



Decentring the Study of Migrant
Returns and Return Policies

Country Dossier Morocco

WP7: Return Aspirations and Trajectories of Migrants

Authors:

Bachir Hamdouch, Karima Belhaj, Mehdi Lahlou, Mohamed Mghari

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List of abbreviations

AMI	Association Migration Internationale
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
EU	European Union
HCP	High Commission for Planning
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
CNSS	National Social Security Fund

Executive Summary

This country dossier on Morocco provides a comprehensive analysis of migration dynamics, highlighting the diverse experiences, motivations, and challenges migrants face. Based on 32 in-depth interviews with migrants of different administrative statuses and national backgrounds, as well as national data, the dossier explores Morocco's role as both a transit and destination country within the broader migration landscape.

Migrants arrive in Morocco for various reasons, including economic hardship, conflict, political instability, and lack of access to basic services in their home countries. Many see Morocco as a stepping stone toward Europe, yet significant barriers often leave them stranded, forcing them to reconsider long-term settlement. Economic hardship remains a primary driver of migration, with many migrants seeking employment to support their families back home. Some flee personal threats, conflict, or military conscription, while others rely on incomplete or misleading information about migration routes, exposing them to exploitation and violence.

Employment remains a major challenge for migrants, who are often pushed into low-paying, informal sector jobs without contracts or social protection. Many report exploitative working conditions, with wages too low to secure housing or send remittances. The lack of stable employment creates a cycle of economic vulnerability, particularly for those with families to support. Women, while generally facing fewer encounters with law enforcement, often endure heightened risks of exploitation in domestic work and caregiving roles.

Legal and administrative barriers further complicate migrants' ability to secure stability in Morocco. The residence permit renewal process is complex and restrictive, requiring valid work contracts, housing agreements, and social insurance documentation, conditions that most migrants cannot meet. Some migrants, including asylum seekers and those who benefited from Morocco's regularization program, have legal status, yet still struggle with bureaucratic hurdles. Others remain in limbo, waiting for international resettlement opportunities.

Migrants without legal status live in constant insecurity, facing frequent arrests, harassment, and arbitrary relocations by Moroccan authorities. Many report being forcibly moved from northern cities like Tangier and Casablanca to less accessible regions like Agadir, disrupting their economic activities and forcing them into greater precarity. These relocations create a cycle of instability, making it nearly impossible for migrants to establish livelihoods or long-term plans. The psychological toll of this precarious existence is significant, particularly for those who see returning home as an admission of failure.

Despite these challenges, some migrants express satisfaction with their presence in Morocco and hope to secure regularized status and employment. Others remain determined to reach Europe or another destination, though border restrictions and financial constraints limit their mobility. Some eventually consider returning home, particularly if supported by reintegration programs. The report emphasizes the need for policies that facilitate regularization, enhance social protection, and provide sustainable solutions for migrants who wish to stay, move on, or return. Strengthening access to employment, reducing administrative barriers, improving

policing practices, and ensuring psychological support for returnees are essential steps toward a more inclusive and humane migration system in Morocco.

Keywords: migration, integration, return policies, Morocco, Transit, immigration.

Morocco Map



<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/morocco/map/>

About the project & Work package 7

GAPs is a Horizon Europe project that aims to conduct a comprehensive multidisciplinary study on the drivers of return policies and the barriers and enablers of international cooperation on return migration. The overall aim of the project is to examine the disconnects and discrepancies between expectations of return policies and their actual outcomes by de-centring the dominant, one-sided understanding of “return policymaking.” To this end, GAPs:

- examines the shortcomings of EU’s return governance;
- analyses enablers and barriers to international cooperation, and
- explores the perspectives of migrants themselves to understand their knowledge, aspirations and experiences with return policies.

GAPs combines its decentring approach with three innovative concepts:

- a focus on return migration infrastructures, which allows the project to analyse governance fissures;
- an analysis of return migration diplomacy to understand how relations between EU Member States and with third countries hinder cooperation on return; and
- a trajectory approach that uses a socio-spatial and temporal lens to understand migrant agency.

GAPs is an interdisciplinary 3-year project (2023-2026), co-coordinated by Uppsala University and the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies with 17 partners in 12 countries on 4 continents. GAPs' fieldwork has been conducted in 14 countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Sweden, Nigeria, Germany, Morocco, the Netherlands, Afghanistan, Poland, Georgia, Turkey, Tunisia, Greece and Iraq.

WP7 investigates migrants' experiences in transit countries during the pre-return phase, emphasizing how they navigate their return decisions within broader im/mobility experiences. The research employs a multilevel lens, examining personal experiences, the role of diaspora organizations, and the effects of state policies on migration trajectories. Conducted through anthropological and sociological methodologies across Turkey, Greece, Poland, Morocco, and additional interviews in Sweden and Germany, the study seeks to enhance understanding of migrant agency and contribute to the development of effective and humane migration policies.

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

This report investigates migrants' experiences in the transit country of Morocco during the pre-return phase, examining how migrants consider, decide, and communicate their return decisions within broader im/mobility experiences. It aims to enhance understanding of migrant agency and offers a micro-analytical perspective on governance. It also explores how return and readmission policies affect migrants' rights and living conditions, along with the role of diaspora groups.

The broader objective of the report is to model return trajectories, highlighting how onward movements, re-orientations, rest periods, and intermediate settlements develop. It also aims to identify the influence of diaspora organizations and transnational networks on migration trajectories and returns. Another key focus is on exploring migrant agency, particularly how states of 'limbo' or 'liminality' impact trajectories, and the role of intergenerational and transnational relationships. The research connects to broader contexts like remote work, global media, and the circulation of knowledge, analyzing how migrants utilize translocal resources to envision their place in the world.

Led by Özyeğin University (OzU) and AMI in Turkey and Morocco, respectively, with support from SRII in Turkey, EKKE in Greece and the University of Warsaw (UW) in Poland, WP7 employs anthropological and sociological methods to study prospective returnees. This includes irregular and settled migrants, those in voluntary return programs, and individuals facing forced return, as well as those who have already returned and can reflect on their experiences.

The project examines return trajectories through a multilevel lens:

- a. **Micro Level:** Focuses on personal experiences, including how social contexts, networks, and media influence decision-making. Factors like labor market integration, personal connections, and local or transnational media play a role. Particular emphasis is placed on gender dynamics in deciding and planning return, along with past return attempts and encounters with pushbacks or return infrastructures linked to the EU.
- b. **Meso Level:** Examines the role of actors such as diaspora and migrant organizations in shaping trajectories, utilizing contextual knowledge and connections.
- c. **Macro Level:** Analyzes how policies impact trajectories, either encouraging or inhibiting return and reinforcing settlement patterns.

Data was gathered in Morocco. This comprehensive approach seeks to illuminate the complexities of migrant experiences and contribute to more effective, humane migration policies.

2. Methods

This study employed a combination of anthropological and sociological fieldwork methods to examine migration dynamics among prospective returnees, including irregular migrants, long-term migrants, and individuals involved in voluntary or forced return procedures. The research adopted a multilevel perspective, analyzing migrant trajectories with a focus on changing aspirations, social embeddedness, and mobility decisions.

At the micro level, the study explored the influence of personal experiences on return decisions, encompassing feelings, insights from family and friend networks, information from local or transnational media, and the migrant's labor market position and integration experiences in the host or transit country. Gender was a significant factor, with particular attention to how it affected decision-making and return planning. The research also examined past return attempts (both voluntary and forced), interactions with readmission and return systems, particularly in relation to the EU, assessing the impact of risks on individual return trajectories.

Preparation for fieldwork included team discussions on qualitative research practices, interviewing techniques, and ethical considerations. Researchers utilized a WP7 discussion guide, structured to facilitate mapping migrant trajectories and examining agency, governance, networks, and integration contexts. The guide provided four primary questions with optional sub-questions, ensuring a clear focus while allowing flexibility in the interviews.

Recruitment of participants was flexible in terms of dates, locations, and nationalities, specifically targeting individuals at risk of return, including irregular migrants, those with removal orders, and voluntary returnees. Recruitment strategies involved partnerships with organizations, researcher contacts, and fieldworkers' pre-existing connections. Interviews were conducted with participant consent, with measures for anonymity and the option for participants to skip questions or end the interview at any time. Where permission was granted, interviews were recorded, securely stored, and deleted post-transcription. The interviews were conversational, generally lasting under an hour unless otherwise agreed, focusing on capturing participants' perspectives. Ethical considerations included maintaining anonymity, providing incentives, and omitting sensitive questions as needed.

Fieldwork took place in Morocco. The collected data were coded and analyzed by country teams, leading to the creation of country-specific reports. The results were synthesized into a thematic report.

Data Collection

In Morocco, **32 micro-level interviews** were conducted with immigrants from the following categories:

- **Immigrants with Expired Visas:** These are individuals who entered Morocco legally but overstayed their visas, becoming undocumented. Among them, some came with the intention to work in Morocco, while others aimed to transit to Europe;
- **Refugees and Community Representatives:** This group includes refugees as well as community representatives who work closely with international organizations like UNHCR and IOM, acting as community agents to support and guide other migrants;
- **Immigrants Waiting for Asylum in Europe:** These individuals are awaiting transfer or official asylum status in a European country;
- **Voluntary Returnees (as classified by IOM):** This group includes immigrants who have submitted for voluntary return assistance from the IOM.

A little more than half of the migrants interviewed are in an irregular administrative situation (18 individuals). The others (12 individuals) hold regular status, including eight with residence permits. Among these, five are refugees, two of whom hold a ten-year residence card, one is an asylum seeker, and one has refugee status recognized by the UNHCR. Additionally, three individuals were regularized under the government's exceptional operation between 2014 and 2017, and four have valid visas.

Sampling Criteria

The above mentioned categories reflect the specific conditions in Morocco as both a receiving and transit country, capturing a diverse range of at-risk populations. Criteria such as sex, age, and nationality were also considered, as many migrants face unique challenges based on these factors. Migrants often live in communities for mutual protection; men, for example, are frequently subject to recurrent arrests, while women face heightened vulnerability on migration routes before reaching Morocco, although they generally find it somewhat easier to integrate compared to men.

Target population of the study

The interviews focused on a target population of regular and irregular migrants, men and women aged 18 to 50, who are present on the national territory. In other words, migrants belonging to the following categories:

- irregular migrants, e.g. migrants living in an irregular administrative situation;
- regular migrants, e.g. migrants having benefited from regularization operations implemented by Morocco between 2014 and 2018. This last year, permits have not been renewed for many migrants. This are likely to return to their country of origin or go elsewhere.

The interviews were conducted in 3 cities in Morocco (Rabat, Temara, and Salé), bearing in mind that the target population is characterized by high mobility. The choice of these cities is justified by the great presence of returned or transit migrants.

Regarding the sample size, the interviews focused on a sample of 32 people. To ensure better representativeness, the selection of migrants to be interviewed took into consideration, as far as possible, also with the support of relevant local NGOs, the following elements:

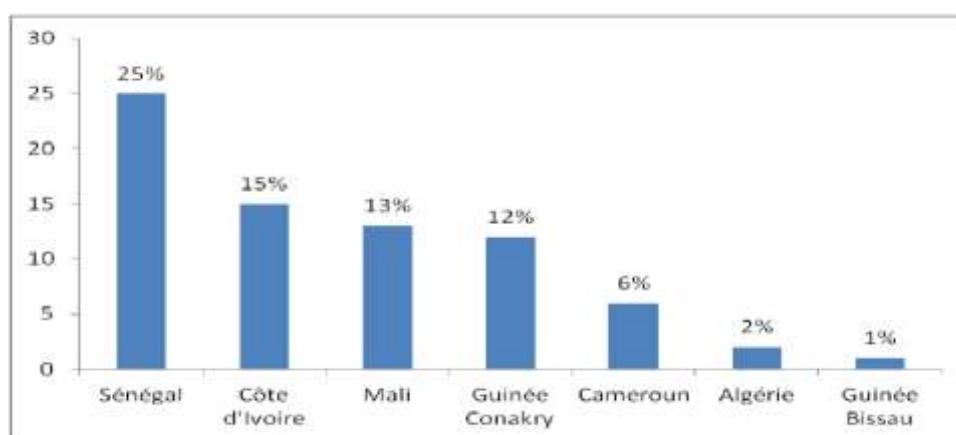
- Gender: Studies and surveys conducted in Morocco have reported a male predominance in the gender structure of the migrant population (the feminization rate varies between 32% and 42%), we decided to interview 60% of men and 40% of women, given the vulnerability of women and the importance of making them more visible in our work.
- Country of origin, the sample included migrants from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Guinea as they are the most represented in Morocco, also in terms of irregular migrants intercepted by the Moroccan authorities in 2020 (25%, 15 %, 13%, and 12% respectively out of a total of 20,045 individuals) - see Figure 1 and table 1 below .
- The migration period that was taken in consideration for interviews is migration from 2013 to 2023, e.g. the last 10 years (see Figure 2). This is all the more relevant for our research as it seems, according to recent studies made in Morocco, that more than eight out ten of

migrants present in the country have arrived there in the last decade, e.g. since the adoption by the country of the National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) in 2013.

What returns are these?

The return taken into consideration may be forced or voluntary, decided by individual choice. Forced return concerns migrants who have been subject to refoulement or expulsion, including those who recently participated (in June 2022, in particular) in the forced crossing of barriers bound for Spanish presidencies in northern Morocco.

Figure 1: Interceptions of irregular migrants in Morocco coming from the most important countries of origin in 2020 (Total number 20,045 interceptions)



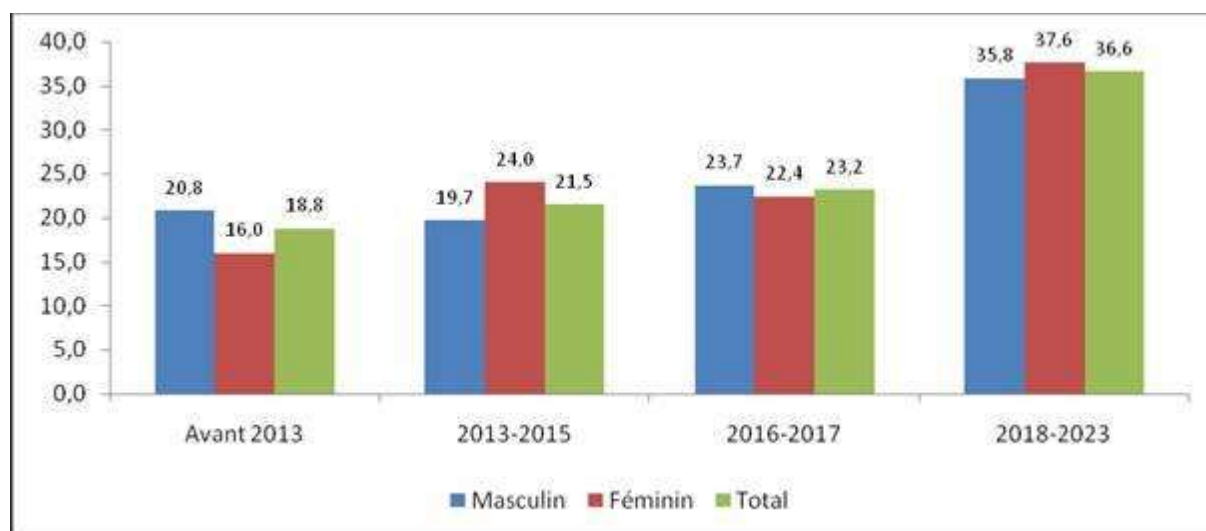
Source: National Migration Observatory, Ministry of the Interior, 2021.

Table 1: Refugees in need of international protection by country of origin in 2023.

Country of origin	Total	Asylum seekers	Refugees/Persons in need of international protection
Syrian Arab Republic	5 617	5	5612
Guinea	2 572	2395	177
Senegal	1 772	1652	120
Sudan	1 526	1235	291
Côte d'Ivoire	1 288	982	306
Central African Republic	1 215	24	1191
Yemen	901	6	895
Cameroon	831	646	185
Mali	709	647	62
Nigeria	455	424	31

Democratic Republic of the Congo	402	219	183
South Sudan	377	34	343
Palestine	196	1	195
Gambia	177	175	2
Chad	155	147	8
Others	1 060	674	386
Total	19 253	9 266	9 987
Count of Country of Origin		54	48

Source: UNHCR, 2023.

Figure 2: Migrants by period of arrival in Morocco and sex (%)

Source: Survey on the Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants in Morocco, OIM-AMI, 2023.

3. Context

3.1. Brief Historical Background of Migration in Morocco

Migration in Morocco has undergone significant transformations over the past decades, shifting from being primarily an emigration country to becoming a major destination and transit hub for migrants from various regions of Africa, as well as Arab countries.

Migration Patterns: From Transit to Settlement

Historically, Morocco has been a key sending country, with approximately 10% of its population residing abroad. However, in recent years, it has increasingly become a country of immigration and transit, attracting migrants from North and West Africa, as well as from the Horn of Africa and Central Africa as well as Arab countries. While a segment of these populations aims to reach Europe, migration through Morocco is not necessarily a direct transit but rather a step-by-step process. Many migrants attempt to establish themselves temporarily in Moroccan urban centers, engaging in economic activities such as trade, labor, or education before seeking further opportunities.

This gradual migratory strategy has contributed to Morocco's role as a key migratory hub, where migrants maintain strong ties with both their countries of origin and transit, reinforcing networks that facilitate further migration. However, Morocco has also faced challenges in adapting to this influx of foreign populations, as their arrival and settlement were not initially anticipated in national policy frameworks.

The Influence of European Border Policies

A critical aspect of Morocco's migration governance is its relationship with European migration policies. Due to its geographic proximity to Spain, Morocco has faced significant pressure from the European Union (EU) to strengthen border controls and restrict irregular migration flows. The presence of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla further complicates this issue, as these territories serve as focal points for irregular migration attempts. European policies have, in effect, externalized border management to Morocco, requiring Moroccan authorities to act as gatekeepers, often in ways that prioritize security measures over humanitarian considerations.

In this context, Morocco adopted Law 02-03 in 2003, which established a legal framework governing the entry and residence of foreigners, irregular migration, and human trafficking. This legislation introduced stricter border controls and sanctions against unauthorized migration, aligning Moroccan migration policy with European security concerns. Over the years, Law 02-03 has been widely criticized by civil society organizations for its restrictive nature and for prioritizing border security over migrant rights (1). The law remained in force until significant reforms were initiated in 2013, reflecting growing tensions between migration control and human rights protection.

The Political and Social Responses to Migration

Morocco's long-standing engagement with migration, particularly in managing its own emigrant population, has shaped its response to incoming migrants. The Moroccan state has

historically framed migration as a political issue, focusing on the rights and integration of Moroccans abroad while simultaneously managing domestic debates on migration governance. This context has influenced the Moroccan public's perception of foreign migrants, fostering a degree of solidarity, as many Moroccans relate to migration struggles through their own diaspora experiences.

The emergence of migrant rights associations and civil society organizations has been a notable development in Morocco's migration landscape. These organizations have played a crucial role in advocating for the rights of migrants and critiquing restrictive migration policies. Between 2003 and 2013, Morocco implemented a repressive legal framework governing migration, characterized by stringent border controls and limited protections for migrants. However, growing pressure from civil society, coupled with increasing reports of human rights abuses, led to significant policy reforms.

Policy Shift: The 2013 National Immigration and Asylum Strategy

A turning point in Morocco's migration policy occurred in 2013 when King Mohammed VI initiated a comprehensive reform following recommendations from the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) (2). This shift was driven by concerns over the treatment of migrants in Morocco and the realization that Moroccan emigrants themselves often face hardships abroad. The new National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) introduced substantial policy changes, including large-scale regularization campaigns for undocumented migrants.

The regularization programs of 2014 and 2017 granted legal status to thousands of migrants, marking a significant departure from Morocco's previous security-driven migration policies. These reforms reflected a broader effort to integrate migrants into Moroccan society while addressing human rights concerns. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring long-term integration, access to social services, and addressing ongoing issues of border externalization imposed by European policies.

3.2. Migration and Return Governance System

In recent years, Morocco has undergone a significant transformation in its migration governance. The SNIA, launched in 2014, marked a shift from a security-focused approach, typified by the restrictive Law 02-03 of 2003, to a more human rights-oriented framework (3). This new strategy prioritizes the integration of migrants, including access to education, healthcare, and employment, while reinforcing border management to curb irregular migration.

A cornerstone of Morocco's migration governance is its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) program, implemented in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Since 2005, the program has facilitated the return of over 18,500 migrants, providing them with pre-departure assistance, financial support, and reintegration services in their countries of origin. This system represents Morocco's dual commitment to humanitarian principles and migration management.

Morocco's cooperation with the European Union is a key feature of its migration policy. While it has strengthened border controls and collaborated on return operations, Morocco has resisted signing a formal readmission agreement with the EU. This stance reflects its strategic

use of migration diplomacy to balance regional responsibilities with its broader economic and political interests.

3.3. Social, Economic, and Political Conditions

Socially, the integration of migrants into Moroccan society remains a work in progress. The National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA) has introduced policies aimed at reducing discrimination and enhancing access to essential services. Among these, the education sector has been notably successful. Since 2013, a circular from the Ministry of National Education has allowed migrant children to attend public and private schools. While these children initially faced challenges, particularly with learning in Arabic, they have demonstrated remarkable adaptability. Healthcare access has also been facilitated, with migrants able to use primary health services at local centers on the same basis as Moroccan citizens. However, secondary and tertiary healthcare services remain challenging to access due to financial constraints, although organizations such as CARITAS, Médecins du Monde, and the Centre d'Entraide Internationale provide critical support. Despite these efforts, many migrants continue to face obstacles in securing adequate housing, healthcare, and education. Public perceptions of migrants vary, with some communities showing solidarity and others remaining skeptical about their presence.

Economically, Morocco's landscape presents a mixed picture for migrants. The country has achieved steady growth, with a GDP per capita of 3800\$ in 2023, yet it continues to grapple with persistent poverty and high unemployment rates. Economic opportunities for migrants are often confined to the informal sector, where precarious working conditions and exploitation are common. Vocational training initiatives provided by institutions like Entraide Nationale, OFPPT, and NGOs such as AMAPPE, ENABEL, and the Orient-Occident Foundation have helped some migrants acquire valuable skills and establish small income-generating projects. However, many remain stuck in low-paying jobs or face significant barriers to economic stability, exacerbating their vulnerability.

Politically, Morocco has positioned itself as a progressive actor in migration governance. Its return to the African Union in 2017 and its active role in international frameworks such as the Global Compact for Migration reflect its commitment to balancing humanitarian principles with regional stability. At the same time, Morocco's cooperation with the EU on border control and return operations often attracts criticism from rights groups, who highlight the tension between migration management and the protection of migrants' rights. These dynamics illustrate Morocco's complex role as both a transit and destination country, navigating competing domestic and international pressures in its approach to migration.

4. Findings

4.1. Agency and movement

This section explores the complex interplay of individual agency and structural conditions that shape the migration trajectories of individuals in Morocco. Drawing on interviews conducted with migrants from diverse backgrounds, it highlights the motivations behind their journeys, the resources and information they rely upon, and the challenges they face along the way.

Migration is rarely a straightforward decision. It reflects a combination of push factors such as economic hardship, conflict, and lack of basic services, and pull factors like safety, opportunities, and perceived better living conditions in Morocco. For many, Morocco represents a critical juncture in their migration journey—a place of relative stability compared to other transit countries in the region. For some, it is a destination in itself, offering a chance for integration and a better life. For others, it is a stepping stone toward further migration, often to Europe.

Understanding the reasons for movement and the decision-making processes of migrants reveals their resilience and resourcefulness amidst significant constraints. These constraints include limited access to reliable information, exposure to dangers during the journey, and exploitation by traffickers. This section examines these dynamics in detail, beginning with an analysis of the primary motivations for migration, followed by an exploration of the information available to migrants and the risks they encounter en-route. Through their own voices and narratives, the section underscores the human dimension of migration, highlighting the aspirations and struggles of those who navigate these challenging pathways.

4.1.1. Reason for movement

According to the responses of the interviewees, the main reasons for migration are, in order: economic reasons (job search, improving economic situation, poverty), followed closely by seeking safety or avoiding war or early military mobilization; the third reason is the need for social services, primarily education and health.

For many migrants, economic hardship is the primary driver. Barry , a 21-year-old from Guinea Conakry, explained, "My family is poor; I emigrated to send them money." Others, like Bernadette, a 51-year-old from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), cited family circumstances: "After the divorce, I stayed with the kids, without work." These narratives underscore the financial pressures and responsibilities that compel migrants to seek better opportunities abroad.

Safety is another critical factor motivating migration. Sasson, a 53-year-old from Nigeria, shared, "My parents are dead, and I was in danger back home," while Moaz, a 20-year-old from Eritrea, explained, "I left my country at 14 because military conscription starts at 15." Such experiences highlight the life-threatening conditions many migrants seek to escape, including violence, insecurity, and forced military service.

The choice of Morocco aligns with these motivations: primarily for safety, followed by aspirations for a better life. Morocco is perceived by many migrants as offering more favorable reception conditions than other countries in the region. Because of this perception, several migrants choose to settle temporarily in Morocco, which they view as a relatively safe and welcoming environment. For some, Morocco represents a temporary place of stability before pursuing a settlement project in Europe or other countries, while others consider long-term integration if economic opportunities or regularization possibilities become available.

The 2021 national survey corroborates these results, with war and insecurity-related reasons ranking first (40%), closely followed by job search and improving living conditions (37%). Studies come next (14%), followed by family reunification (4.7%). These findings emphasize the complex interplay of economic, safety, and social factors driving migration to Morocco.

4.1.2. Information available/ used for movement

The information available to migrants about their journey is often limited and rarely reflects the true dangers and risks involved. For those traveling by land, knowledge of the route typically comes from friends, word-of-mouth, or rudimentary tools like maps. However, such information seldom captures the extreme hazards migrants face. Smugglers, who play a central role in facilitating clandestine movements, charge exorbitant fees to guide migrants across treacherous borders between Mali, Niger, and Algeria. These journeys are fraught with peril, including violence, exploitation, and exposure to life-threatening conditions.

Barry, a 21-year-old from Guinea Conakry, shared his traumatic experience: "I was severely beaten in the desert by Tuaregs; a week in the Sahara without food or water." Similarly, Moaz, a 20-year-old from Eritrea, recounted, "I was imprisoned underground; they asked me to call my family to send \$5,000." These accounts highlight the physical and financial exploitation migrants endure, often leaving them physically and emotionally scarred.

Women, in particular, face heightened vulnerabilities during these clandestine journeys. Despite occasional group protection, they remain at significant risk of sexual abuse and exploitation by traffickers. As Zoe, a 29-year-old from Côte d'Ivoire, reflected, "Stay in your country; being a migrant is not easy; I knew many people who drowned trying to go to Europe. I regretted migrating, but I gained from the experience." Her words underscore the dual reality of migration—the harsh lessons learned and the lingering sense of regret.

Even migrants who survive the journey often warn others against it. Barry echoed this sentiment: "Do not migrate, at least not by land; I nearly died." Eric, a 55-year-old from the Democratic Republic of Congo, added, "Migration is not easy, especially to Europe and particularly for women." Esther, a 25-year-old Nigerian, highlighted the misinformation surrounding migration: "90% of migrants do not tell the truth about migration and its difficulties. They only mention the positive."

By contrast, air travel offers a safer alternative, with known destinations and fewer risks. The 2021 National Survey indicates that the main entry points to Morocco are airports (48%) and the Algerian border (44%). However, for many migrants, financial constraints and systemic barriers make air travel unattainable, forcing them onto hazardous land routes.

4.2. Social networks, family and institutions

This section delves into the critical role of social networks, familial connections, and institutional support in the lives of migrants in Morocco. Migration is not just an individual journey but one deeply rooted in collective experiences and community dynamics. Social networks and families often provide a safety net, enabling migrants to navigate the challenges of daily life in a foreign environment. These networks foster mutual assistance, security, and resource-sharing, particularly among those facing precarious conditions.

In addition to informal support structures, institutional involvement through diaspora organizations and international bodies such as the IOM and UNHCR is vital. These organizations offer migrants, especially the most vulnerable, access to essential services like legal aid, healthcare, and social guidance. The collaboration between informal networks and formal institutions enhances resilience and integration efforts, demonstrating the interconnectedness of personal and systemic support mechanisms in shaping the migration experience.

This section examines these dynamics through two lenses: the relationships migrants build within their immediate surroundings and their engagement with broader institutional frameworks. Through these perspectives, the section highlights the significance of social and institutional anchors in migrants' efforts to adapt and thrive in Morocco.

The solidarity networks established among migrants are crucial for their daily survival and security amidst the challenges they face. One particularly telling practice reported by several interviewees highlights this dynamic. Some male migrants, such as Tamutunga, a 51-year-old from the Democratic Republic of Congo, shared that they go out in public accompanied by the children of their roommates or friends, often fellow nationals, to avoid being arrested by the Auxiliary Forces "*Mistreated by the Auxiliary Forces, I go out with my roommate's child to avoid being arrested*" (Tamutunga, 51 years old, DRC).

This strategy stems from an observed pattern: men accompanied by children are generally not targeted for arrest by law enforcement. While not codified in any formal legislation, this behavior is likely the result of internal directives given to the Auxiliary Forces to avoid situations that might violate children's rights, especially when women and children are involved. These informal practices underscore the importance of mutual aid and resource-sharing among migrant communities as they navigate precarious conditions in Morocco.

4.3. Integration context - livelihood and socio-cultural context

Integration is a multifaceted process that encompasses economic participation, social inclusion, and access to essential services. For migrants in Morocco, integration represents both an opportunity and a challenge. Despite various hardships, many express positive sentiments about their lives in the country, citing its relative safety and welcoming environment. According to the 2021 National Survey, nearly nine out of ten migrants report satisfaction with their presence in Morocco, and a majority hope to secure long-term residency and stable employment.

However, the realities of integration are shaped by socio-economic factors. Migrants often face precarious work conditions, administrative hurdles, and limited access to advanced healthcare

and education. These challenges are compounded for those in irregular administrative situations, who remain particularly vulnerable to policing practices and forced relocations.

This section examines key dimensions of the integration process, focusing on livelihood opportunities, legal and administrative frameworks, and access to services. It highlights the role of institutions like the Orient-Occident Foundation, which provide critical vocational and socio-cultural support, and underscores the resilience of migrants striving to build a stable life despite systemic barriers. Through their experiences, this section provides a nuanced understanding of what integration means in the Moroccan context.

During the interviews, several migrants told us that *"they feel very good in Morocco"*. They also hope to gain regularized status (for those who are undocumented) and to secure employment.

4.3.1. Economic situation

Field interviews reveal that a significant number of migrants struggle to find stable employment, with unemployment affecting men slightly more than women. Many engage in low-paying, minor jobs to make ends meet. Some work as community representatives for NGOs or the UNHCR, while others find employment in restaurants, bars, or call centers. Additional roles include site guards, gardeners, car wash workers, and laborers in metal shops.

A few migrants have turned to small-scale commerce, working as street vendors, while others rely on begging or domestic work to survive. Among these, women are often involved in domestic labor, while men tend to gravitate toward street vending. A smaller group consists of individuals pursuing artistic endeavors, such as composing or singing, although these careers offer limited opportunities and stability.

Additionally; among the migrants interviewed some were beneficiaries of the Orient-Occident Foundation. This Moroccan foundation provides essential support in vocational training, enabling migrants to acquire valuable skills for the Moroccan labor market, thereby increasing their chances of obtaining stable employment. Additionally, the Orient-Occident Foundation organizes socio-cultural and psychological support activities that assist migrants, especially the most vulnerable, such as refugees and asylum seekers, in overcoming integration challenges and strengthening their bonds with the Moroccan community.

These findings align with the "Forced Migration in Morocco" survey conducted by the High Commission for Planning in 2021 (HCP, 2021), based on a sample of 3,000 migrants. At the time of the survey, over a quarter of migrants in Morocco (27.4%) were unemployed, with unemployment rates at 29.6% among men and 24.3% among women. Youth unemployment (ages 15 to 29) was 30.7%, compared to 25.9% among those aged 30-44 and 23.2% among those aged 45-59. Nearly a quarter of migrants in Morocco (24.5%) were outside the labor force, including 9.3% students (with no significant gender difference), 8.2% homemakers, and 7.1% other inactive individuals. Just under half of the migrants (48%) held employment, with a notably higher employment rate among men (53.8%) than women (39.7%). Employment rates varied by age, from 38.5% among youth aged 15-29 to 56.3% among adults aged 45-59.

Precarious work conditions

Migrants generally face significant job insecurity, as most work in the informal sector, where they experience labor rights violations, social and wage inequalities, exploitation, and lack of social protection. Many migrants struggle with the absence of work contracts, non-registration with the National Social Security Fund (CNSS), and poor working conditions. These structural vulnerabilities make it difficult for migrants to secure stable livelihoods.

Many interviewed migrants highlighted these economic hardships. Mady, 34, a man from Mali, shared, *"There is no real work; it's exploitation, and the wages are not enough for me and my family."* Babakar, 41, a man from Senegal, reinforced this sentiment, stating, *"There's nothing for migrants in Morocco; we work like slaves."* Bernadette, 51, a woman from the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), echoed this frustration, adding, *"There's nothing here; we are poorly paid."*

Zoé, 29, a woman from Côte d'Ivoire, provided a concrete example of these financial difficulties, explaining, *"Living in Morocco is hard. I earn 2,200 DH per month as a cleaner, and I pay 800 DH for a single room."* Zoé's experience underscores the financial strain migrants face, as rent in cities like Rabat is relatively high compared to their income. With nearly half of her salary going toward housing, she has little left for essential expenses such as food, transportation, or healthcare, leaving her in a precarious economic situation.

Adding to these challenges, Abbas, 29, a man from South Sudan, highlighted the instability of informal employment: *"The problem in Morocco is the lack of job opportunities, and employers aren't serious—they keep saying, 'come back tomorrow.'" Like many other migrants, Abbas faces constant uncertainty, as informal jobs lack contracts and protections. This unpredictability makes it difficult to plan for the future or achieve financial stability, reinforcing the cycle of economic vulnerability.*

Obligations to help family, friends

For many migrants, the financial pressures to support family and friends back home significantly shape their migration experiences and priorities. While seeking employment and better income opportunities is often the initial motivation, the ongoing responsibility of sending remittances impacts their financial stability and decision-making in the host country. This obligation can lead to increased economic strain, as migrants frequently allocate a substantial portion of their limited earnings to support loved ones.

For example, Zoé, who works as a cleaner in Morocco, shared, *"I earn 2,200 DH per month, but after paying rent, I send what I can to support my child since the father of my child passed away."* Similarly, Adam, 42, explained the enduring financial demands: *"Even though I migrated to improve my income, I constantly feel the pressure to help my family back home, which leaves little for my own needs here."*

These narratives illustrate how the burden of providing for others can exacerbate the precarity of migrants' lives, limiting their ability to save or invest in their own future. The dual challenge of sustaining themselves while supporting family members abroad highlights the complex interplay between migration, economic insecurity, and familial obligations.

4.3.2. Residence permits

One of the most significant barriers faced by migrants in Morocco is the difficulty in obtaining or renewing residence permits. Without legal documentation, migrants are systematically excluded from essential services and face heightened risks of arrest and forced relocation. Stéphane, 50, a former commercial agent from the Democratic Republic of Congo, struggled repeatedly with residency renewal, an experience that pushed him into activism. Reflecting on his journey, he stated, “I struggle with residence card renewal, abuse from auxiliary forces, but I’ve learned a lot through my community involvement.” Now the president of the Congolese diaspora association in Morocco, an employee at the Orient-Occident Foundation, and a community agent for the UNHCR, Stéphane has become a key figure in assisting migrants facing similar bureaucratic obstacles. His experience highlights how systemic barriers force migrants into advocacy roles, equipping them with skills and community leadership opportunities they might not have otherwise pursued.

Lack of documentation also directly impacts migrants' economic stability and personal security. Many, like Babakar, a father of two from Senegal, are frequently arrested or forcibly relocated, making it nearly impossible to maintain stable employment. After being detained in Marrakech following a dispute, Babakar spent six months in prison and was forcibly relocated three times to different cities. Now homeless, he struggles with job insecurity and often sleeps near the train station, vulnerable to further exploitation.

Given these hardships, many migrants view Morocco as a temporary stop rather than a final destination. Vanessa, a 28-year-old transgender woman from Côte d’Ivoire, fled gender-based violence in her home country and sought refuge in Morocco. However, her ultimate goal is to relocate to a safer country where LGBTQ+ rights are recognized and protected. “I don’t want to stay in Morocco or return to my country. I am waiting for an opportunity to migrate to a safer country,” she explained. Like Vanessa, many migrants seek resettlement through UNHCR, hoping for an opportunity to build a more secure and stable future elsewhere.

Many migrants evoked the feeling of unsafety. Migrants with irregular status in Morocco live in a state of constant insecurity due to their lack of official documentation, making them highly vulnerable to systemic risks and frequent encounters with law enforcement. These encounters often result in physical abuse, harassment, and arbitrary relocations that disrupt their lives and exacerbate their precarious conditions (GADEM, 2023). Many are forcibly moved from northern cities such as Tangier and Casablanca to more isolated southern areas, stripping them of any sense of stability and further deepening their vulnerability (Enass.ma., 2025).

Omar, 30, recounted his experience: “I was arrested by the Auxiliary Forces, sent to Agadir, and after being released, I asked a passerby for 80 DH to buy a bus ticket. I returned to Rabat and decided to go back to Senegal.” His story highlights the cyclical nature of these relocations, which leave migrants stranded, financially drained, and unable to build any form of security. Similarly, Babakar, 41, described the repeated displacements and violence he endured: “I was arrested in Marrakech after a fight, assaulted, injured, spent six months in prison, and was then sent back three times to Khouribga, Agadir, and Mohammedia—beaten by the Auxiliary Forces each time.” Now living near a train station, he remains trapped in a cycle of instability, with no access to stable shelter or resources.

Beyond the physical hardships, these forced movements create deep economic and psychological distress. Adam, 42, explained, “I don’t earn enough money, have no job, no papers, and the police keep relocating me from Casablanca and Rabat to Agadir.” These disruptions make it nearly impossible for migrants to establish livelihoods or plan for the future. However, this heavy-handed policing primarily targets men. Hera, 32, a woman from Congo-Brazzaville, stated “For men, dealing with the police is especially complicated”. While women may experience fewer direct encounters with law enforcement, they face different vulnerabilities, including higher risks of exploitation and abuse, which further complicate their security and well-being. Mady said, man from Senegal said “I saw women and children who are isolated in the forest, lacking the means to survive.”

4.3.3. Access to services (school/health)

Access to education and healthcare services plays a pivotal role in the integration of migrants in Morocco, with varying levels of success depending on individual circumstances (PNPM, 2009). While many migrants face challenges, some have managed to overcome obstacles and thrive within the Moroccan system.

Nisrine, a Palestinian doctoral student, shared her positive experience of integration. Despite initial difficulties, particularly with the French language, she has successfully adapted to life in Morocco. Her three children attend Moroccan schools and have integrated well into the educational system. “We feel good in Morocco,” Nisrine stated, reflecting on her family’s experience. Her story highlights how education can serve as a bridge to integration, even when language barriers present initial challenges.

Nisrine’s case contrasts with the struggles faced by others, like Pamela, who fell ill and temporarily lost her ability to work.

Access to healthcare services remains a critical aspect of migrants’ integration experiences in Morocco. While primary healthcare services are available to migrants at local health centers, challenges persist, particularly when illnesses or injuries prevent them from working. Pamela, a 22-year-old nanny and housekeeper from Côte d’Ivoire, recounted her experience of falling ill while working: “I got sick and couldn’t work. The woman I worked for took me to the doctor, paid for the consultation, and bought me the medication I needed. However, I was unable to work for a while, so I moved in with a friend in Casablanca, who also works as a nanny and rents a small room in the city, while looking for another job.”

Pamela expressed her gratitude for her friend’s support: “Thankfully, I had my friend. Otherwise, I would have had to go back to the woman who brought me to Morocco to work. She has many girls crammed into her apartment, some sleeping on the floor, with many men also staying there.”

4.4. Perceptions about Return

Migrants’ perceptions of returning to their home countries vary and are often colored by fear and apprehension. Many feel the weight of the sacrifices they and their families made to undertake their migration journey. Omar, 29, from Senegal, for instance, sacrificed everything for this endeavor, selling “a sheep and two cows, all his family owned” to finance his journey to Morocco. This reality makes the idea of returning difficult, as it could be seen as a failure, especially after such sacrifices.

For some migrants, such as Tamutunga from Cameroon, this pressure is exacerbated by the fact of having left young children behind. Having been in Morocco for eight years, Tamutunga feels constant pressure from his prolonged absence and his inability to support his family as he had hoped. He is torn between the desire to return to his loved ones and the fear of returning empty-handed.

Economic challenges and lack of opportunities in Morocco lead some migrants to consider returning home, despite their apprehensions. As Babakar from Senegal expressed, *"I learned the trade of carpentry here in Morocco. Opening a carpentry shop in Senegal, I would be better off at home; I'm tired, I had everything in Senegal, I achieved nothing here (in Morocco)." Zoe, 29, from Côte d'Ivoire, expresses her exhaustion and frustration, saying, "I'm tired in Morocco; I'm not making it here. I want to go back for my daughter."* Similarly, Eric, 51, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), speaks of his family responsibilities: *"Life is too hard here to continue. My father died after I left, and I have to go back to take care of my family."*

Returning is therefore not solely a personal choice but also a response to the expectations of those who depend on them. These expectations, combined with the difficulties faced in Morocco, create a sense of tension and anxiety around the decision to return, as migrants do not want to disappoint their families after so many sacrifices. As indicated in the National Survey on Forced Migration, more than half (54%) wish to stay in Morocco, a quarter (26%) intend to migrate elsewhere, and 12% want to return to their country of origin.

For those who do consider returning, the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) process often adds to their apprehensions. Many migrants report experiencing significant gaps in communication and support during the process. A recurring issue is the lack of detailed and accessible information provided to participants. Omar shared his experience: *"After I expressed interest in returning to my home country, I was handed a piece of paper by AVRR representatives but received no further clarification on the next steps, the type of assistance available, or the timeline for my return".* This lack of clarity is a common complaint among migrants. Many describe feeling uncertain and confused about the process, which undermines their ability to prepare effectively for reintegration. Without comprehensive guidance and support, migrants are left feeling unsupported, raising concerns about the adequacy of the program to meet their needs and ensure a dignified and sustainable return.

4.5. Perceptions about Migrating Elsewhere

Despite the challenges encountered, some migrants maintain hope for a better life in another country, particularly in Europe or North America. Barry, 21, from Guinea, explains that his migration journey was driven by economic and educational constraints in his home country: *"I had to leave because I couldn't afford to study. My school was very far from home."* Others, like Adam, 42, from Senegal, express frustration with the lack of progress in their country and hope for a better life abroad: *"I'm tired of my country; there's no progress. I thought I could make it abroad."*

Gender factors also influence migration perceptions. Vanessa, 32, from Côte d'Ivoire, a transgender migrant, voices her desire to escape a dangerous situation through international resettlement to a third country: *"Gender violence and assault forced me to flee my country."*

Here, I'm waiting for international resettlement." This need for security and better opportunities is shared by Helene, 35, from Chad, who received training in Morocco but faces integration challenges: *"Morocco trained me, but job opportunities are rare. Integration is hard."*

Pamela, 22, from Côte d'Ivoire, embodies the dream of a better life in a country offering more opportunities. While waiting to fulfill her ambition to join her cousins in France or perhaps settle in Canada, she works as a nanny in Morocco. Although the job does not align with her goals, she holds onto hope that an opportunity will arise, allowing her to support her family back home.

For some migrants, attempts to move on from Morocco have failed, leaving them stuck. Lucie, 36, from Nigeria, is an example: *"I've tried to leave here several times, but each attempt fails. I still hope for a chance."* Finally, others, like Julien, 34, from Cameroon, have adapted to life in Morocco despite the challenges: *"I've learned the real life in Morocco. I've struggled, but I don't want to go back to where I came from."*

The testimonies collected highlight the complexity of migrants' perceptions in Morocco regarding potential migration elsewhere. While some see Morocco as a temporary stop on the way to other destinations, others realize that the difficulties they faced on their journey and their current instability hinder them from pursuing their aspirations. The desire to join loved ones or find better living conditions in more stable countries (particularly in Europe and North America) remains strong for many, fueled by stories of success or family connections abroad.

The experiences of migrants like Vanessa, who is transgender, and others who seek to escape violence or insecurity in their home countries, underscore that migration is often driven by a need for safety and social acceptance. These factors strengthen their desire to find a place where they can rebuild their lives securely, with better access to rights and economic opportunities, which can often only be ensured in a third country.

Although Morocco represents a space of relative stability for many migrants, it is often seen more as a transit point than a final destination. The desire to move elsewhere is prevalent, motivated by hopes for better living conditions, security, and stability. However, for many, financial, legal, and social barriers create a situation of stagnation. This blend of hope and frustration characterizes the migration experience of those, like Pamela and Lucie, who continue to await an opportunity to fulfill their aspirations in an often-uncertain environment.

4.6. Trajectories: Migrant Experiences and Decision-Making in Morocco

The trajectories of migrants in Morocco are as diverse as their journeys and aspirations. Each migrant's path reflects a blend of agency, resilience, and response to the challenges they face, from leaving their home country to navigating life in Morocco and contemplating their future. These narratives offer insight into how migrants perceive their movement, integration, and potential return, shaped by their unique circumstances and degrees of control over their decisions.

The Optimistic Integrator

For some migrants, Morocco has become more than just a transit point—it is a place to rebuild their lives. These individuals arrived seeking safety or stability and have worked hard to

integrate into Moroccan society. Benefiting from programs like the SNIA and support from organizations such as the Orient-Occident Foundation, they have found opportunities in education, vocational training, or small-scale entrepreneurship. They describe Morocco as a relatively welcoming environment where they feel they can build a future. Return is not an option for them, as their home countries remain plagued by insecurity or lack of opportunities.

Example: “I will stay wherever I find a job, not necessarily in Europe ”Stephane, RDC, Community activist , President of the Congolese diaspora association in Morocco) and employee of the FOO

The Hopeful Transit Seeker

Others view Morocco as a stepping stone—a temporary stop on the way to Europe. These migrants left their home countries with the clear intention of reaching Europe, driven by dreams of better economic prospects. However, they have encountered significant barriers, including financial constraints and the tightening of border controls. They live in precarious conditions, often in informal housing or irregular jobs, while saving money and waiting for the opportunity to cross. Integration is not their priority; instead, they focus on achieving their original goal.

Example: “My dream is to go to Canada” Pamela, 22 years,

The Stagnated Survivor

For some, Morocco represents a limbo where they feel trapped. These migrants often fled their home countries out of desperation, such as escaping war or persecution, without a clear plan for the future. In Morocco, they struggle to meet basic needs, relying heavily on humanitarian aid or the support of friends. Without legal documentation or stable employment, they feel isolated and stuck. Return is unthinkable due to the dangers awaiting them in their home countries, but further movement also seems out of reach.

Example: “I won’t stay in Morocco, nor return to my country of origin. I hope to migrate to another country if the opportunity arises for a better future. I’m waiting to be placed internationally by the UNHCR.” Vanessa who fled persecution and gender-based violence against transgender.

“I can’t go back, and I don’t see a way forward,” one migrant explained. “I just try to survive here.”

The Risk-Taker

Among the most determined are those who take significant risks to continue their journey. These migrants are willing to endure dangerous and exploitative conditions to achieve their ultimate goal of reaching Europe. They often rely on smugglers and navigate perilous routes, such as crossing the Sahara or the Mediterranean, with little regard for personal safety. Despite multiple setbacks, including arrests or injuries, they remain resolute in their determination to move forward. For them, returning home is synonymous with failure.

Example: Tamutunga, RDC: Tamutunga crossed the Niger desert on foot and had to deal with traffickers and smugglers who took a lot of money from him to cross from Niger into Algeria. He witnessed people dying in the Mediterranean during his attempts to cross. “I lost 4 friends

at sea, including a woman,” he recounted. Despite all these hardships, Tamutunga continues to hope that one day he will join his brothers in England.

The Voluntary Return Planner

Not all migrants view return as failure. For some, particularly those who left due to economic hardship rather than conflict, the idea of voluntary return becomes a viable option when paired with reintegration support. These migrants are open to returning to their home countries if they can access resources to rebuild their lives, such as financial assistance to start a small business or reintegration programs to support their transition. They see return as a chance to start anew rather than as an endpoint to their aspirations.

Example: “Opening a carpentry shop in Senegal, I would be better off at home”. Babakar, 41 years old man, Senegal.

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The findings from the field work in Morocco reveal a complex and multifaceted migration experience. While some migrants express satisfaction with their presence in Morocco, others face significant challenges related to precarious conditions, legal uncertainty, and economic integration difficulties. For many, Morocco represents a transit point toward destinations offering better opportunities.

The recommendations below are directly informed by the narratives and challenges identified in both the field interviews and the country dossier, aiming to provide concrete policy solutions to improve their situation.

- **Facilitating Regularization and Expediting Residency Permits**

Many migrants reported challenges in renewing or obtaining residency permits. The field investigation highlights the restrictive and ambiguous nature of Morocco's residency permit renewal process, which requires work contracts, housing agreements and social insurance documentation, barriers that many migrants cannot meet. A more accessible and less complex regularization process for irregular migrants, along with administrative and legal support, would enable these individuals to integrate better and contribute positively to the local economy. Solutions to accelerate residency permit renewal, especially for those with employment contracts, would also help reduce their sense of insecurity.

- **Improving Access to Employment Opportunities and Strengthening Social Protection**

Economic hardship is a dominant theme in migrant experiences. As mentioned above, a quarter of migrants in Morocco are unemployed, with many engaged in informal sector without contracts or social protections. The country, Promoting targeted economic integration policies, including vocational training and employment support for migrants, is essential. Regulating work conditions in the informal sector and extending social protection, particularly through CNSS coverage for migrants, are also recommended.

- **Strengthening Partnerships with International Organizations and NGOs**

The country dossier highlights the role of international organizations such as IOM and UNHCR in providing essential services to migrants, including healthcare and legal assistance. Enhanced collaboration between the Moroccan governments, international organizations would improve migrant access to healthcare, education, and social services. These partnerships could also assist migrants seeking voluntary return through reintegration programs.

- **Raising Awareness and Providing Accurate Migration Information**

The interviewed revealed that many migrant rely on word of mouth information, which often leads to unrealistic expectations and increased vulnerability. Misinformation about migration routes contributes to dangerous journeys and exploitation. To counter misinformation it is essential to bolster awareness campaigns on the realities of migration, partnering with diaspora representatives and community leaders. Given that migrant community networks are

well-developed and actively collaborate with Moroccan civil society¹, these community agents who often assist the most vulnerable could serve as an effective channel to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration.

- **Enhancing Security and Reducing Arbitrary Deportations of Migrants**

The country dossier details the frequent forced relocations of migrants. Measures should be implemented to mitigate the risks of harassment and arbitrary detention of irregular migrants. Morocco could consider establishing clear guidelines for law enforcement to ensure the rights of migrants are respected and to limit deportations that disrupt their lives and plans.

- **Improving Information and Support in the AVRR Program**

The dossier highlights gaps in the AVRR program, particularly the lack of comprehensive information provided to migrants. To improve the AVRR, it is recommended to replace the single-page handout currently given to migrants with a comprehensive information kit and personalized follow-up. This kit would include:

1. Detailed documentation explaining each step of the return process, available resources in the home country, and local support options, including contact information for local partners, NGOs, and government institutions offering reintegration assistance;
2. A personalized reintegration plan, developed in consultation with the migrant, to identify specific needs and objectives, anticipating potential challenges and offering tailored solutions in employment, vocational training, and psychological support. Structured support for reintegration into the labor market or entrepreneurship would contribute to successful reintegration.

- **Strengthening Vocational Training and Entrepreneurial Support for Returnees**

Many migrants, such as those interviewed in the dossier, expressed a willingness to return home if they had the means to support themselves. The country dossier notes that financial aid alone is insufficient, as many returnees lack the skills to achieve long-term economic reintegration.

For migrants wishing to return, it is crucial to go beyond financial aid provided by programs like IOM's AVRR. In addition to financial support, certified vocational training could equip migrants with valuable skills for their home country. Collaboration with local institutions to facilitate certification recognition and promote entrepreneurship among returnees could enhance their long-term economic integration. This structured support would prevent financial aid from being used solely to attempt remigration and would promote their contribution to local development.

¹ <https://www.maroc.ma/fr/actualites/ouverture-rabat-de-la-3eme-edition-du-forum-annuel-de-limmigration>

- **Enhancing Psychological Support, Especially for Migrants in the Return Process**

The country dossier highlights the mental distress experienced by many migrants, particularly those facing return. Feelings of failure, social pressure, and anxiety over reintegration contribute to psychological challenges.

Mental distress associated with return often takes the form of depression, anxiety, and profound insecurity regarding reintegration. Many migrants report feeling devalued in the eyes of their families, which can further isolate returnees. This mental distress, combined with social pressure and the shame of not having succeeded, may also drive some to consider risky remigration attempts, often financed by their last resources or new debts.

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About the Authors

All authors (Bachir Hamdouch, Karima Belhaj, Mehdi Lahlou, and Mohamed Mghari) are researchers at Association Migration Internationale (AMI), Morocco.

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6. Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul (Sweden/Turkey)
7. Hashemite University (Jordan)
8. Ethniko Kentro Koinonikon Erevnon (Greece)
9. Association Migration Internationale (Morocco)
10. Toronto Metropolitan University (Canada)
11. University of Nigeria (Nigeria)
12. Bilim Organization for Research and Social Studies (Afghanistan)
13. Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)
14. Migration Matters EV (Germany)
15. University of Sousse (Tunisia)
16. SPIA UG (Germany)
17. University of Glasgow (UK, Associated Partner)