETURNEES IN 2021

79% of Moroccans assisted in 2021 were between the ages of 18 and 39. **12%** of beneficiaries were women, representing a decrease of **13%** compared to 2020. **80%** of assisted Moroccans spent less than 12 months abroad before seeking assistance for voluntary return.

Among the 125 Moroccans assisted in 2021, six were in a situation of increased vulnerability. These migrants (two single mothers and four people with special medical needs) received special protection and assistance measures before and upon their arrival in Morocco.



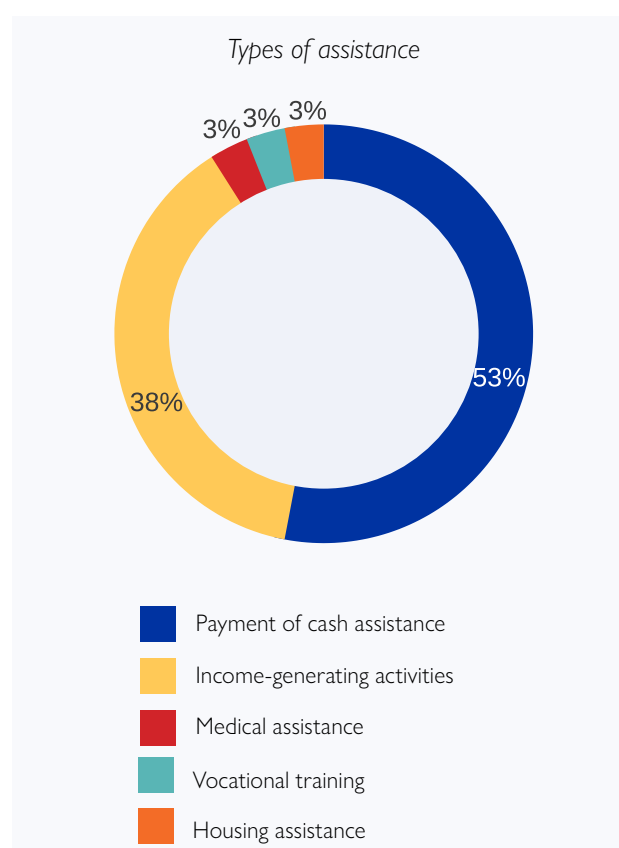
In addition, it was noted that the beneficiaries assisted are mainly located in the regions of Beni-Mellal - Khénifra, Casablanca - Settat and Souss - Massa.

ASSISTANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

Returning Moroccans receive reintegration assistance under various programmes implemented either by their last host countries or by IOM Morocco under the “EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in North Africa”. This reintegration assistance allows returnees to start different activities that will enable them to reach a decent level of economic, social, and psycho-social well-being.

Reintegration support is provided through IOM and its partners including reintegration case workers currently based in the cities of Casablanca, El Kelaa des Sraghna and Khouribga. Their work consists in identifying opportunities as well as partners that could provide reintegration assistance and ensuring the referral of Moroccans back to the structures or programmes most likely to help them in their reintegration project.

Monitoring visits are carried out after the implementation of the reintegration plan. During these visits, **100% of the beneficiaries stated that they were satisfied with the assistance received from IOM** and **90% said that the support of those around them was crucial in their reintegration process.**



FOCUS ON VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

Since its launch, the AVRR programme has been implemented thanks to the precious support of various donors including the Kingdom of Morocco. The involvement of several donors in the AVRR programme guarantees its continuity and lays the basis for international cooperation between involved actors.

Some specific programmes support this effort:



Initiative conjointe
UE-IOM pour
la Protection et
la Réintégration
des migrants

The EU — IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in North Africa

With the support of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa



This programme aims at offering the possibility of a dignified, safe, and voluntary return (and assistance for a sustainable reintegration in some instances) to 4,600 migrants in a vulnerable situation in Morocco. Moreover, 275 returning Moroccans will be receiving assistance for a sustainable reintegration through individual, collective (grouping several beneficiaries) or community-based projects (involving members of the community of return). Finally, the programme will allow the organization of capacity building activities for the benefit of national actors on issues related to voluntary return and assistance to vulnerable groups of migrants.

COMPASS

Orienter les migrations sûres

COMPASS : Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions

With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands

This regional programme (countries from Africa, the Middle East and Asia) will facilitate the voluntary return of more than 1,000 migrants in a vulnerable situation in Morocco. Moreover, 25 of these migrants will receive reintegration support in their countries of origin by ensuring complementarity between this programme and other ongoing initiatives. Finally, COMPASS will allow for the organization of capacity building activities and exchange of experience at the international level between the various actors involved.



FORAS

FORAS II – Strengthening reintegration opportunities

With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany

In continuation of its first phase, the project FORAS II aims to strengthen the economic, social and psychosocial reintegration of migrants enrolled in the AVRR program in Morocco. The project was able to provide pre-return awareness and orientation sessions for more than 4,000 migrants and more than 800 migrants were able to benefit from pre-return personal development and entrepreneurship trainings in order to strengthen their motivation and technical capacities and thus increase their chances of successful reintegration in their countries of origin. This second phase is part of a regional programme “Strengthening the stabilization and cohesion of migrant communities in Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and countries of return”.



Informative video on reintegration assistance for Moroccan returnees

*The Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme was implemented thanks to
the financial support of several donors:*



The International Organization for Migration