



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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Publisher:	International Organization for Migration	United Nations Development Programme
	17 Route des Morillons	1 UN Plaza
	P.O. Box 17	New York, NY
	1211 Geneva 19	10075
	Switzerland	USA
	Email: migration4development@iom.int	Website: www.undp.org
	Website: www.iom.int	

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This report was written by Audrey Hickcox (IOM) and Caroline Lund (UNDP). The team would like to thank reviewers and collaborators who provided targeted guidance and input to the development of the report. Substantive edits were provided by Manuel Hoff (IOM), Joanne Irvine (IOM), Johannes Tarvainen (UNDP), Patrick Nicholson (UNDP), and David Khoudour (UNDP). Other reviewers include IOM and UNDP colleagues in the nine Country Offices represented and Regional Offices.

The report was designed and formatted with the support of Ben Brodie.

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

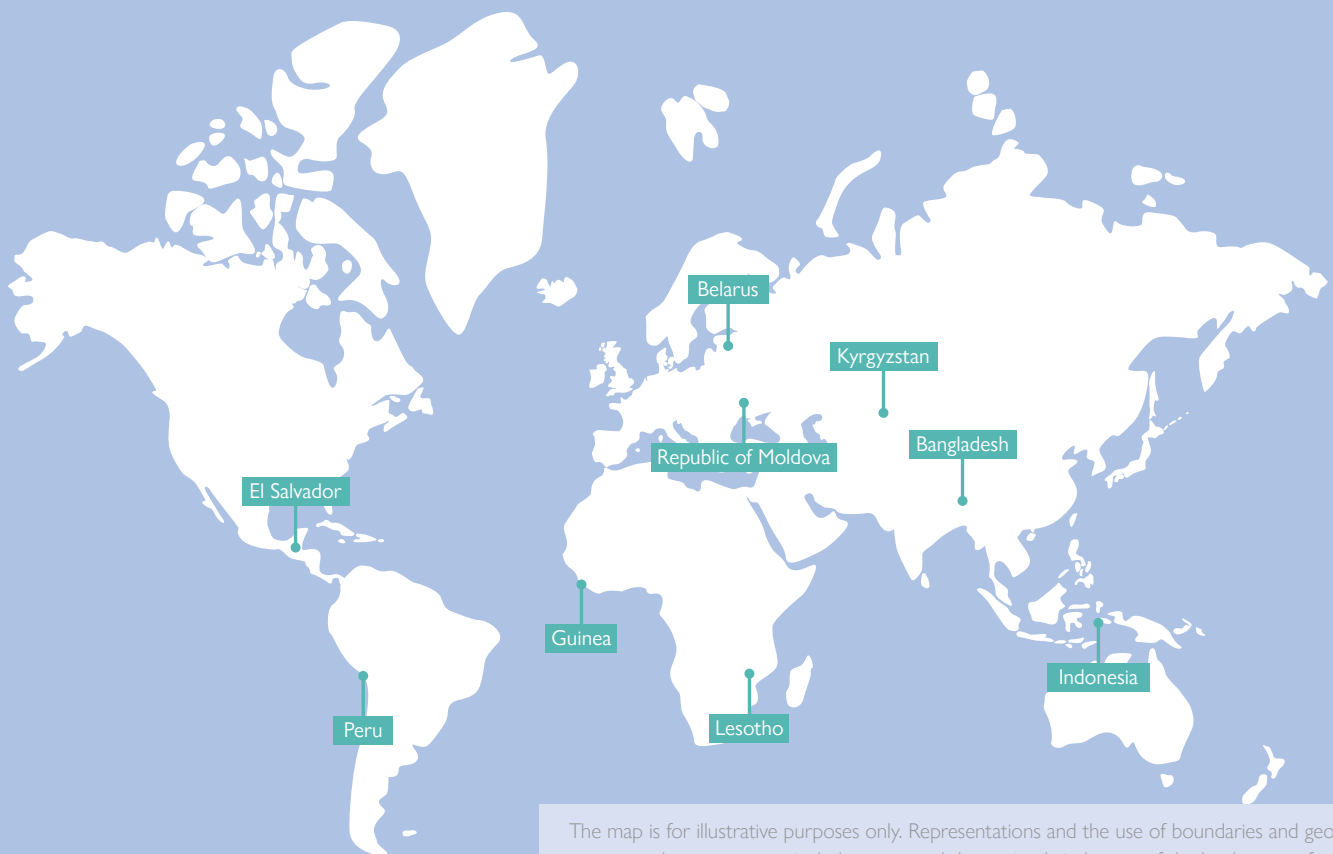
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LEVERAGING MIGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

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.

² United 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](#).

³ IOM (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:

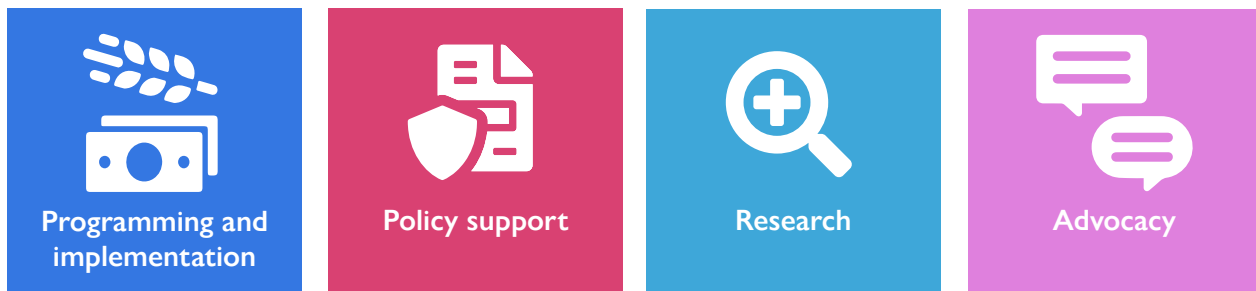
Dividing tasks by “comparative advantage” of each agency

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 stake 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.

Contact

David Khoudour, UNDP HQ, Crisis Bureau - Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility Team, david.khoudour@undp.org
 Manuel Hoff, IOM HQ, Migration and Sustainable Development Unit, mhoff@iom.int

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 and migration from residential to

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