

IOM Belgium AVRR Job Placement approach

Job Placement IOM Georgia 2020

Comparative Analysis of Belgian Reintegration Cases 2016-2019

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and choose to return voluntarily to their countries of origin¹. Within the framework of return programmes these migrants are provided with administrative, logistical and financial support. On top of this for most vulnerable migrants there is an in-kind reintegration assistance post arrival. The reintegration packages vary depending on the donor requirements for every sending country and usually include some or all of the following components – cash, housing, livelihood, medical, income generating and training/employment. This assistance for Georgian nationals is provided by IOM counsellors at five IOM Field Offices throughout Georgia to help beneficiaries rebuild their lives within the communities of their return.

Belgian reintegration programme, unlike similar programmes from other EU countries, offers a job placement component on top of the regular reintegration package. This component envisages training needs assessment of the interested returnees, selection of a vocational training course related to their experience / interest and capacity and then subsequent assistance in job placement. All this is done in close coordination with training providers and employers throughout Georgia. IOM Georgia has been engaged in similar activities since 2009 through various projects (including AVRRs), so there is an existing and regularly updated list of the above partners who provide services to our project beneficiaries. The returnees are guided through the whole process and stay in close contact with IOM counsellors. Their progress is measured during the subsequent monitoring.

Background and Methodology

IOM Georgia initiated this pilot comparative analysis of returnees with and without additional job placement assistance to see the difference and added value of this particular component and to compare the sustainability of reintegration assistance of the two mentioned groups.

In the context of high unemployment and general economic instability in the country, long-term sustainable reintegration is not an easy goal to achieve. When using standard reintegration packages returnees follow their plans, achieve progress but as many returnees are people of employable age and fit to work, who try to find additional income but cannot because of lack of qualification and experience,

¹ Reintegration Handbook

at some point they still start thinking about remigration as the only means of supporting their families to the extent they would like to.

During the past years there was a general feeling among IOM Georgia AVRR team that this component is very important and works well in conjunction with other reintegration assistance and it was decided to have a closer look at the statistics and see if this is reflected in the numbers, in the feeling of security and satisfaction among the returnees and their economic stability as well as their social reintegration in the society. The sample is quite small because many earlier returnees were not reachable, also the number of participants of the job placement component was not very big. However, we hope this pilot endeavor can show the importance of job placement support and can be shared as a good example with other sending countries for their consideration.

Methodology used was phone interviews conducted by using IOM's standardized Reintegration Sustainability Survey questionnaire, combined with other questions related to the types of reintegration assistance received, as well as a brief inquiry into the impact of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic on individuals' reintegration. Field works were conducted in Autumn 2020.

A probability-based stratified cluster sample method was used to select migrants. Target group was stratified by the regions and within the region target members were selected randomly, so that each individual had the same probability of being chosen in the sampling process. Also, we had to consider the balance within the beneficiaries with and without job placement support. The sample is representative at 90% confidence level with 10% margin of error.

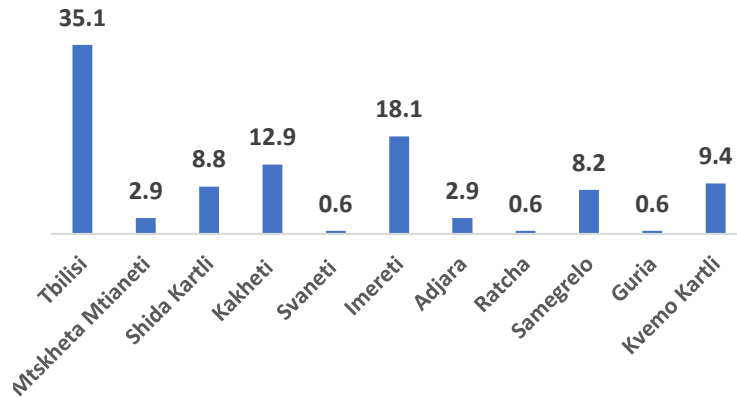
In this analysis, all surveyed respondents were returnees who came back to Georgia within 2016-2019 years and received either reintegration support only or job placement support on top. Out of the 246 cases within the indicated period only 120 beneficiaries could be reached, 44 returnees were selected randomly, which is 18 % per cent of the total sample. Phone survey was conducted with these 44 returnees. Gender distribution: 34 % - female; 66% - male. Survey data comparisons between returnees with the reintegration support and returnees with the reintegration support + job placement support was included for illustrative purposes of the survey - estimation of impact of job placement Component. Among the surveyed 44 returnees 27 returnees received only reintegration support and 17 returnees reintegration + job placement support.

Returnees from Belgium and Job Placement Support as an additional component for sustainability of reintegration

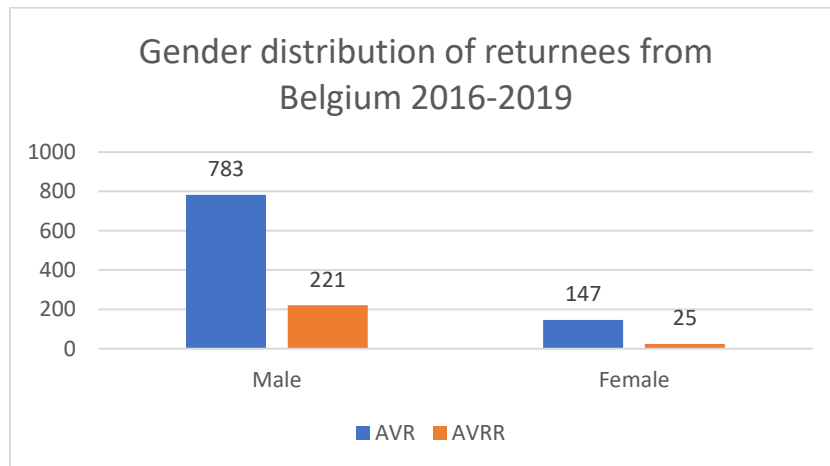
IOM Georgia assisted 246 cases (303 persons) returning from Belgium in 2016-2019. Majority of the surveyed returnees reside in urban areas. Overall urban-rural distribution is 72 % urban, 28 % rural.

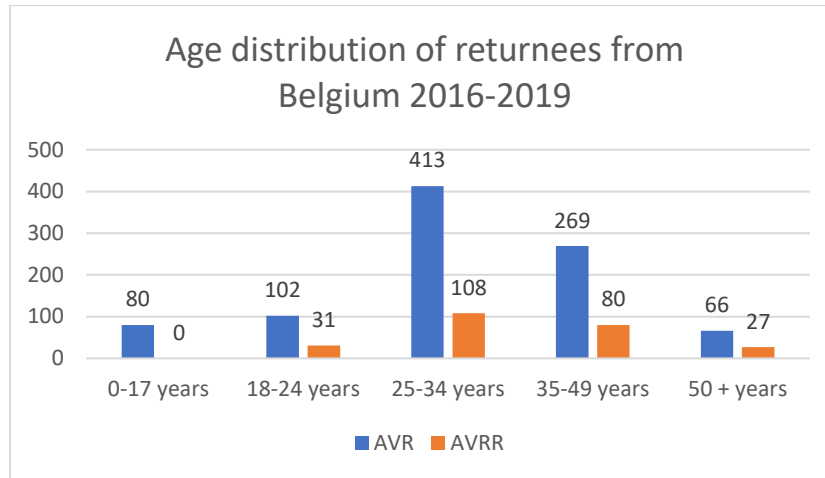
The below table with the distribution of returnees by regions shows that the largest number of returnees from Belgium are residents of Tbilisi (25.1 %). The second bigger area is Imereti district (18.1 %) followed by Kakheti district (12.9%).

Distribution of returnees per districts %



The profile of returnees has not changed much over these few years. Proportion of male returnees is steadily much higher than that of female returnees. The majority of returnees fall under age category of 25-50 years. The below charts show the gender and age distribution of returnees from Belgium in 2016-2019, both voluntary returns (930 persons) and those with reintegration assistance component (246).





Educational level is a significant marker of Georgian returnees from Belgium. Most returnees have secondary education, with no professional skills, or working experience. A considerable part of the returnees are highly educated persons, but with lack of relevant professional experience. Only a few migrants have some professional skills, which are not certified or recognized by the local Educational System. None of the migrants appeared to be uneducated, or without literacy.

Diverse reintegration needs of returnees require more tailor-made approach to enhance beneficiaries' ability to achieve sustainable reintegration following return.

As the main part of the returnees are young people with some new work experience and skills gained abroad, they need assistance to enhance their foreign language or professional skills or acquire any other new skills through training, that can help them to get a job easier in Georgia. After return, they often face challenges with employment or relevant vocational trainings, which increases their vulnerability. Firstly, they do not have relevant qualifications for desired jobs, and secondly, they lack information and funds for attending tailored vocational education courses or access to on-the-job training. Accordingly, IOM Belgium has explored an alternative approach to enhance long-term reintegration opportunities for the migrants through selection of relevant vocational training, job search, job matching and job placement primarily in the private but also in public sector.

Job placement support, as an additional component for the returnees from Belgium, has been implemented since 2015 in IOM Georgia along with the Belgian Voluntary Return Programme, funded by the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil). IOM mission to Georgia has the privilege to identify potential/prospective returnees (based on their qualification, work experience, and motivation) in conjunction with current Georgian labor market needs. IOM Georgia provides job counselling to returnees and helps them to look for long-term reintegration opportunities in Georgia. Extensive post-arrival counseling is provided by qualified IOM staff throughout the country. IOM Georgia counselors provide individual counseling, skills assessment and career development support to the returned migrants. Project participants are matched with the available and relevant vocational educational courses and if need be also assisted with the funds for transportation to training facility. This

is done through various methods including trainings, internships, on-the-job training support, etc. The programme further focuses on employment (with the possibility of wage subsidy) and entrepreneurship.

The advantages of job placement support as one type of assistance:

- Leads to long-term sustainability of reintegration of returnees.
- Helps returnees to gain new skills and qualifications for future employment opportunities.
- Offers on-the-job training or internship programmes increasing beneficiaries’ competitiveness in open labor market with actual work experience.
- Offers possibility of using funds for wage subsidy.
- Increases confidence of returnees for sustainable reintegration in their country of origin.
- Is an additional pull factor for participating in the AVRRs.

Since 2016 IOM Georgia has assisted 91 returnees Under the Job Placement Programme (including year 2020).

Table 1 - Services provided under the job placement programme

Services	numbers
Job counseling and referral	91
Wage subsidy	3
Vocational education and on-the-job training	33
Transportation allowance during the training	4
Employment	31

Sustainable reintegration - Reintegration can be considered sustainable when returnees have reached levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being that allow them to cope with (re)migration drivers. Having achieved sustainable reintegration, returnees are able to make further migration decisions a matter of choice, rather than necessity.

The economic dimension of reintegration covers aspects of reintegration which contribute to economic self-sufficiency. These include the ability to borrow money, the debt-to-spending ratio, need for food rationing, adequacy of employment, ownership of productive assets, etc.

The social dimension reflects the extent to which returnees have reached social stability within the community, including access to services relating to housing, education, justice, health, and other public infrastructure services.

The psychosocial dimension encompasses the emotional, mental, and psychological elements of reintegration. “Psychological”-related needs – such as the need for therapy due to a mental health concern – are just one component of the broader psychosocial dimension².

² Reintegration Handbook

Reintegration in the context of return

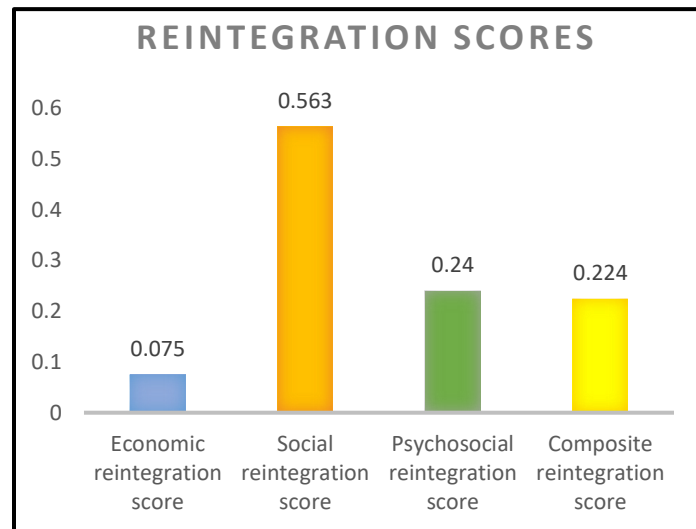
Return migration, like migration in general, is a complex phenomenon. When people leave their countries, it is often with the expectation that they will return at some point. This is true for people who migrate for positive reasons such as education or work, but perhaps even more so for those forced to migrate, whose return is usually conditional upon an improvement of the situation that forced them to leave. Some migrants never return. But many others do and under a variety of different circumstances. However, the mere fact that someone returns to a country or place where they have previously lived does not mean that reintegration is seamless³.

For some returnees, return process is linked to a lot of challenges, such as those described in Reintegration experience. Examples 1 and 2 – to showcase the diversity of factors impacting reintegration in Georgia.

Reintegration experiences of returnees

Example 1 - Lowest score:

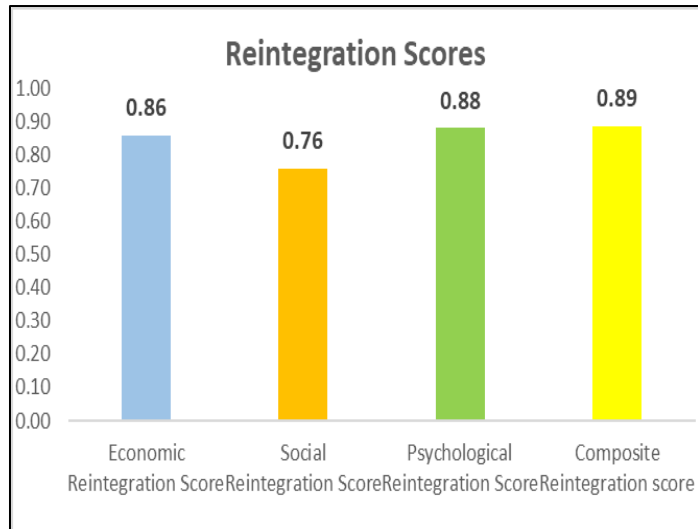
A 46-year-old woman returned to Tbilisi after 10 years of emigration in Belgium. With the reintegration support from IOM Belgium, she rented an apartment. Since her arrival she has been struggling with hard economic conditions. She is unemployed and is still trying to find a job, but in vain. She is not able to borrow money in case of need. She does not have her own residential space. She cannot afford to get proper medical treatment due to the lack of income. She does not have a sense of belonging and she feels physically unsafe and regrets returning to Georgia. She considers that her present conditions do not allow her to stay in Georgia. The beneficiary may require further reintegration assistance.



³ Source: Reintegration Handbook

Example 2 - Highest Score

A 37-year-old woman has returned to Tbilisi after 1.5 years of emigration in Belgium. She has received reintegration support from IOM and additionally has been supported from Job Placement Project. She has passed training courses in Management and Accounting. Now the beneficiary works as a manager in a restaurant. She is very satisfied with her economic status and does not look for another job. Even COVID-19 pandemic did not influence her income. She has taken a loan from bank, but she is able to pay it. She has good access to different social services and is satisfied with the experience. She has high level of living standards. She has a strong support network, which also enables her to deal with the difficulties more easily.



There is more awareness of the need for support to make reintegration sustainable and beneficial for returnees and their families, as well as their communities and countries of origin. We think that job placement support combined with the standard reintegration packages makes sustainable reintegration more feasible. Of course, we understand that the gap between these two scores can not only be attributed to JPS but other important factors as well – like quality of support network after return, duration of stay abroad, psychological problems, etc.

Reintegration Outcomes

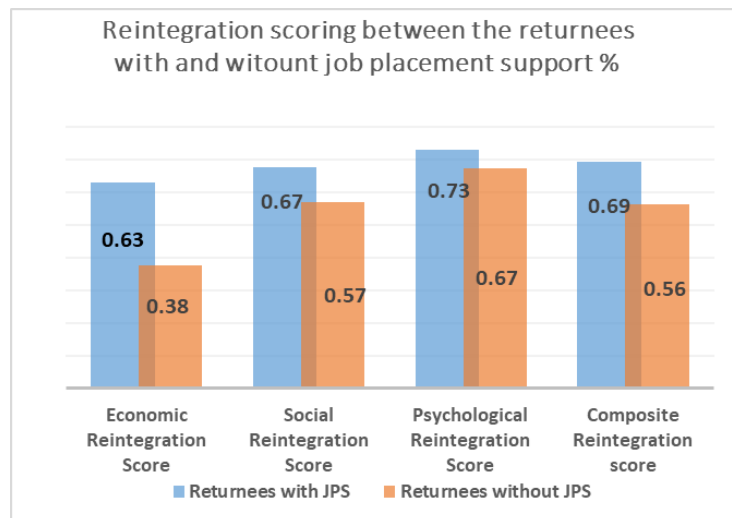
This survey provides a snapshot of reintegration outcomes among individuals who returned from Belgium, completed their reintegration plans and received all assistance allocated to them within their reintegration programme. Surveyed returnees achieved an average **composite reintegration score** of 0.61, **economic reintegration score** 0.47, **Social reintegration score** 0.61 and **psychosocial reintegration score** 0.70 (on a scale between 0 and 1). The results confirm that Georgian returnees from Belgium struggle mostly with reintegration in the **economic dimension**.

Turning to the comparison of the reintegration outcomes for the returnees with only reintegration support and returnees with reintegration support + job placement support (JPS), we find out that the reintegration score is higher for the returnees with JPS and it reaches 0.69. The same indicator for the returnees without JPS is less by 0.10 and equals to 0.56. Returnees without JPS are mostly struggling with hard economic conditions and their economic reintegration score is 0.38, which is less by 0.25 compared to the returnees with the JPS.

Table 2 Reintegration scoring

F2	Average Economic reintegration score	Average Social reintegration score	Average Psychological reintegration score	Average composite reintegration score
Returnees with job placement support	0.63	0.67	0.73	0.69
Returnees without job placement support	0.38	0.57	0.67	0.56

Although the difference between the scores is most apparent in the economic reintegration score, it should be noted that there is a difference in social and psychological scores as well showing that people who received additional job counselling component are doing better in all the aspects than those who have not received it.



Returnees to Georgia agreed that reintegration support after arrival was mostly in line with their needs. Majority of the beneficiaries - 59 % of those with the JPS agreed that reintegration assistance fully met their needs after arrival. The same indicator for the returnees without JPS is 28 %. For 52% of the returnees without JPS (provided assistances only partially met or did not met at all their needs as they are again struggling with the reintegration and especially economic problems after arrival. Most of their dissatisfaction is caused by economic distress, unemployment, low access to the desired job and a low salary. The same indicator for returnees with JPS is 12%.

Table 3. Satisfaction reintegration assistance

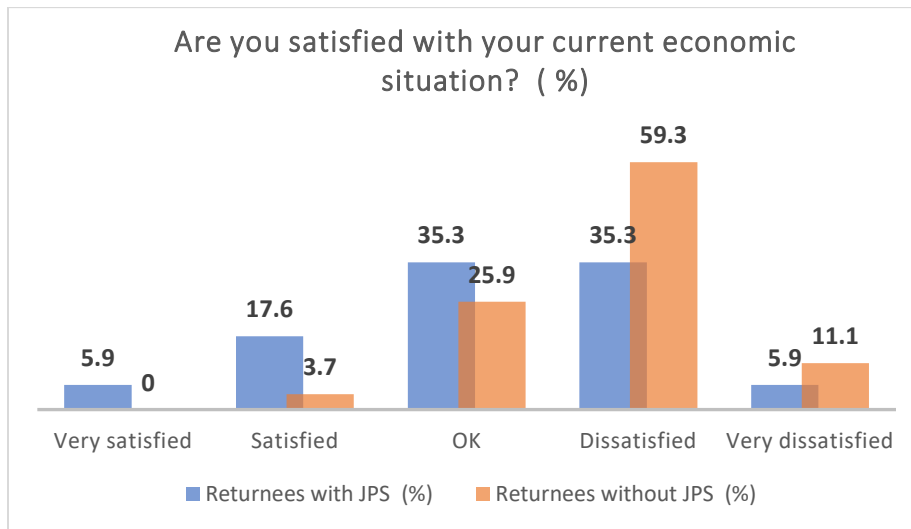
To what extent did the received reintegration assistance meet your needs?	Returnees with job placement support %	Returnees without job placement support %
Did not meet at all	0	4
Met fully	59	28
Met to a great extent	29	20
Partially met	12	48
in Total	100	100

The data illustrate that additional support from the job placement programme had a good impact on the reintegration of the returnees. During the interview, beneficiaries confirmed the importance and advantages of the job placement support for their reintegration after arrival.

Specific observation in Economic Dimension

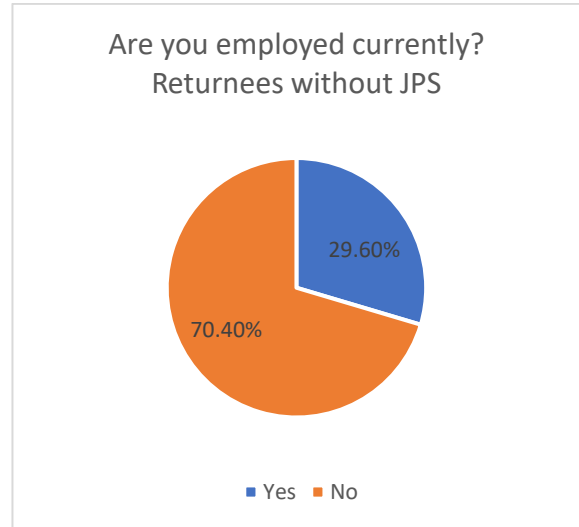
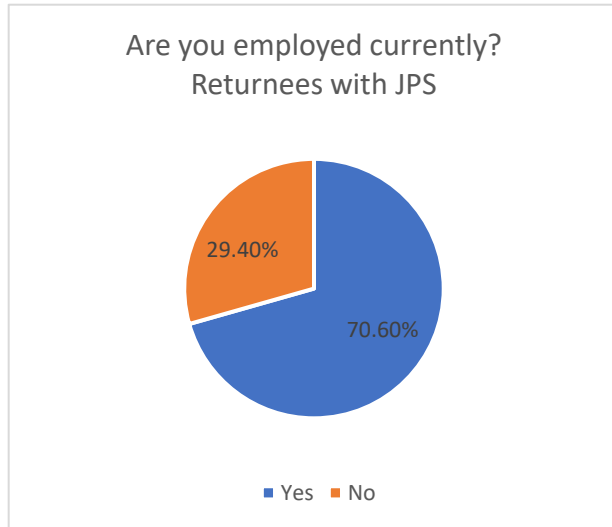
It should be noted, that 70.4 % of the returnees without JPS are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their current economic status whereas the same indicators with the returnees with JPS is 41.2%.

Beneficiaries with JPS have higher level of satisfaction in terms of economic status. They have more possibilities to borrow money in case of need and have better access to employment and training.



During the pandemic in the country, some of the returnees with JPS (who worked) lost their job, but 70.6% still have the same job or found a new source of income with less salary. For the remaining 29.4 %, their jobs have been suspended due to the pandemic or temporary physical disability (one beneficiary broke a leg and is not able to work until full recovery). The results are different with the surveyed returnees without JPS. Only 29.6% have jobs and 70.4% are unemployed. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide

exact information related to their employment status before the pandemic, but based on the open questions we can state that part of the beneficiaries without JPS also lost their jobs due to COVID-19.



Beneficiaries with JPS

- Are OK with their economic status.
- Have better access to finances.
- have less debts.
- Have better access to the training and employment.
- Are currently employed.

Beneficiaries without JPS

- Are mostly dissatisfied with their economic status.
- Have low access to finances.
- Have debts.
- Have low access to the training and employment.
- Currently are unemployed.

Specific observation in Social Dimension

Returnees have reached higher reintegration scoring in social dimension compared to their economic scoring. Beneficiaries with JPS have scoring higher by 0.10 compared to the respondents without JPS.

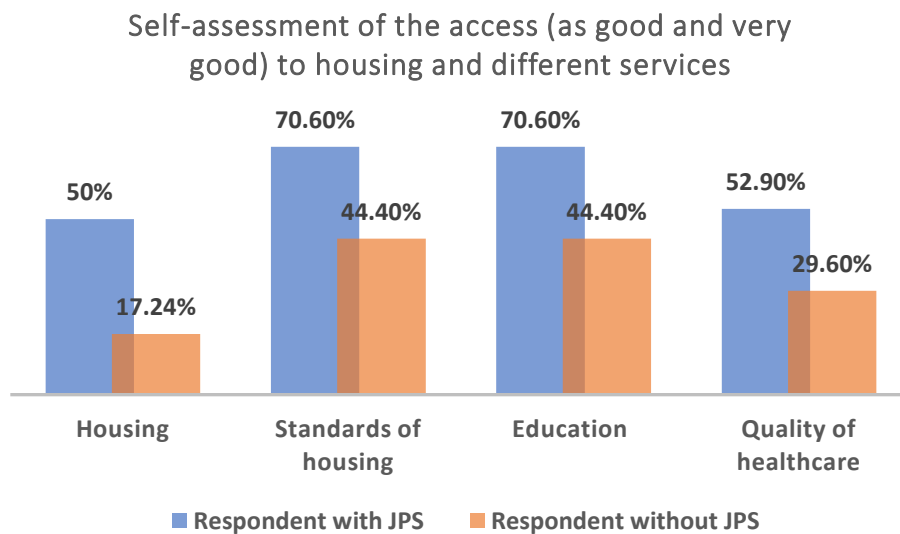
Having a safe and affordable place to live, as well as access to different basic services is essential for successful reintegration. However, needs, expectations and actual realities vary among returnees depending on the context and communities of their return. Up to 32 % of surveyed returnees had *good* access to the housing after arrival. For the 38.6 % access to the accommodation was *satisfactory* and for the remaining part of beneficiaries the access was *poor* (22.7%) or *very poor* (4.5%). More than 50 % of the returnees declared that they have good living standards (including parameters like neighborhood

safety, cleanliness, size, living conditions in the house) and only 4.5 % of the returnees considered their living standards as *poor*.

Big majority of returnees from Belgium (63 %) estimated their access to justice and law enforcement as *good*. Only 7 % considered it as *poor*.

Ensuring good access to documentations and education is accounted to as an important task for reintegration. Almost all respondents reported very good access to the documentation and education for school-age children. There was only one exceptional case regarding access to the documentation. The beneficiary was not able to take an identification card due to the lack of funds.

Returnees need to have water available in sufficient amounts for drinking, cooking, cleaning and personal hygiene. Most of the returnees evaluated access to the safe drinking water as *good* (up to 89 %). Only three beneficiaries for the total survey considered their drinking water as *poor*.

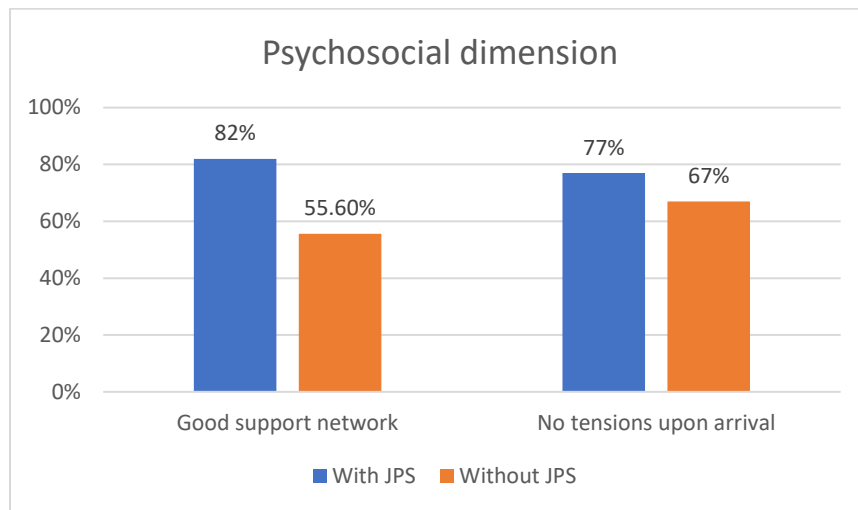


Beneficiaries with JPS	Beneficiaries without JPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have better access to housing. • Have better living standards. • Have better access to the education. • Have good access to healthcare, but only 53 % perceive the quality of healthcare as good or very good. Only one person estimated the quality of the medical service as poor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have lower access to housing. • Estimated their living standard not so good. • Have less access to the education. • Have good access to the healthcare, but in terms of quality it is not so good.

Specific observation in Psychosocial Dimension

The psychosocial dimension is covered by several indicators including the expressed need for psychosocial support, the presence of negative emotions, availability of support networks, experience of discrimination, participation in social events and overall sense of security and peacefulness in the community of return.

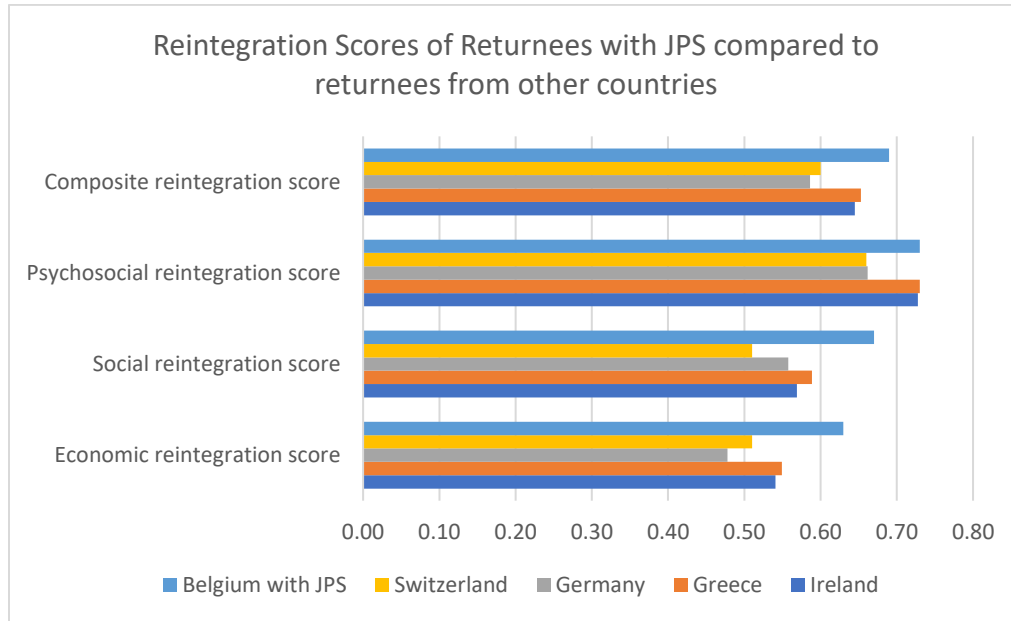
Returnees from Belgium have reached Reintegration scoring in psychological dimension - 0.70. This is mostly connected with the cultural factor, rather than their psychological well-being. As a general trend, beneficiaries usually face some difficulties in perceiving themselves as belonging to the country and the community that may have changed since their migration. Some people do not tend to talk openly about their emotional status and problems in their country after return. But based on survey results respondents consider themselves as a part of society where they live, have strong support networks, and feel physically safe. The rate of their participation in social events has reduced only due to the Coronavirus. Most of the beneficiaries think that they do not need specialized psychological support. Only 8 respondents declared that they had a desire to receive psychological assistance.



The differences between returnees with and without job placement support are smaller in this dimension compared to those in economic and social dimensions, but they are still visible.

Comparison Reintegration scores between main sending missions

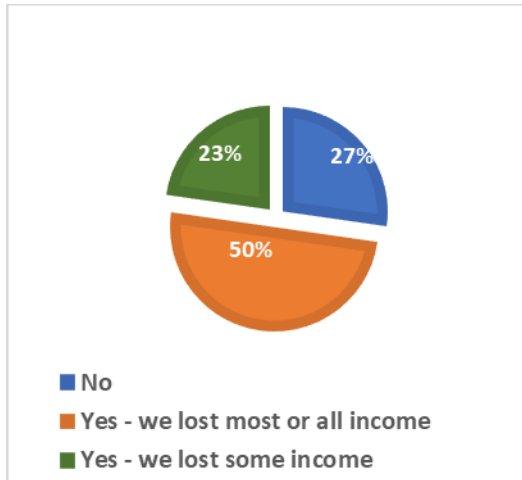
We also tried to compare the same area scores with returnees from other major sending countries, although this result should be taken with caution, because the data for other countries are taken from the big reintegration survey done in Summer 2020, which did not envisage separate assessment of reintegration programmes by countries of return. It can be noted though that AVRР returnees from Belgium assisted with Job Placement Support component score the highest overall, with a significant higher value on the socio-economic and social parameters.



Impact of COVID-19

Coronavirus pandemic has put enormous pressure and downturn on Georgian economy. The virus caused full suspension of tourism and related activities especially in service sector and trade, where the returnees were mostly employed. For example, one returnee lost her job in a hotel, another beneficiary's retail trade business was suspended, etc. Some of them keep their working places, but their salary has significantly decreased.

73 % of respondents declared that they lost their income during the Pandemic. 50 % of respondents lost almost all income. But some beneficiaries declared that they did not have any income to be lost.

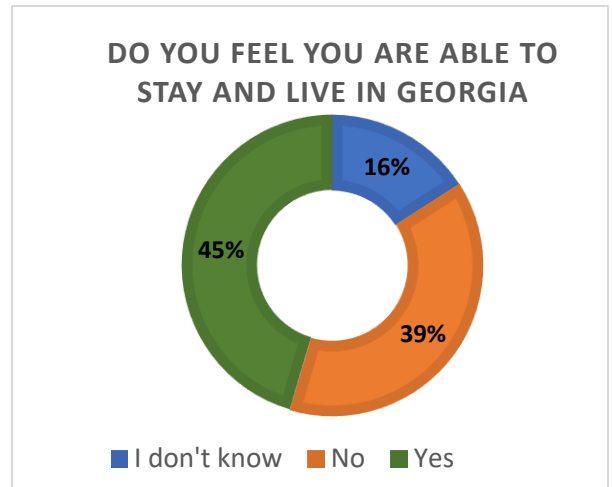
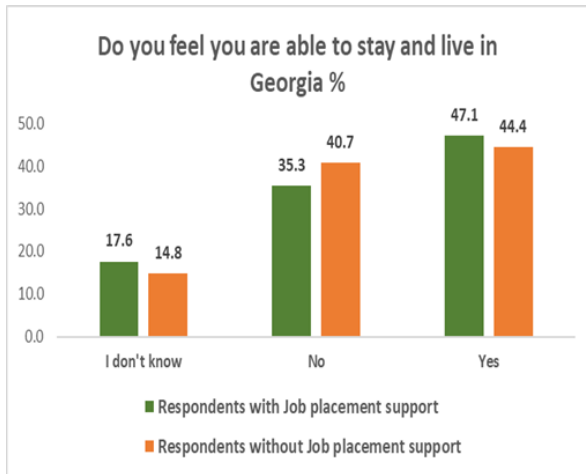


What was the % of decrease in your family income due to pandemic?

Range of income lost	Returnees %
20%-50%	26.9
51%-99%	38.5
100%	34.6

During the survey, there are only two employed beneficiaries whose income is stable and did not change during the pandemic. Both were supported under the Job Placement Project and are very satisfied with their economic conditions. They appreciate the support from IOM Belgium and think that Job placement program improved their employment prospects, gave skills development and was a driving factor for their social and economic development.

At the conclusion respondents were asked to estimate their possibility to stay and live in Georgia. Up to 37 % of the returnees considered that they are not able to stay here due to hard economic conditions, unemployment, low salary, insecurity, etc. It is not wishing for a better life and a better country but the feeling that they need to leave because of lack of possibilities in their community and the country. On the other hand, 45.5 % declared that they are able and plan to stay in Georgia. The remaining 15 % did not have an exact answer to this question.



In terms of feeling the need to leave Georgia there were only slight differences (3% – 5%) between the respondents with and without job placement support, but the ratio of those planning to stay is a bit higher for people who received JPS and the ratio of those planning to migrate again is higher for those without JSP.

Conclusion and Further Steps

Despite the small sampling and the difficult economic situation because of COVID-19 resulting in the loss of jobs and restricted training possibilities, the difference between the scoring results of the returnees who did and did not receive job placement support is clearly visible. The satisfaction levels for all three factors (economic, social and psychosocial) are different and people who received JPS on top of reintegration grant feel more secure, do better in terms of economic stability as well as social inclusion and psychological aspects.

We think this component should be continued in 2021 and taken as a good example to be followed by other sending countries whenever there is a possibility.

It should be noted however, that if training / employment component is one of the reintegration possibilities, the returnees usually opt rather for income generating activities (micro business) despite continuous suggestion from the counsellors. They would rather see an immediate impact on their economic situation, then wait for long-term sustainability of acquired skills and employment prospects. When offered as a top-up, however, many of them take this opportunity (especially the biggest age group 25-50 years, who are employable and interested) and see the results sometime later.