

Final Report

on

Final Evaluation of Norad and GFEMS funded project

“Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers”

Submitted to:

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)

Email: submissions@cafod.org.uk

Submitted by:

SAFE Development Group, a Development Consulting Firm

House # 231/A (2nd Floor), West Dhanmondi

Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh

Mobile No-01720553263, 01521101069

E-mail: sdg.bdesh@gmail.com

nazlyq05@yahoo.com

Dhaka

Date: 5 October 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Support from all corners made it possible to accomplish the Final Evaluation of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) funded project “Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers” in a timely manner. The consultant team sincerely expresses their thanks to all the project staff members of Caritas Bangladesh (CB) and Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) for providing assistance to conduct the study with the target beneficiaries at various locations of eight districts of the study area. The team appreciates the cooperation of the concerned local, district and national level government officials, in providing their valuable time and information relevant to this evaluation. The Consultant team also acknowledges the cordial cooperation from CAFOD, GFEMS, CB and OKUP, and their suggestions and insights in the entire process of the evaluation.

The Consultant team is thankful for the cooperation rendered by the project beneficiaries during the fieldwork who gave their time and valuable information required for the study. The support of the Research Assistants, Data Entry Operator and the Data Analyst deserve special appreciation for their cooperation in timely data collection and data processing for preparing the report on time. Appreciation is due to the Field Officers and Field Organizers of Caritas Bangladesh and OKUP who supported the Consultant team during the course of the study period.

Consultant Team

Aminul Hoque Tushar, Evaluation Team Member

Gopal Chowhan, Evaluation Team Member

Lucille Sircar, Evaluation Team Member

Qumrunnessa Nazly, Team Leader

SAFE Development Group

(A Development Consulting firm)

Disclaimer: The information and views shared in this evaluation report is based on findings and observation from the field visits and consultation with community people and does not necessarily reflect the views of Norad or GFEMS or the SAFE Development group

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BDT	Bangladesh Taka (Currency)
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CB	Caritas Bangladesh (a humanitarian development organization)
CFM	Community Feedback Mechanism
CMSME	Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
CTC	Counter Trafficking Committee (at Union Parishad level)
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPAR	Feminist Participatory Action Research Approach
FYP	Five Year Plan
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFEMS	Global Fund to End Modern Slavery
HH	Household
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
MAWTS	Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School (MAWTS)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework
NTCC	National Trauma Counseling Center
OCC	One Stop Crisis Center
OKUP	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program
PKB	Prabashi Kallyan Bank (Migrant Welfare Bank)
PKSF	Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation
RBM	Result Based Monitoring
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
TTC	Technical Training Centre
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Program
UDC	Union Digital Centre
UP	Union Parishad (the bottom tier of local administration)
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding

Executive Summary

International labor migration is one of the major driving factors for the economic growth and development of Bangladesh. According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) sources, from 1976 to July 2022, a total of 14,325,178 Bangladeshis migrated overseas for employment. Bangladesh started sending women as migrant workers in 1991 and between then and 2021 the number of women migrant workers reached 1,000,456, of whom 40.67% went to Saudi Arabia, 17.58% to Jordan, 13.23% to the United Arab Emirates, and 10.73% to Lebanon. They are mostly concentrated in particular occupations like housekeeping, cleaning, and ready-made garment machine operator¹. Considering that remittance is the country's second largest source of foreign currency earnings following readymade garments (RMG)², the Government of Bangladesh has taken different steps to develop legal and policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms to better regulate migration issues. However, issues of return and reintegration remain less focused in the migration governance system of Bangladesh, though return and reintegration are equally important steps in the migration cycle to ensure sustained and beneficial impact of overseas employment. The reintegration services in Bangladesh are fragmented, mostly focusing on economic reintegration, with limited coverage, especially on social reintegration. A composite package of reintegration services that target women and men returnee migrant workers is lacking.

In this context, the *Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers* project aimed at reducing the prevalence of forced labor in the Middle East, predominantly the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) corridor (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates), as well as Lebanon and Jordan. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), in a consortium with Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) and Caritas Bangladesh, has been implementing the project funded by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), focusing on the reintegration of vulnerable migrants and survivors of abuse and exploitation³. The project worked to support survivors of modern slavery and vulnerable migrants to recover, reintegrate and thrive in Bangladesh, through a holistic approach combining immediate and long-term support, and strengthening reintegration and recovery services in Bangladesh, through support from key government and migration actors.

An independent assessment of the project has been carried out to measure the progress made by Caritas Bangladesh, OKUP, and CAFOD towards achieving the intended impact, outcomes and outputs of the project.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation, participatory in nature, involved relevant stakeholders in the study design and implementation process. It applied both qualitative and quantitative tools, such as sample surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and case stories to collect primary information. The sample size for the survey was determined following beneficiary population density based location specific sampling method, and accordingly the survey was carried out with 148 respondents from the eight project districts. The total sample size was distributed proportionately to the density of the targeted returnee migrants, following representation of 75% women and 25% men respectively. The evaluation applied random sampling to select the beneficiaries for the survey, and the locations of data collection were decided in consultation with the implementing organizations. In addition to the sample survey, 11 FGDs with around 100 participants that included beneficiaries, community people, migrant forum members and project team members; and 22 KIIs were done with different stakeholders that include project personnel, relevant government officials, and non-government organizations, etc.

Evaluation findings

The evaluation was carried out from several aspects of the project, i.e., relevance; efficiency; effectiveness; sustainability; impact; partnership; cooperation and collaboration; replicability; and lessons learnt.

Relevance: The evaluation has tried to find out if the project was relevant, i.e. if the objectives and interventions were consistent with the needs of the target beneficiaries and the national policy priorities. The evaluation found that the project is relevant in the context of returnee migrant workers of Bangladesh as the intervention was well informed by the root causes of forced labor, and was designed appropriately to address the vulnerabilities of the returnee migrant workers. Almost all the respondents of the questionnaire-based survey acknowledged the support of the project in meeting their immediate and long-term needs. Participants in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews also recognized the need for the project components which provided a range of support, such as airport pick-up, shelter support, medical support, counseling, legal aid, skills training, seed money, and enterprise development support as needed by the returnee migrant workers.

¹ Pathways for Empowering Employment: Diversity and Challenges for Women Migrant Workers of Bangladesh, UN Women (2018)

² https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/quarterly/remittance_earnings/april_june_2020.pdf

³ Vulnerable Migrant Workers: Returnee migrant workers who go through unfair or corrupt recruitment practices, have faced violations of labour rights in the country of destination or who return home following labour rights violations or deceit.

Survivors of exploitation and abuse: Returnee migrants who return from an exploitative and/or abusive (including physical, mental, and sexual) situation including domestic servitude in the destination country.

The evaluation also noted the flexibilities in planning and setting targets to better respond to the changed needs; this allowed the revision in the log frame targets (increasing targets for number of airport pickups from 280 to 510, and decreasing the target for earning an income from 75% to 60%), better responding to the changed situation that best suits needs in a realistic manner. The project was designed in line with the national policy framework of Bangladesh on migration as well as the 8th Five Year Plan (FYP)⁴.

To ensure both periodic feedback as well as better needs-based support to the beneficiaries, the project used existing community feedback mechanisms, as well as multiple tools, such as a helpline, migrant forums, complaints boxes, feedback forms, one-to-one discussion sessions, sessions with spouse groups, and informal verbal feedback to engage community people in the project implementation. Some needs not adequately addressed were found around linking the beneficiaries with the local government for accessing social safety net services; strengthening psychosocial support through professional counselors; exploring local level (UP/Upazila and district level) referral services; linkage building with the private sectors; strengthening skills development opportunities matching with the individual inspiration and local market demand/employability, and institutional linkage with the government and non-government skills development system.

Efficiency: To assess efficiency, the evaluation focused on how economically the resources were used to achieve the expected results, and thus looked into the timeliness, cost effectiveness and quality of the activities as well as beneficiaries' experience about the adequacy of the support they received from the project. The evaluation results indicated that despite the challenges and delays associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the project accomplished the planned activities within the planned project tenure except for the advocacy initiatives with the government which were completed within the one-month project extension. According to GFEMS Project Monitoring Report (October 2021-March 2022), a total of 1,025 Returnee Migrant Workers received support from the project compared to the target of 1,020.

All the respondents of the survey were also found to be satisfied with the quality of services. Almost all the respondents (97.3%) of the questionnaire survey shared that the project activities supported them in their time of need and 90.5% of the respondents said that the project services were adequate to meet their needs. Contrarily, those who responded that the project services were not adequate referred to the psychosocial counseling and livelihood support. Both the project beneficiaries and the implementing partners viewed that psychosocial counseling especially would have benefitted from regular follow up, timely service delivery and provision on a wider scale, since almost all beneficiaries were in need of such services, which are scarce on a national level. However, the project has trained its staff and migrant forum members on basic psychosocial counseling and attempted to address the gaps in psychosocial counseling. On the other hand, the participants of FGDs and KIIs, including the implementing partners shared that seed money (BDT 25,000 per person) was too small and inadequate, indicating the inadequacy of the livelihood support. To address the gaps in livelihood support, the project took initiatives to link the beneficiaries with the relevant government and non-government services. The evaluation found that an adaptive management approach and regular review and sharing, especially through monthly steering committee meetings, enabled the project to adapt to the changed situation to keep on track to achieving the planned outputs and outcomes. Both the implementing partners and the donor partners appreciated the approach in ensuring efficient implementation.

Effectiveness: In evaluating the project's effectiveness, the successes of the project in benefitting both the direct and indirect beneficiaries, as well as the contributing factors to and limitations of successes were explored. The main successes identified are its holistic short-term and long-term support that includes safe shelter, medical support, counseling and legal support, as well as entrepreneurship development training, vocational training and capital support contributing to social and economic reintegration of the returnee migrant workers. From the beginning till March 2022, OKUP provided need-based support around safe shelter, counseling, legal support to 298 survivors/ returnee migrant workers (83 men and 215 women), and Caritas Bangladesh provided entrepreneurship training and seed money to 900 returnee migrant workers (225 men and 675 women).

Among the quantitative survey respondents, 68% of the respondents shared that they benefitted from the project support to recover from trauma, 66.2% said that they benefitted from the support by way of restoration of livelihoods, and 57% benefitted as a result of accessing resources, where 35.1% of the respondents benefitted as a result of reintegration in the family and society.

All the respondents (100%) shared that the project benefitted the wider community as well due to increased awareness about safe migration issues. Life skills training for the participants also contributed greatly to regaining their confidence, managing stress, and physical and mental health as revealed during the FGDs with the beneficiaries and evidenced by their verbal reports.

⁴ http://plancomm.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/68e32f08_13b8_4192_ab9b_abd5a0a62a33/2021-02-03-17-04-ec95e78e452a813808a483b3b22e14a1.pdf

Impact: This subsection highlights the effects on the lives of the beneficiaries, institutional changes as well as changes in the community attitudes as consequences of the project interventions and the limiting factors. Though long-term impact is unusual from a 29-month project, the project contributed largely to bringing about positive changes in the lives of the beneficiaries in the process of reintegration in their family and society. The project's monitoring report⁵ indicated that out of the total 663 people targeted, 458 (69%) beneficiaries have successfully⁶ reintegrated socially and economically after 25 months. The final evaluation indicated that towards the end of the project, 95.9% of the sampled beneficiaries have seen an increase in their income, 97.3% being female and male being 91.9%, and average monthly income increased to BDT 7,583 for female and BDT 5,761 for male beneficiaries.

The other two significant achievements of the project are the development of the referral guideline for the government and influencing the government to consider a holistic approach in the draft policy on reintegration of returnee migrant workers, soon to be approved. Additionally, OKUP's Migrant Forums have an immense importance in reintegration and providing moral support to the survivors and vulnerable returnees.

The evaluation also found a positive change in a lower rate of remigration rate among the project participants. According to the project's regular reporting, the remigration rate of project participants is 9% which continues to be well below the 23% reported by OKUP monitoring from the working districts from previous projects. Similarly, the questionnaire survey also found very low interest for the remigration amongst the beneficiaries; only 2% of the respondents think that the livelihood support of the project does not ensure enough income/can't meet their family needs and said that they prefer to remigrate in such a situation.

With regard to the impact of the project in changing gender relations within the family, the sample survey findings indicated a positive change. To understand the perception of women beneficiaries about the changes in family decision making as a result of their participation in the project, the survey included a set of questions about their involvement in family decision making before and after participating in the project. The survey findings revealed that before participating in the project 55% women were involved in family decision making, and 45% women had no participation in family decision making, whereas 94.6% women said that after their participation in the project, they are now more involved in family decision making. However, the evaluation also found gender specific barriers that prevented women from participating in training organized by the project: During the field level data collection the evaluation team observed that husbands of the women beneficiaries are running the businesses in some cases, and some women were found to be solely dependent upon their husband or male guardian for economic activities. During a FGD with the male community members, community men expressed dissatisfaction over the priority that was given to women in the project. This reflects the existing biased gender relations and discriminatory norms; and lack of understanding of the vulnerability of women and their responsibility to support. This may be present in other areas and needs to be addressed through well designed community sensitization on gender equality and equity, with motivation towards inclusiveness and greater benefit of the family and the society.

Value for Money: The evaluation has observed good value for money for the project based on the widely used 3Es Framework, i.e. Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness. It has found that the total cost per beneficiary for this project (USD 1,472.04 for 29 months) is worth investing, since the services, like medical, airport pick up, psychosocial counseling, life skills training, and seed money they received from this project would otherwise be impossible to access by the beneficiaries mainly due to lack of availability, accessibility, and lack of information. The implementing partners already had experienced staff, training set up to some extent, shelter set up, existing linkages for advocacy with duty bearers and stakeholders, offices set up in the field, etc. Leveraging existing resources effectively has been a contribution to the project without which the project cost would have been much higher. Reaching more women (75% of the total beneficiaries) and targeting the remote areas [like *char* Bhadrason in Faridpur also represents good value for money for this project as those are hard-to-reach individuals even for the local government

Sustainability: This subsection presents the sustainability aspects of the project, when it comes to its potential to influence the beneficiaries, link them with consistent sources of information and resources, or leave an impact that they will maintain fully or partially with or without support of the project. The evaluation revealed that skills development, enhancing self-esteem, gaining greater acceptance to the family and community, and awareness about safe migration and the earning opportunities are the primary elements of the sustainability of the project interventions. Some major visible aspects in this regard are engaging the Migrant Forums [a community-based set up that will remain after the project exits] to reach the beneficiaries; beneficiaries being more aware (73.6%) of the government services they are entitled to as returnee migrant workers [the information they gained will remain with them after project exits]; and life skills training [which they can use and benefit from even after the project ends]. What will add more value to this are initiatives by OKUP and CAFOD to develop a longer-term strategy to continue this support;

⁵ Reporting work book, quarter 3 of year 2.

⁶ The assumptions in the logical framework state: Successful reintegration includes acceptance into their families, completed counseling (needs-based), and earning an income through a sustainable livelihood.

engaging a peer-to-peer counseling model; and building institutional linkages through using external referral mechanisms. To this end, once the referral guideline developed by the project (OKUP) is approved by the government, it will take off and should have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of returnee migrants each year in the future. Also, professional trauma Informed Counseling Training and Monthly Mentoring Meeting on Mental Health First Aid would be rewarding.

Partnership, coordination and collaboration: The project has brought together expert organizations in their respective fields—a primary strength of the project. They are OKUP, a community based migrant workers organization, and Caritas Bangladesh, who have specific expertise on livelihood interventions and cover 49 districts. The other two partners, CAFOD and GFEMS, have vast experience about the migration issue with explicit strategic funding priority around it. The adaptive management approach of GFEMS contributed to the project's effectiveness and impact, adapting new activities, and revising budgets as the context changed. Regular and systematic communication enabled project completion in spite of many challenges. However, the evaluation found coordination gaps felt by both the implementing partners in the functioning of internal referral services. The evaluation understands that more in-person engagement of CAFOD, and implementing some joint events around team building, cross visits, coordination, adaptive field management, etc. could help substantially in this regard to bring partners together and exercise openness during the coordination meetings. This was not possible until the end of the project due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Replicability and lessons learned: A unique strategy of the project was applying a holistic approach to reintegration; prioritizing Women Returnee Migrant Workers; developing peer support groups through Migrant Forums; Adaptive management; Providing life skills training; App based Results-Based Monitoring ((RBM): CommCare Apps, and use of Batteries tools⁷. These have made the project outstanding compared to existing government and non-government intervention around migrant workers focused intervention.

Some lessons that will help to improve future interventions are the importance of ensuring emphasis on both recovery and social and economic reintegration support equally for all the enlisted beneficiaries, the details are explained in chapter 5 on evaluation findings (5.8 on replicability and lessons learned); strengthening external referral with regular follow up; engaging survivors as change makers; ensuring adequate skilled field staff; scaling up psychosocial counseling services; exploring opportunities for diversified livelihood skills aligned with local market opportunities; and engaging with the private sector employers. The future interventions should also consider longer period for training with refresher courses, and providing market linkage support; equipping staff with updated knowledge and skills on different aspects of livelihoods, such as entrepreneurship development including value chain and market linkage support⁸, and about different government services available to returnee migrant workers; modifying the M&E system to better monitor the financial aspects, particularly on budget expenditure to avoid budget under spending; and widening the outreach campaign on safe migration and specific awareness on gender perspectives.

Challenges: Major challenges faced by the project shared by different stakeholders are restrictions on movement related to Covid-19; lack of adequate (number and competency of) psychosocial counselors in the project provision; lack of adequate numbers of project staff for both the partners; difficulty in adapting project design to ensure activities are appropriate for the low levels of education of most of the beneficiaries; two- days' awareness session and small entrepreneurship training were found inadequate; limited linkage with the available government services, that could benefit the participants more and project duration (too short). Three-months vocational/skills development training was also found challenging for the beneficiaries from different perspectives. For instance, some women faced restrictions from their families to attend long duration training at venues far away from home; and the absence of a stipend/subsistence allowance during the training demotivated both men and women to participate in such a long course as they had to give up daily income for the period.

The evaluation found that high staff turnover at crucial moments of the project and absence of dedicated project staff at the field for OKUP hampered the project implementation. On the other hand, inadequacy of staff both for OKUP and Caritas Bangladesh also impacted the efficiency of the implementation of the project. For example, provision of only one psychosocial counselor for OKUP was found challenging to provide the required services to all, and maintain the quality of care to the beneficiaries. Caritas Bangladesh also felt a shortage of staff compared to the number of expected beneficiaries, and the sporadic location of the beneficiaries to ensure adequate follow up with the beneficiaries.

⁷ The details of the App based RBM: CommCare Apps, and use of Batteries tool will be found in the chapter 5 on evaluation findings (5.8 on replicability and lessons learned).

⁸ 'Value chain' refers to reviewing and improving the business model to better understand the steps/activities involved to enhance business efficiency thereby widening the profit margin. 'Market linkage' refers to strategies that include both backward and forward linkages to connect the beneficiary entrepreneurs with the input suppliers (such as financial institutions, retail suppliers of raw materials, etc.) and to increase market accessibility by connecting them with the end buyers of their products.

Conclusion and recommendation

Despite different challenges and constraints including the COVID-19 pandemic, the “Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers” project during its 29 months period created a unique example of a holistic approach to reintegration programming. However, based on the evaluation findings and the proposed solutions to the gaps expressed by the different stakeholders consulted, a set of recommendations has been put forward below for consideration in designing and implementing any reintegration program/project in future:

- Extending community outreach campaigns for all working areas.
- Integrating gender equality perspectives in project design and implementation to identify and mitigate barriers to equal rights and opportunities.

Adopting a survivor-led approach in the total project cycle to strengthen sustainability, create a sense of ownership, and empower local migrant communities through a rights-based approach.

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- Strengthening livelihood support systematically through market analysis at each location as part of the planning for livelihood interventions to ensure the beneficiaries both meet market demand and financially gain, and including provision of individual need-based support, such as capital support, mentoring support, and market linkage support .
- Strengthening short term recovery support through continued advocacy to develop institutional referral systems, through MoUs with the different government and non-government organizations, such as, One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), Victim Support Centre, National Trauma Counselling Centre (NTCC), etc.
- Strengthening referrals by including clear guidelines for referral services for immediate recovery and long-term economic services within project and share with concerned stakeholders, as well as mental health and legal services, along with project location-specific mapping of available services.
- Taking leverage of OKUP’s reputation, carrying out continued advocacy to implement the reintegration policy and referral guidelines, once approved by the government; and exploring the scope for advocacy with actors in the destination countries to reduce vulnerabilities of the migrant workers.
- Strengthening provision of human resources with adequate numbers of staff to ensure efficient and effective implementation, monitoring and follow up of the project interventions, and strengthening staff capacity on thematic areas.
- Strengthening partnership and coordination through team building activities, joint events, cross learning events, for partners to minimize coordination gaps and work as one team.
- Disseminating project learning and good practices through producing evidence-based learning materials, replicable models, lessons identified, etc. and sharing the same with the different stakeholders including the government and development partners.

Chapter 1: Introduction

International labor migration is one of the major driving factors for economic growth and development of Bangladesh. Each year, more than 400,000 workers leave Bangladesh for overseas employment⁹. According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) sources, from 1976 to July 2022, a total of 14,325,178 Bangladeshis migrated overseas for employment. Currently, there are 12 million Bangladeshi migrant workers in 174 different countries of the world¹⁰. BMET's data shows that the majority of the Bangladeshi migrant workers go to the Gulf and other Arab states either as unskilled or semi-skilled temporary workers. Bangladesh started sending women as migrant workers in 1991 and between then and 2021 the number of women migrant workers reached 1,000,456, of whom 40.67% went to Saudi Arabia, 17.58% to Jordan, 13.23% to United Arab Emirates, and 10.73% to Lebanon. They are mostly concentrated in particular occupations like housekeeping, cleaning, and ready-made garment machine operating¹¹.

Remittance is the country's second largest source of foreign currency earnings following readymade garments (RMG)¹². According to BMET sources, total remittance in 2021 stood at 22,070.87 million USD. In fact, Bangladesh is one of the largest remittance recipient countries in the world. The World Bank report (Migration and Development Brief 32, World Bank, April 2020) ranked Bangladesh as the third highest remittance receiving country in the South Asian region. Overseas employment created 3.5 million jobs against the target of 2 million for the 7th Five Year Plan, thus covered 30% deficit of domestic employment creation¹³.

Recognizing the contribution of migration to the economy of the country, the Government of Bangladesh has taken different steps to develop legal and policy framework and institutional mechanisms to better regulate the migration issues. These include the 'Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013', Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, Labour Migration Management Rules 2017, Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act 2018, Policy Guidelines for Mandatory Insurance for Migrant Workers 2019. However, issues of return and reintegration remain less focused in the migration governance system of Bangladesh though return and reintegration is equally important step in the migration cycle to ensure sustained and beneficial impact of overseas employment.

There is no official database available on the returnee migrant workers. But, in reality each year a large number of migrants are compelled to return to the country in a vulnerable situation requiring special assistance in reintegrating into the home country. Many migrants are deported from the destination countries due to irregular status, and there are also victims of fraud, trafficking, abuse, and exploitation who return to the country before completing their migration period. From 2008 till 2019, about 585,000 migrant workers have been deported to Bangladesh after most of them became undocumented in the countries they were working¹⁴. Quoting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) reported that a total of 9,177 female migrants have been kept in shelter homes in Saudi Arabia from 2015 to 30 October 2019. Of them, 8,637 female migrants were sent back to the country¹⁵.

According to the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) report, between 2015 and the middle of 2018, nearly 5,000 female workers returned home because of horrifying experiences at the hands of Saudi Arabian employers¹⁶. Besides, COVID-19 was another issue that sent back many migrant workers home in different conditions. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, more than 400,000 Bangladeshi migrants were forced to return home in 2020, according to the International Organization of Migration (IOM)¹⁷. Quoting from a study titled 'Addressing Systemic Challenges of Wage Theft: Bangladesh COVID-19 Returnees from the Gulf States', the Financial Express, a news media outlet, reported that that despite having due visa and work-permits as many as 63 per cent were forced to return by the employers after their contracts were arbitrarily terminated, and their visas were cancelled¹⁸.

Returnee migrant workers face numerous obstacles to resettling at home with a decent life and livelihood. These include:

- obstacles to social integration and social acceptance by neighborhood and family
- financial loss from investing with improper arrangements

⁹ <https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁰ http://www.probashi.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/probashi.portal.gov.bd/annual_reports/bfdd0d10_0f02_444b_9d4f_2cfb7b238f8a/Annual%20Report%202020-2021-2-1_compressed.pdf

¹¹ Pathways for Empowering Employment: Diversity and Challenges for Women Migrant Workers of Bangladesh, UN Women (2018)

¹² https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/quarterly/remittance_earnings/april_june_2020.pdf

¹³

https://ictd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/ictd.portal.gov.bd/page/6c9773a2_7556_4395_bbec_f132b9d819f0/ICT%20Roadmap_two-pager_The%20Labour%20Migration%20and%20Remittance%20sector%20%281%29.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/12/24/effective-reintegration-program-for-returnee-migrants-essential>

¹⁵ LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES, RMMRU

¹⁶ <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/protecting-our-female-migrant-workforce-1793371>

¹⁷ <https://www.thedailystar.net/views/opinion/news/our-migrants-are-suffering-what-can-we-do-help-2984506>

¹⁸ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/bangladeshi-migrant-workers-in-gulf-states-victim-of-wage-theft-1628687607>

- risks of keeping the hard cash at hand
- exploitation by intermediaries with false business commitment
- social stigma
- psychological and health problems
- unemployment

Women returnees face additional challenges due to gender stereotyped beliefs and practices. The problems begin with social barriers of stigma, discrimination. Women are continually abused and mistreated throughout the process of migration and continue to struggle upon return due to various challenges to reintegration. However, reintegration services provided by both the state and NGOs are not adequate to meet the existing needs of the returnees. Moreover, the services are fragmented, and mostly focused on economic support with less emphasis on social aspects.

Conceptual understanding on reintegration: Though there is no universally agreed definition of the concept of reintegration, the definitions used by different international organizations on migration emphasizes on integrated approach to reintegration. An integrated approach to reintegration recognizes the need for holistic interventions at three levels – individual, community, and structural – to ensure sustainability, and across three dimensions: economic, social and psychosocial, and an effective reintegration means successful reintegration of returning workers into their families, communities, the economy, and society.

Chapter 2: The “Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers” project

The “Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers” project aimed at reduction in prevalence of forced labor in the Middle East, predominantly the Gulf Corridor Council (GCC) corridor. Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in consortium with Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (OKUP) and Caritas Bangladesh has been implementing the project funded by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

Started in April 2020, the *Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers* project focuses on providing a holistic package of reintegration support for returnee migrant workers which includes shelter, airport pickup, psychosocial counseling, medical support, legal, and economic/ livelihood support services.

The overall outcome of *Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers* Project is the reduced prevalence of forced labor in the Middle East, predominantly the GCC corridor (via survivors and vulnerable migrants in target locations remigrating and reentering the forced labor market).

To this end, the project works on the following two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Survivors of modern slavery and vulnerable migrants recover, reintegrate and thrive in Bangladesh through a holistic approach of immediate and long-term support.

Outcome 2: Reintegration and recovery services in Bangladesh are strengthened and supported by key government and migration actors

Project Target Group and Location: The project targeted a total of 1,020 vulnerable migrants and survivors (75% women, 25% men) across nine target districts: Dhaka, Munshiganj, Gazipur, Tangail, Faridpur, Cumilla, Narsingdi, Manikganj and Narayanganj.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the ‘Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers’ Project

The period of performance of the *Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers Project* is from 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2022. The overall objective of the evaluation was to have an independent assessment by third-party involvement on the project progress, and have recommendations for future program development.

The specific objectives of this final evaluation were to:

- Measure the progress made by Caritas Bangladesh, OKUP, and CAFOD towards achieving the intended impact, outcomes and outputs of the project;

- Identify the efficacy and effectiveness of the design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management of the project in achieving the project outcomes;
- Identify the efficacy and effectiveness of the fund management in ensuring quality implementation of the activities;
- Explore the effectiveness of the consortium and CAFOD's leadership in ensuring quality implementation of the project interventions in getting impact of the project; and
- Identify the contribution made by the project towards the overall objectives of Caritas Bangladesh and OKUP.

Chapter 4: Evaluation Methodology and Approach

The evaluation followed a participatory approach by involving relevant stakeholders in the study design and implementation process. It used both qualitative and quantitative tools, such as sample surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and case stories to collect primary information. Apart from the primary information, existing relevant project documents i.e., project proposal documents; baseline survey report, research/ study reports, monitoring data and other relevant documents were also reviewed. The beneficiary selection and proportion of men and women was done systematically in line with the beneficiary pattern of the Project. The community and government and nongovernment stakeholders were also consulted for evaluation as per the requirement, necessity and logic of the task.

4.1 Quantitative data collection

To enroll a representative number of respondents as stated in the terms of reference (ToR), the evaluation team applied beneficiary population density-based location specific sampling methods to justify the field representation for this final evaluation. Since the project beneficiaries were spread across eight target districts: Munshiganj, Gazipur, Tangail, Faridpur, Cumilla, Narsingdi, Manikganj and Narayanganj, locations for data collection have been selected from all the working districts ensuring that all components of the Project were covered.

The survey was carried out with 148 respondents. The total sample size was distributed proportionately on the density of the targeted returnee migrants following representation of 75% women and 25% men respectively. The evaluation applied random sampling to select the beneficiaries for the survey, and locations of data collection have been decided in consultation with the respective implementing organizations. **Please see Annex 1 for details about the methodology and sample size calculation.**

4.2 Qualitative method

To triangulate the findings of the sample survey and to strengthen the outcomes of the evaluation, the qualitative tools, FGD, KII and case story were used for this purpose. **A total of 11 FGDs** were conducted with about 100 participants that included beneficiaries, community people, migrant forum members, and project team members, **and 22 KIIs** were done with different stakeholders that included project personnel, and relevant government officials, non-government organizations etc.¹⁹. Additionally, five individual interviews were carried out with non-project participants (returnee migrant workers) who served as a 'comparison group', and nine re-migrated beneficiaries/family members.

4.3 Limitations

Some of the limitations that affected to some extent the evaluation work are mentioned below.

- Due to busy schedules and official engagements, government officials had to delay to give appointments, some were busy in online meetings and with staff members even when consultants visited them for KII. These hampered the quality of KII in getting adequate information from them.
- Some officials of the concerned government offices were transferred lately, who were knowledgeable and well aware of the issues and concerns of the project as well as the migration issue. Information from them would be helpful. Those newly appointed and in office could not share any information on the issue in KII. A gap of information or insight thus, prevails.
- Two sets of public holidays had put some limitations when it comes to planning the field work as well as availability of people at their offices. Rainy weather also put some extra concern on movement.
- The consultant has felt the scope of better coordination among the implementing partners in identifying and availing the beneficiary for interview and cases.

Nonetheless, cooperation and assistance were rendered according to the available capacity and situation as much as possible from the partners' side.

¹⁹ See Annex 1 Methodology for full details.

Chapter 5. Evaluation findings

5.1 Relevance

This subsection highlights the evaluation findings in relation to the relevance and appropriateness of the project interventions in meeting the needs of the returnee migrant workers, and reducing the prevalence of forced labor. In doing so, it highlights whether project objectives and interventions were consistent with the needs of the target beneficiaries and the national policy priorities. It also highlights the scope and opportunities of the project participants in providing input and feedback to have greater ownership of the project.

The evaluation found that the project is relevant in context of returnee migrant workers of Bangladesh, as the intervention was well informed by the root causes of forced labor, and were designed appropriately to address the vulnerabilities of the returnee migrant workers. The evaluation also noted the flexibilities in planning and setting targets to better respond to the changed needs that allowed the revision in the log frame targets²⁰, better responding to the changed situation that best suits the needs in a realistic manner, informed by the baseline survey.

The project was also designed in line with the national policy framework of Bangladesh on migration. Though there is no specific reintegration policy for returnee migrant workers, different legal and policy instruments on migration include guidance and commitments on reintegration of the returnee migrant workers. The ten-point agenda of the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP) includes specific policy guidance on reintegration of the returnee migrant workers including referral for medical, psychosocial support, skills development, economic rehabilitation and financial inclusion. This project also followed global standards and good practices that include the ICRMW, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as the standards developed by IOM and ILO²¹ on reintegration in designing a holistic approach embodying social, psychological and economic aspects to ensure sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

The respondents of the final evaluation informed that upon their return the beneficiaries faced different challenges, such as physical and mental sickness, unemployment, inadequate savings and social rejection, and required support in those areas. The sample survey findings disclosed that 57.4% respondents suffered physical illness, 86.5% suffered mental sickness, and 16.2% faced challenges in social acceptance. Besides, 70.3% of respondents mentioned employment and 43.2% mentioned inadequate savings as the problems they felt on their return.

As shown in the following **Table 1**, the challenges were more severe for women than men. The sample survey found that more women (64.9%) compared to men (35.1%) suffered physical illness, and similarly more women (87.4%) compared to men (83.8%) mentioned suffered mental sickness, and 19.8% women compared to 5.4% men experienced social rejection as the challenges on their return. Contrarily, more men (94.6%) than women (62.2%) shared about unemployment as the challenges which might have linkage with the fact that women migrant workers after returning get back to their primary roles of doing household work, and focus less on employment. This is to be mentioned that these findings are derived from the sample survey carried out for this final evaluation exercise where the respondents were sharing the challenges that they faced upon their return.

Table 1: Needs and challenges of the returnee migrant workers

Types of challenges	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical illness	13	35.1	72	64.9	85	57.4
Mental sickness	31	83.8	97	87.4	128	86.5
Unemployment	35	94.6	69	62.2	104	70.3
Inadequate savings	21	56.8	43	38.7	64	43.2
Social acceptance	2	5.4	22	19.8	24	16.2
Others	1	2.7	0	0.0	1	0.7
Total	37	278.4	111	273.0	148	274.3

²⁰ increasing targets for output indicator 1.1.5 the number of airport pickups from 280 to 510, and decreasing the target for 1.2.1 related to earning an income from sustainable livelihoods from 75% to 60%

²¹ Article 67 of ICRMW, Objective 21 of global compact The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/documents/atip_levant/iom-reintegrationhandbook-module_1-an-integrated-approach-to-reintegration.pdf; A Framework of Services for Reintegration and Remigration of International Labour Migrants from Bangladesh (ILO 2019); <https://www.dole.gov.ph/reintegration-services-for-overseas-philipino-workers/>;

In response to the questions about their economic conditions on return, the survey informed that total 27.7% of the respondents were in debt, where 48.6% was financially solvent, i.e. able to meet their daily needs and repay debts if any, and 79.7% of the respondents said that they had no cash in hand. The average debt amount of the respondents on return was 143,775 BDT. Almost all the respondents of the questionnaire-based survey acknowledged the support of the project in meeting their immediate and long term needs in different scales. The respondents recognized different types of support they received from the project (Table 2), such as medical treatment, psychosocial counseling, legal support and livelihood assistance. However, the majority of the respondents of the questionnaire survey (96.6%) shared about psychosocial counseling followed by livelihood assistance (75.7%) as the immediate support they received from the project.

Though 57.4% respondents suffered physical illness, only 22.3% of the respondents shared about the medical treatment received from the project. This might be linked to the limited target (provide medical services to 220 survivors) and the increased need for the medical support as well as the lack of accessibility of the services. Project Monitoring Report (October 2021-March 2022) disclosed that a total of 194 returnee migrants requested healthcare support, among them 123 (63%) returnee migrants received this support, and 71 (37%) returnee migrants did not receive the support because some were not interested to travel far away from home to receive such support. It is worth noting, there are no health service facilities to provide quality healthcare locally.

Table 2: Types of immediate support received by the beneficiaries from the project (multiple responses)

Type of support	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Medical treatment	7	18.9	26	23.4	33	22.3
Psychosocial counselling	36	97.3	107	96.4	143	96.6
Legal support	2	5.4	12	10.8	14	9.5
livelihood assistance	28	75.7	84	75.7	112	75.7
Others	0	0.0	3	2.7	3	2.0
Total	37					

With regard to the types of livelihood support received from the project, 87.8% of those respondents mentioned about skill development /vocational training, and 44.6% mentioned about entrepreneurship support, 70.9% about business capital / seed fund support and 4.7% access to loan support [from other sources as referral cases], and a small percentage (6.8%) of both women and men also mentioned support in network development and referral to specialist support they received from the project (Table 3) and, all the respondents of the sample survey opined the need for continuation of the project activities.

Table 3: Types of livelihood support received by the beneficiaries from the project (multiple responses)

Type of livelihood support	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Skill development /vocational training	33	89.2	97	87.4	130	87.8
Entrepreneurship support	23	62.2	43	38.7	66	44.6
Business capital / seed fund support	28	75.7	77	69.4	105	70.9
Access to loan support	1	2.7	6	5.4	7	4.7
Network Development	2	5.4	3	2.7	5	3.4
Referral to specialist support	3	8.1	13	11.7	16	10.8
Employment	2	5.4	8	7.2	10	6.8
Others	0	0.0	3	2.7	3	2.0
Total	37					

Likewise, the participants of FGDs and KIIs consistently recognized the need for the project interventions as they provided all kinds of support, such as airport pick-up, shelter home support, medical support, counseling, legal aid, skill training, seed money, and enterprise development support as needed by the distressed returnee migrant workers. The majority of participants in FGDs and KIIs stressed the importance of the support for women returnee migrant workers to address the barriers to social reintegration. All respondents of the questionnaire survey shared that they consider the project support useful for them and for their family members. They identified reasons such as getting immediate support, confidence building, life skills development, livelihood assistance, and small business support for the usefulness.

All five non-beneficiary returnee migrant workers (comparison group) interviewed showed an interest to participate in the project to initiate some ability to generate an income after receiving training, as well as getting psychosocial counseling support. This demonstrates the support from the project is an encouragement to initiate income generation activities. One woman in Munshiganj pleaded with the evaluation team thinking they have some influence to enroll her to the project. During conversation,

she disclosed her economic, social and mental vulnerabilities. The project's support seemed to be so crucial for her at that moment because she needed to get back an identity, social dignity and recognition, and a minimum income for a living²².

All respondents of the questionnaire survey said that they were consulted by the project in identifying their problems and needs, either through assessment session/baseline survey, household visit /beneficiary profile, or by way of community meeting.

The evaluation also tried to understand the relevance and use of the existing Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in ensuring wider participation of the beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of the project activities. The questionnaire survey revealed that 98% of the respondents are aware of the CFM, and in response to the questions about whether they used the mechanism, 49.3% responded yes, and of those who responded yes, 39.7% found the mechanism very useful and 56.2% found the mechanism useful, and 94.5% were found satisfied with the responses (**Table-4**).

Table 4: Usefulness of CFM

Scale of usefulness	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very useful	4	26.7	25	43.1	29	39.7
Useful	11	73.3	30	51.7	41	56.2
Not useful	0	0.0	3	5.2	3	4.1
Total	15	100.0	58	100.0	73	100.0

The review of quarterly narrative reports found that most of the communications using CFM was about clear understanding about the project activities and the accessibility to the project benefits. However, it also found some suggestions about greater involvement of the migrant forum members in the planning and implementation of the field activities, developing IEC materials for raising awareness with community members, arranging capacity building training for migrant forum leaders and organizing exchange visits between migrant forums, which have been responded well.

Though CFM is used as a strong accountability tool on safeguarding, the evaluation didn't find any specific reference on the issues and concerns on safeguarding, particularly against safeguarding against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, leading to two opposite assumptions: 1) there was no genuine concerns on SEAH; or 2) issues of SEAH has not been explicitly discussed with emphasis with the community stakeholders. Though the evaluation exercise didn't delve into this, the evaluation team thinks that even when there are no such safeguarding concerns that should also be noted.

The evaluation also found a decreasing trend in remigration of the project beneficiaries indicating the success of the project in reducing forced labor, and achieving targeted impact in the short term via survivors and vulnerable migrants in target locations remigrating and reentering the forced labor market. According to the project's regular reporting, the remigration rate of project participants is 9% which continues to be well below the 23% reported by OKUP monitoring from the working districts from previous projects. Similarly, the questionnaire survey also found very low interest for remigration amongst the beneficiaries; only 2% of the respondents think that the livelihood support of the project does not ensure enough income/can't meet up family needs and said that they prefer to remigrate in such a situation.

5.2 Efficiency

To evaluate the efficiency of the project, the evaluation focused on answering the questions on how economically the resources were used to achieve the expected results, and thus the evaluation focused on timeliness, cost effectiveness (in terms of strategies/choices of resource allocation in order to achieve the desired results in an economic way) and quality of the activities. However, it also tried to explore the views of the project beneficiaries about the adequacy of the support they received from the project.

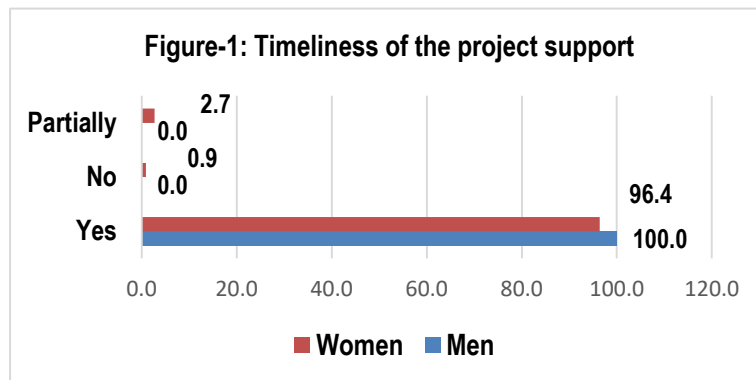
The project's regular reporting (GFEMS Project Monitoring Report for October 2021-March 2022) indicated that the project already excelled in reaching targeted beneficiaries. Total direct beneficiaries reached by the project are 1,025, against the target of 1,020²³. The project also reached 105,000 people indirectly through community awareness raising activities.

²² Though the woman was not offered any support from the project, was also not referred to other services, the project staff seemed sincere to connect her with relevant services whenever opportunities are found.

²³ Total Returnee Migrant Workers reached by the project: 1,025 (Male: 282 and Female: 743) and Vulnerable Migrant Workers: 625 & Survivor Migrant Workers: 400.

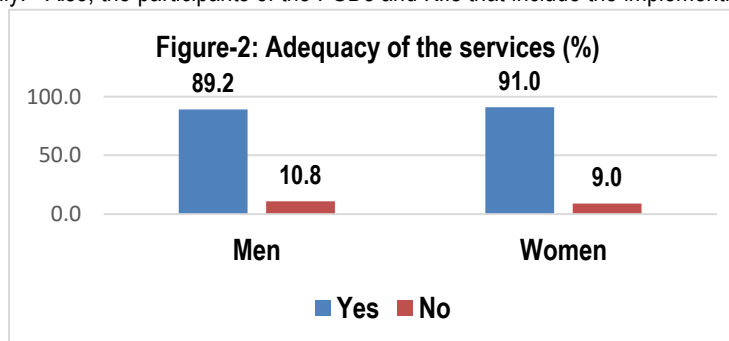
The evaluation indicated that despite the challenges associated with COVID-19, the project was successful in accomplishing all the planned activities on time except the advocacy initiatives with the government that could not be organized on time due to restrictions on public gatherings and the availability of the government officials.

The evaluation revealed that the project beneficiaries were satisfied with the timeliness of the support. Almost all the respondents (97.3%) of the questionnaire survey shared that the project activities supported them in time of their need (Figure-1). All the respondents of the survey were also found satisfied with the quality of services.



In response to the questions on adequacy of the project support, 90.5% of the respondents said that the project services were adequate to meet their needs (Figure-2). Of the respondents who replied affirmative on adequacy of the project services, 75.4% of them referred to psychosocial counseling, and 91.0% respondents referred to livelihood support as adequate, where 22.4% and 8.2% considered medical treatment support and legal aid support as adequate to meet their needs respectively.

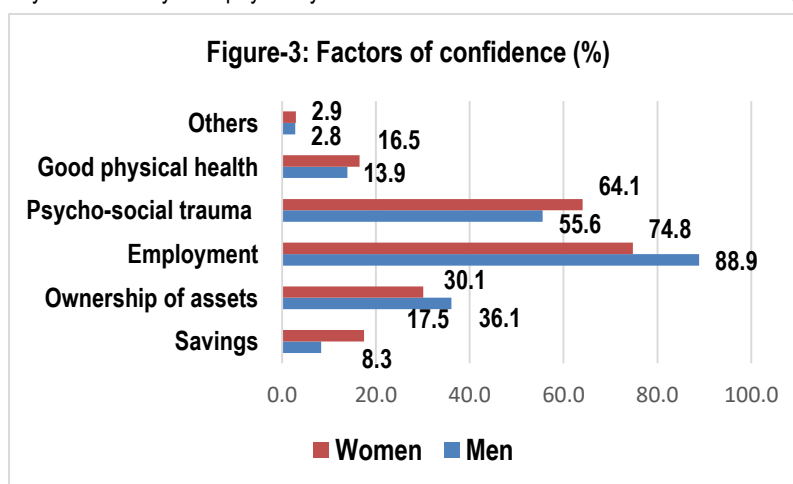
Again, interestingly those who responded that the project services were not adequate referred to the psychosocial counseling and livelihood support. The former requires regular follow up, timely service and a higher target as all beneficiaries more or less have that need and such service is scarce nationally. Also, the participants of the FGDs and KIs that include the implementing partners shared that seed money was too small and inadequate. Discussion with the implementing partners also highlighted the challenges of providing psychosocial counseling services with only one professional psychosocial counselor. According to the Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation, one psychologist for the whole project does not ensure quality counseling services. However, training the project staff and the migrants forum on trauma informed counseling approach and mental health first aid partially contributed to deliver psychosocial counseling services to the beneficiaries.



The observation of the evaluation team shared that the beneficiaries who were abroad for long time, and could accumulate some assets in the country before they returned were largely benefitted from the livelihood support, particularly from the seed money, as the seed money was an added value to their already available resources to invest in than the beneficiaries who were aboard for short time and returned distressed without any savings as it was hard for them to run something profitable only with the 25,000 taka of seed money.

With response to the question on whether they are mentally and physically confident to maintain their livelihood at this stage (Figure-3), 93.9% of the respondents replied yes, and they referred savings, ownership of assets, employment, overcoming psycho-social trauma / mental health first aid, and good physical health as the contributing factors of such confidence.

The evaluation recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the implementation of the project activities at the beginning. However, undertaking desk-based planning of activities, adopting alternative mode of implementation to implement activities remotely, and revising activities and



timeline demonstrates the efficient planning in continuing the project operation despite the ever-challenging situation due to COVID-19.

Factors that contributed to the cost effectiveness of the project were the strategy of utilizing the community members (migrant forum), engaging staff members of other projects of OKUP, recruiting experienced staff of CB for this project, using referral services, using already available infrastructure and office set up, and leveraging the expertise of respective consortium partners.

Adaptive management approach of the project and regular review and sharing, especially through monthly steering committee meetings enabled the project to adapt in the changed situation to keep on track to achieving the planned outputs and outcomes. Both the implementing partners and the donor partners appreciated the approach in ensuring efficient implementation.

While engaging community members and staff of other projects is a good strategy to ensure cost effectiveness, the evaluation found that absence of dedicated project staff at the field hampered the project implementation for OKUP. On the other hand, inadequate numbers of staff both for OKUP and Caritas Bangladesh also impacted efficiency of the implementation of the project. For example, provision of only one psychosocial counselor for OKUP was found challenging to provide the required services to all maintaining the quality of the care to the beneficiaries.

To keep abreast of project progress, regular monitoring, evaluation and learning were ensured in quarterly project reports, monthly Steering Committee Meetings between CAFOD, OKUP and CB; quarterly coordination meeting between CB and OKUP staff in Dhaka; community feedback meetings; meetings with MF and Spouse groups, and fortnightly meetings between CAFOD and GFEMS. Both CB and OKUP also continued to have internal meetings. However, the evaluation found inadequate supervision and monitoring at field level implementation, possibly due to the COVID-19 and inadequate human resources of both CB and OKUP, which they tried to address via online meetings, extra efforts, and telephonic communication. The project could have set up a locally managed system for more frequent monitoring followed by staff members' periodical cross-checking. Though CB has project staff, ratio to beneficiary or number of locations was found very low compared to the widespread locations of the beneficiaries. On the other hand, OKUP not having project staff at the project locations, and having a Dhaka-based small team hampered the field monitoring. Addressing this can ensure greater impact and achievement.

With regard to monitoring the project performance and progress toward results, the evaluation found that result-based monitoring using the Batteries tool and the CommCARE apps mentioned above as the most useful and systematic tool as it enabled the project management to see the changes in the lives of the beneficiaries in meeting basic needs, such as food, health, education, housing and the effect of different services of the project.

5.3 Effectiveness

This subsection attempted to describe the major successes of the project in benefitting both the direct and indirect beneficiaries, as well as the contributing factors for the successes. It also describes the barriers that the project encountered during the implementation of the project and the suggested follow up actions that the evaluation team considered necessary.

5.3.1 Successes and contributing factors

The main successes of the project interventions are the holistic short-term support and long-term livelihood support that includes safe shelter, medical support, counseling and legal support, as well as entrepreneurship development training, vocational training and capital support contributing to social and economic reintegration of the returnee migrant workers. From the beginning till March 2022, the implementing organizations provided need-based support around safe shelter, counseling, legal support to 298 (83 men and 215 women) survivors/ returnee migrant workers and provided entrepreneurship training and seed money to 900 (225 men and 675 women) returnee migrant workers.

The success factors in achieving the planned outputs and outcomes of the project are:

- Expertise, dedication and commitment of project staff;
- Wide acceptance of the implementing partners in the community and among stakeholders;
- Project's holistic approach and flexibility to adapt to changed needs and situation;
- Establishment of referral mechanism and community-based peer support group;
- Life skills training for the participants that contributed greatly to regain their confidence; and
- Addressing psychosocial needs, maintaining physical and mental health of beneficiaries

The following tables (5 & 6) presents comparative status of receiving short-term recovery support and long-term livelihood support services by the returnee migrant workers between the baseline status and the project target²⁴.

²⁴ Reporting workbook, quarter 4 of year 2.

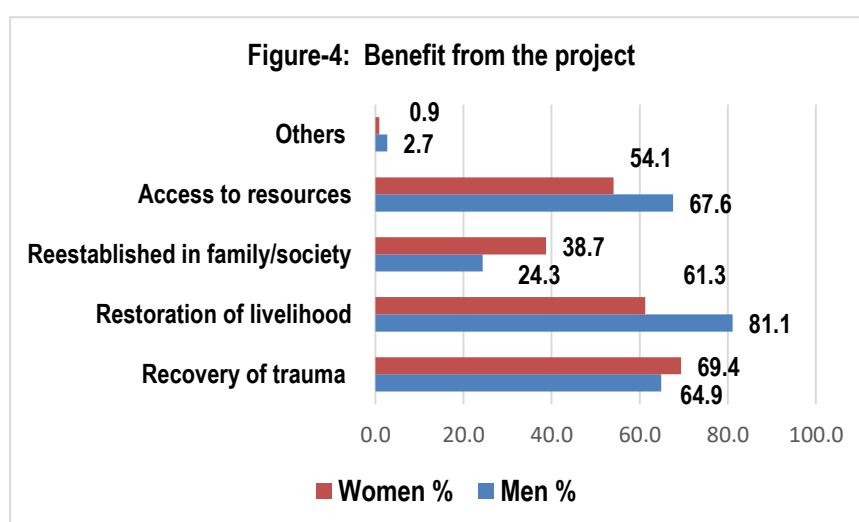
Table 5: Status of providing short-term medical, psychosocial, and legal aid support

SL	Name of services	Baseline status			End point Target			Achievement		
		Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
01	Trauma informed psycho-social care services	07	1	6	320	26	294	356	109	247
02	Safe shelter	2 out of 8 (all female) returnees who required shelter support were provided with safe shelter			320/270 (changed target)	26	294	178	49	129
03	Medical services	82	12	70	220	16	204	166	45	121
04	Legal services	7	1	6	80	0	80	16	0	16
05	Return to families				280	25	255	868		
No. of survivors receiving holistic short-term support (needs-based: safe shelter, counseling, legal support)		0: While some respondents received different types of support, they were disconnected initiatives and did not cover a holistic range of support services.			320	26	294	298	83	215

Table 6: Status of providing long term livelihood support

SL	Name of services	Baseline status			End point Target			Achievement		
		Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
01	# of survivors and vulnerable migrants trained through certified livelihood courses	0	-	-	900	225	675	900	231	669
02	# of survivors and vulnerable migrants provided with seed money to start a business	41	17	24	900	225	675	900	231	669
03	# of survivors and vulnerable migrants are employed through job placements/self-employment	99 survivors and vulnerable migrants are employed: 68 (34 male, 34 female) are self-employed, and 31 (8 male, 23 female) are in job placements.			675	169	506	746	196	550

The other successes of the project interventions include outreach campaigns carried out by OKUP in their working areas, and cluster meetings introduced at the latter part of the project implementation in Caritas Bangladesh working areas. The questionnaire-based survey respondents shared the multiple responses to describe the benefit of the project for them and their family members (Figure-4). The survey findings informed that 68% of the respondents shared that they benefitted from the project support to recover from trauma and 66.2% said that they benefitted from the support by way of restoration of livelihoods and 57.4% benefitted as result of accessing resources, where 35.1% of the respondents benefitted as a result of reintegration in the family and society.

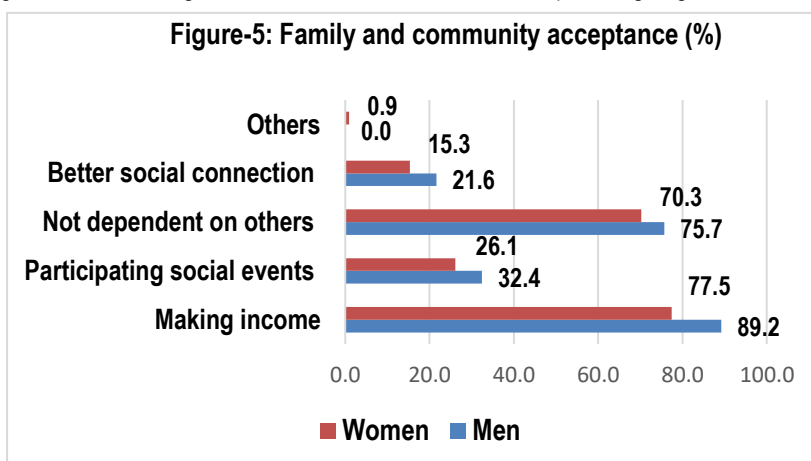


All the respondents shared that as a result of their participation in this project, their family and community now show greater acceptance to them (Figure-5). They identified that making income, not being dependent on others for a living and better social connections as the factors contributing to family and community acceptance. All the beneficiaries that participated in the sample

survey shared that the project was beneficial to the wider community as well due to increased awareness about the safe migration issues.

Considering that Counter Trafficking Committees (CTC) in District, Upazila and union level can play important role in raising awareness on safe migration and linking the returnee migrant workers with different service providing organizations, the evaluation found the engagement with the CTCs in OKUP working areas important, and considers that similar interventions in Caritas Bangladesh working areas would also raise community awareness and referral linkage building.

The evaluation found changes in the community about the attitude of the community members to accept the returnee migrant workers with care and respect. However, there still needs mass awareness on social stigma and its harmful effects on people's



lives and the community aiming to facilitate better acceptance of the returnee migrant workers by the community members. In addition, targeted awareness and sensitivity for spouses and other family members of returnee migrant workers are needed to ensure easy and smooth acceptance in the family and in the community. The evaluation also found further need to continue information dissemination about the key service providers, and the services they provide, such as WEWB, DEMO, TTC, PKB, and BMET, different Upazila / District level offices i.e. Department of Youth Development, Department of Social Services and Department of Women Affairs etc.

5.3.2 Barriers and suggested follow up actions

The evaluation found different barriers of the effective implementation of the project which included:

- Small amounts of seed money;
- Inadequacy of medical support allowance;
- Short duration of training;
- Lack of institutional referral;
- Lack of availability of the support services, particularly at the local level ;
- Lack of accessibility of the support services due to lack of information, cost, lack of agency to approach the service providers, and non-supportive attitude of the service providers;
- Lack of interest of the beneficiaries in training due to low literacy and cognitive ability; gender stereotyped norms, and traditional roles and responsibilities of women, need of stipend/allowance during the training period, distance of the venue, and lack of employment opportunities.

The project RBM report revealed mismatch between skills training and employment as it shows that only 7% of the respondents could be employed through job placement support following skill development training, and 3% of the respondents were employment in jobs without any connection with the skills training they received, and 1% run business without any connection with the skills training they received. However, the mismatch between skills training and employment might not necessarily be the only causal factor for lower rate of job placement, there may have other causal factors, such as fewer job placements being available in part due to COVID-19 and lack of interest of the beneficiaries to engage in job far away their own localities.

The other constraints for the project include lack of interest of the returnee migrant workers in accessing justice and lack of access to information about the returnee migrant workers, particularly for the immediate support services, and doing the need assessment at the airport. Given the constraints in accessing justice using formal mechanisms, the evaluation suggests exploring available alternative avenues of accessing justice, such as village courts, the quasi-judicial mechanism to settle small disputes at the Union Parishad level and community-based mediation engaging local community leaders, elected representatives, and local government officials. There are different good practices developed in Bangladesh by the NGOs to settle migration related disputes locally through forming community level Grievance Management Committees. It could also explore using the government legal aid fund and the district legal aid committees. The challenges on doing need assessment at the airport echoed the need to have access to the welfare desk at the airport through formal arrangements among WEWB, Airport Authority and OKUP that have been shared by the OKUP staff, and the evaluation recognizes the ongoing advocacy of OKUP on this particular issue.

Though the project has shown impartiality and equality in seed money distribution, providing the same amount for all was not found efficient, as not all the businesses require the same amount of investment, rather with a ceiling, amount of seed money should be determined on the basis of the respective business plans. There were concerns about the selection of the livelihoods, as there were beneficiaries not passionate about their endeavors. More thoughtful or feasible processes and techniques to identify the livelihood options need to be used. Also, instead of money, equipment and instruments, materials for business can be arranged that they will use for the business.

The evaluation team during FGDs observed over emphasis on sympathy and kindness of the community people as the grounds to accept the returnee migrant workers. In view of the evaluation team, such tendency undermines the notions of rights and entitlements of the individuals as the citizens of the country and acts as a constraint towards the empowerment of individuals, and thus demands close monitoring and follow up to ensure that rights-based messages shared during community awareness activities are rightly conceived by the target audiences.

The evaluation found that inability of women mainly due to their gendered roles and expectations/barriers, and for distance (remoteness) hindered women to participate in the trainings organized by the project, but no explicit and systematic strategy to address these gender specific challenges were found, neither did the risk register recorded this as potential risk.

Observations of the livelihoods of women beneficiaries found that they were involved with traditionally 'women-friendly' income [like poultry, cattle raising, tailoring]. However, to bring about substantive equality, the project can go beyond the traditional and protective approach of gender equality, and explore the scopes and opportunities to engage women in diverse and non-traditional livelihood opportunities that can offer women better platforms to best use their potential and accelerate their overall empowerment.

The other aspects that could potentially contribute towards the long term benefits from the livelihood support are exploring diversified livelihood opportunities for the beneficiaries along with local market assessment, and backward and forward linkage opportunities, more in-depth understanding on the interest of the beneficiaries, exploring and expanding the linkage building with other public and private banking and non-banking financial institutions, and NGOs to facilitate access to loan services for the beneficiaries given that capital support of the project is inadequate. The findings of OKUP led research into PKB loans are expected to guide the subsequent planning, particularly in advocacy to improve access to loans from PKB. The evaluation in this regard noted the commitment of the Secretary of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment made at the consultation on research findings sharing to continue steps to simplify the conditions of the loan disbursement for the migrant workers.²⁵

Ensuring expert support in livelihood interventions (enterprise development /livelihood expert) may be useful. There is also a need to undertake advocacy with the Bangladesh Bank and other specialized institutions, such as BSCIC, PKSF to ensure returnee migrant workers have easy access to the different Cottage, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (CMSME) loans, and/or initiate targeted loan or savings products for returnee migrant workers.

The evaluation also finds the need to strengthen the capacity building of the Migrant Forums, and to facilitate sustainable functioning of them as to promote a survivor centered approach. The Migrant Forum members during FGDs stressed on the strong organizational base of the forum, and urged support in building their capacities in different issues, such as organizational development, leadership development, basic counseling, communication and networking, case referral etc.

5.4 Impact of the project

This subsection highlighted the effects on the lives of the beneficiaries, institutional changes, as well as changes in the community attitudes as consequences of the project interventions. It also highlighted the challenges that hampered the project in achieving its intended impact.

The evaluation has found quite good evidence showing the impact of the 29 month-project in the participants' lives. Though long-term impact is unusual from a little more than two-year intervention, the project contributed largely to bring about positive changes in the lives of the beneficiaries in the process of reintegration in their family and society. The project's results-based monitoring (RBM) report as well as the field data collected for this final evaluation purpose revealed the impact of the project in the lives of the targeted beneficiaries.

5.4.1 Individual and community level changes

The project's report²⁶ provided that out of the total 663 people targeted, 458 beneficiaries have successfully reintegrated socially and economically after 25 months, which is 69% of the specific target for this indicator. The final evaluation indicated that towards the end of the project, 95.9% of the beneficiaries have seen an increase in their income, 97.3% being female and male

²⁵ <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/metro-news/ease-conditions-of-reintegration-loan-for-returnee-migrants-experts-1659198159>

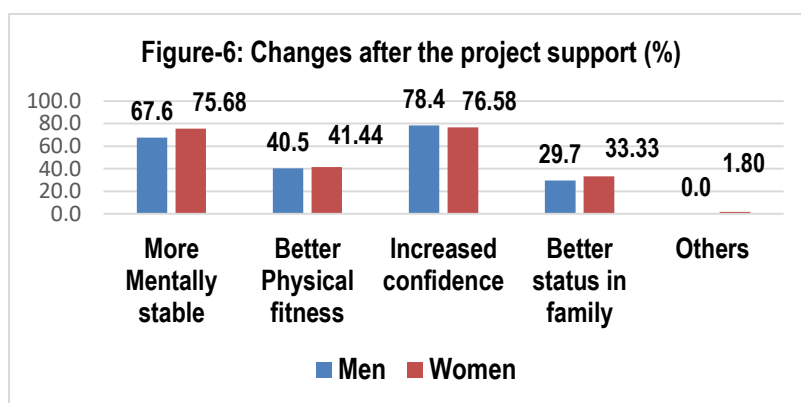
²⁶ Reporting work book, quarter 3 of year 2.

being 91.9%. The following table-7 shows a comparison of income between the project baseline and the final evaluation period. The data shows a substantial increase in monthly income, expenditure and savings.

Table 7: Income, Expenditure and Savings of the Returnee Migrant Workers

Income of and expenditure of the respondents	Baseline		Final Evaluation	
	Men (BDT)	Women (BDT)	Men (BDT)	Women (BDT)
Average Monthly Income	11,374	8,958	17,135	16,541
Average Monthly Expenditure	11,919	8,377	14,743	11,416
Expenditure as a percentage of income	104.8%	93.5%	86.04%	69.02%

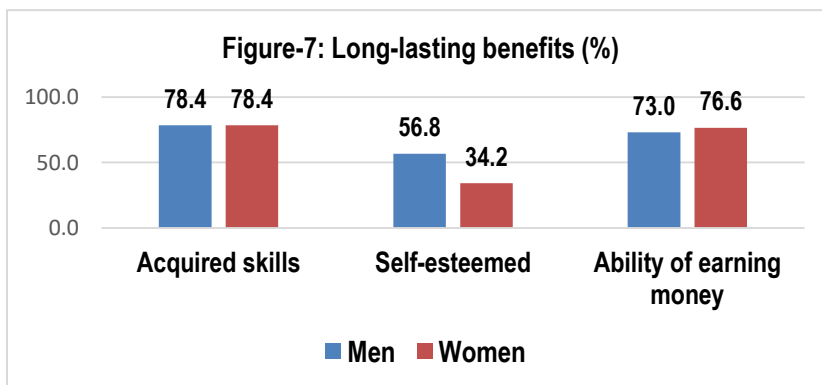
However, as revealed during FGDs with the beneficiaries, they started IGAs; however, earnings from those IGAs are low. There was also a lack of adequate linkages with the financial institutions. Disbursement of seed money to start own business or IGA encouraged the majority beneficiaries to get involved in economic activities, however, further follow-up, monitoring and business mentoring with adequate market linkage building support would benefit the beneficiaries to ensure adequate earning in a sustained manner.



As an indication about the changes taking place in the lives of the project beneficiaries, the respondents of the sample survey shared that they are mentally and physically more stable than before, having higher confidence level, and are enjoying better status in the family.

The chart above showed (Figure-6), that 73.6% of the respondents are now mentally more stable, and 41.2% of the respondents have better physical fitness, whereas 77.0% of the respondents shared that as a result of their participation in the project, they have gained more confidence, and 32.4% of the respondents said that they have better status in the family now. No significant difference was noticed between women and men.

According to the views of the respondents, acquired skills, self-esteem and the ability of earning money are the main long-lasting benefits of the project to the beneficiaries. As highlighted in the chart (Figure-7), 78.4% of the respondents shared that they acquired skills; 75.7% of the respondents said they have gained ability to earn money, and 39.9% of the respondents mentioned self-esteem as long-lasting benefits of the project. Data shows almost similar perceptions by both men and women respondents except on self-esteem, only 34% women (against 57% men) perceived self-esteem as a long lasting benefit of the project indicating the need for continuous and focused support for women in enhancing their self-esteem.



GFEMS project has changed Rakhi's life (Pseudonyms are used for all cases.)

Rakhi, a 36 year old returnee migrant worker, lives in Madhupur Upazila of Tangail district. Born in a poor family, she only studied up to class six. Rakhi and her husband Narayana, have three daughters. As they were facing a financial crisis, Rakhi decided to work abroad. Following this decision, she reached out to a broker and, with his help, she went to Saudi Arabia in 2018. Her husband was a day laborer in a grocery shop, and so they had to borrow 60,000 takas to bear the migration cost.

In Saudi Arabia she faced exploitation and abuse. As Rakhi shared, "I had to work day and night and did not have time to take rest; moreover I did not get enough food and was too weak to work. My health broke and I got skin disease. My house owner

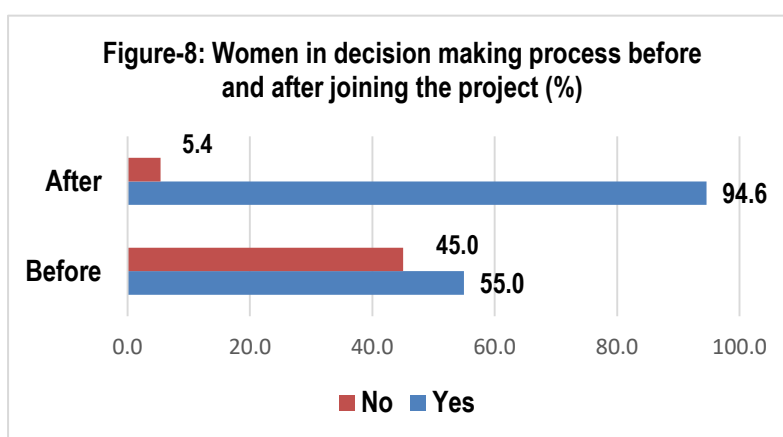
started to torture me in different ways. Finally, I had to return back to my country in October 2020.”

Rakhi was enlisted as a beneficiary of the project in March 2021. After joining the project, she participated in various activities, received training on entrepreneurship development, got life skills training, and started to see the opportunities to become happy and self-supported through the project’s help.

She wanted to begin a business and shared her plan with the project to run a small snack business selling locally popular deep-fried items like *puri*, *singara*, *shomucha*, *piyajua*, etc. From the GFEMS project, she got capital support of 25,000 taka and added her own contribution of 55,000 taka to start her small hotel business. Now she makes a profit of 700 to 800 takas each day and has become self-reliant. Her food is becoming popular! She dreams to expand her business, and with that vision she plans to sell her cattle to invest more in this business. Each day is a day of hope for Rakhi now.

The evaluation also attempted to see the project’s impact in changing the gender relations within the family, as it has prioritized women. With regard to participation of women in family decision making, the sample survey findings indicate a positive change, presented in the chart below.

As the survey showed (Figure-8), before participating in the project 55% women were involved in family decision making, and 45% women had no participation in family decision making, whereas 94.6% women said that they are now more involved in family decision making after participating in the project. All the respondents acknowledged the impact of the project towards participation in decision making in family affairs. They have shared that this has enhanced self-confidence, increased financial contribution, and changed the attitude of their male counterparts to treat them as equal partners and thus, has contributed towards increased participation in family decision making.



However, the evaluation found opposite notions as Caritas Bangladesh shared the gender specific barriers preventing women from participating in training organized by the project. The evaluation team also observed that in some cases the husbands of the women beneficiaries are running the businesses, and some women were found to be solely dependent upon their husband or male guardian for economic activities. This indicates the need for interventions targeting the community and spouses of the beneficiaries on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Other notable factors on gender-specific concerns as observed by the evaluation team include the dissatisfaction of the male community members because of the project’s prioritization of women, the possibility of family disputes due to women participating in training, and domestic violence driving the women’s migration/remigration. The project’s focus on women returnee migrants at 75% was expressed as dissatisfaction by men during FGDs with the men’s group. They argued that men should get more support as they spend more money to migrate and go through frustration more than women; they are involved with crime and addiction to overcome this. This reflects the existing biased gender relations and discriminatory norms; and lack of understanding of the vulnerability of women and their responsibility to support. This may be present in other areas and needs to be addressed through well designed community sensitization on gender equality and equity, with motivation towards inclusiveness and greater benefit of the family and the society.

As shared by both the project staff members and other respondents, family pressure, particularly from the husband, and domestic violence is one major driving factor for women to migrate or remigrate. In Munshiganj, the evaluation team came across such a case, where despite undergoing violence and exploitation in the destination country in the recent past, she remigrated. Her mother and cousin sister willingly shared with the evaluation team that she did so to escape from the domestic violence. This indicates the need for addressing the issues of domestic violence to prevent forced migration of women.

The evaluation also found changes in attitudes and behaviors related to the reintegration of returnees. Though achieving such change is a long process, FGDs with the beneficiaries and the community people revealed that there is increased awareness and sensitivity about the reintegration issues among the project participants and the community people. The local government and community stakeholders are more aware of the issues, challenges, limitations and needs of successful reintegration. Their attitude towards returnee migrant workers has also changed. Some beneficiaries have also shown the ability to become change agents for others. Regular communication and monitoring with all stakeholders have contributed towards the positive impact.

5.4.2 Institutional Change

The major significant achievement of the project, as apparent and acknowledged by concerned stakeholders, is the contribution to the drafting of the national reintegration policy of the government bringing systemic change in addressing the issues of returnee migrant workers. The project, along with other stakeholders has been successful in influencing the government in embodying a holistic approach of reintegration in the draft reintegration policy that addresses social, economic and physical and mental wellbeing of the returnee migrant workers and their family members. The draft policy also integrates gender equality elements into all reintegration services.

Another significant achievement of the project is the referral guideline for the government, soon to be approved. It is a contribution of the project, by OKUP in particular, towards a longer-term impact on strengthening reintegration services by the government and non-government actors. The representative of the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), an important government stakeholder in providing reintegration services to the returnee migrant workers, recognized this during a key informant interview for this evaluation. He mentioned that this is a contribution in assisting migrant workers, particularly in providing different services to the returnee migrant workers. It will provide comprehensive guidance to address returnee migrants' needs in a holistic manner. OKUP, with its extensive advocacy efforts have also strengthened the project's contribution in the policy discussion on reintegration services, a new discourse, for the returnee migrant workers.

Frustration dominates Sakhina of Narayangonj (*Pseudonyms are used for all cases.*)

Sakhina, beneficiary of OKUP, had gone to Saudi Arabia to work as a housekeeper in 2017. She did not know anything about jobs outside of Bangladesh but had an idea that she would work in someone's house as a housekeeper and get money at the end of each month. After going to Saudi Arabia, Sakhina worked in a house where her employer did not treat her well.

Her employer used to lock her in a small and dark room, and gave little food, just to keep her alive. The employer used to beat Sakhina when she asked for her wages. Sakhina still has a mark of torture on her forehead. In the three years working there, she received her wages only once, with two years' and two months' money still due.

With such a terrible experience, when Sakhina returned to Bangladesh empty-handed she became sick because of the torture she had experienced .

When Sakhina reached home, everyone was shocked to see her sick and weak with the torture mark on her forehead . Although her mother and neighbors showed her sympathy, some people said bad things behind her back which she eventually came to hear. Her auntie guided her to meet a staff member from OKUP. After receiving counseling she started to release her pain. Sakhina also got training and some money to buy a cow. She hopes to make some income in time, but the hard-earned wages she lost in Saudi Arabia still haunts her. She doubts if she can forget the pain.

The evaluation found the government officials, particularly migration specific officials aware of OKUP/CB and the project activities. Interviews with the DEMO officials stressed the need for better coordination amongst different government service providing agencies, as well as the coordination between NGOs and the government agencies. They emphasized on the GO-NGO partnership to strengthen reintegration services for the returnee migrant workers. However, there is a huge need to strengthen the capacity, build awareness and create sensitivity of the government officials of all relevant offices at Union and Upazila/ district levels to improve their understanding of the importance of the reintegration of returnee migrant workers to bring about institutional change. In addition to organizing specific capacity building activities targeting government officials, other methods that could be useful are inviting and engaging them in quarterly progress meetings, providing updates on the project activities through Upazila coordination meetings and day observation meetings, and inviting them to different courtyard sessions, meetings, training, seminars etc.

Migrant Forums have an immense importance in reintegration and providing moral support to the survivors from other returnee migrants. Given the role they are playing out of commitment and the effectiveness of their involvement, their capacity should be enhanced so that they can play a more effective role in future. This is to be mentioned that based on the findings of the lessons learned, the assessment and observations from the Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation, the project introduced basic psychosocial counseling training to Migrant Forum members to begin to build this capacity at the local level, which will have a sustainable effect to ensure needs-based counseling support locally. And, given the lack of trained psychosocial counselors in country, it is crucial to take more activities to train community stakeholders like migrant forum members, and other stakeholders.

However, the evaluation also considers it important to engage with the UDC (Union Digital Center) and build their capacity to extend their support services to submit online complaints to BMET/ DEMO through using government online complaint submission.

5.5 Value for Money

This subsection presents value for money aspects of the project following widely used 3Es Framework, i.e. Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness. It also considered cost effectiveness and equity aspects in reviewing value for money aspects of this project.

- The evaluation considered that the cost per beneficiary for this project is worth investing, since the services, like medical, airport pick up, psychosocial counselling, life skills training, and seed money they received from this project would otherwise be impossible to access by the respective beneficiaries. Considering the cost per beneficiary (the total budget (USD 1,508,841) divided by the total number of beneficiaries 1,025), it comes to USD 1472.04 for the 29 months in all its services. The cost of any individual to avail the services they have received and the benefits they have gained by themselves would definitely exceed this cost.
- Considering cost effectiveness, the project also represents good value for money. The implementing partners in general had staff with prior experience, training venue set up to some extent, shelter set up, existing linkages for advocacy with duty bearers and stakeholders, office set up in the field, etc. These altogether have been a contribution to the project that, otherwise would have cost the project much more if the budget had to cover these.
- The utility cost of the project services can be read between the comments of beneficiaries on different themes of the evaluation findings [both quantitative and qualitative] is an indicator of the project's good value for money. The output, the impact and sustainability aspects give more weight to this conclusion.
- In carrying out the project activities there hasn't been any environmental loss or degradation causing the cost of the project to increase. It has not created any financial loss from its activities or beneficiaries' progress. Therefore, the project's value for money is positive.
- Targeting more women (75% of the total beneficiaries) who are the worst sufferers of overseas migration as well as targeting the remote areas (for example, Char Bhadrason in Faridpur) also represents good value for money for this project.

5.6 Sustainability of the project interventions

This subsection presents the sustainability aspects of the project, when it comes to its potential to influence the beneficiaries, link them with consistent sources of information and resources, or leave an impact that they will maintain fully or partially with or without support of the project.

The evaluation revealed that skills development, enhancing self-esteem, gaining greater acceptance in the family and community, awareness about safe migration and earning opportunities are the primary elements of the sustainability of the project interventions. The evaluation recognized that learning from the project interventions will help the beneficiaries throughout their life in different ways, such as managing stress and taking decisions on migration/remigration, and accessing local opportunities such as government social safety services, special grants/loans offered by the government and NGOs.

It is true that the scale of practicing project learning after the project ends might vary, however, during the sample survey all the respondents said that they would like to continue project learning. Increased knowledge and skill, diversified earning options, increased income, and enhanced dignity were mostly mentioned motivating factors for continuing the project learning. These are certainly factors that the project intended in its planning to contribute to its sustainability.

Engaging Migrant Forum, the community-based forum of migrant workers is another sustainable component of the project. This also provides the opportunity of utilizing the experience and aspiration of the survivors in supporting both the aspirant migrant workers as well as the returnee migrant workers about safe migration and in availing of reintegration services from different government and non-government service providers. As shared during the close out workshop, migrant forum members are playing an important role in providing psychosocial support, healing mental trauma faced by the returnee migrant workers. As locally based, the forum has much potential to continue supporting safe migration and reintegration. However, the forum needs more capacity building support on organizational development, leadership, knowledge of available government services for returnee migrant workers, networking, and communication, and mentoring skills to ensure effective and quality services to the returnee migrant workers. OKUP and CAFOD plan to develop a longer-term strategy to continue this support, including the peer-to-peer counselling model.

The institutional linkage building through using external referral mechanisms would also have sustainable force, as the linkage building of the beneficiaries with the different government and non-government services enabled the women and men beneficiaries to get services from the respective service providers, the efforts also contributed to accessing information and gaining awareness about the relevant government services, and the rapport building which beneficiaries can use in getting continuing services as well as referring others to the respective service providers. To this end, once the referral guideline developed by the project (OKUP) is approved by the government, it will take off and could have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of returnee migrants each year in the future.

As a result of the Project intervention the beneficiaries are more aware of the government services they are entitled to as returnee migrant workers. When asked, they responded to be aware to different degrees as follows, some 73.6% respondents replied 'yes', and they mentioned about different services they received: cash grant (59.6%), agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer), 5.5%, vulnerable group development (VGD)/ vulnerable group feeding (VGF)/widow allowance (23.9%). However, the only service providers they could name were OKUP, CB and school, and family members demonstrating further scope to link them with other government, NGO and private actors. To mention a few, TTC (for technical/ stipend-based training and RPL), Department of Women Affairs, Department of Social Services, and Department of Youth Development for skills development training and business support, and Private Banks for savings and CMSME loans.

The sustainability of the project to a greater extent depends on the implementation of the large-scale programme addressing all the components of reintegration implemented by the government and institutionalization of the referral services. Successes in that regard are the contribution of the project in developing a referral guideline for the government and drafting reintegration policy. Stakeholders, particularly the representatives of WEWB, recognized this contribution.

Project support helps Bilash to regain hope (Pseudonyms are used for all cases.)

"Before planning overseas migration, each and every aspirant should know about the safe migration process," says Bilash, a returnee migrant worker from Saudi Arabia.

Bilash was a street vendor earning 400 taka (less than 0.5 US\$) each day. He heard of overseas labor migration from his neighbors. Dreaming of a better income and a better life, he asked his nephew, who was a broker, for more information. Eventually, Bilash's nephew arranged for him a visa for a driver's job. The process cost him 400,000 taka, but as Bilash was not physically fit to be a driver, with an extra amount of 25,000 taka, the broker produced a false driving certificate.

Upon reaching Saudi Arabia, Bilash failed to secure a job with the false driving certificate. He was jobless for three months and got a job as a salesman in a mobile phone shop. He worked there for nine months but was caught in a raid as an illegal migrant and was imprisoned. Finally, he was sent back to Bangladesh empty handed on 19 December 2021.

Upon arrival at Dhaka Airport, Bilash was totally helpless and could not communicate with his family. One OKUP staff member helped him with food, shelter, and healthcare. OKUP also arranged his return to home. Gradually, with counseling, skills training, and seed money to start a small business, Bilash began to see some hope. With the support of OKUP, he started his fruit business. He is now happy with his business and thanks OKUP for their support.

5.7 Partnership, coordination and collaboration

The evaluation tried to understand the quality of partnership between and among the implementing organizations and donors throughout the project cycle to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the project activities. The project has brought together expert organizations in the respective field—a primary strength of the project. OKUP, being a community based migrant workers organization has long experience on migration issues, particularly in providing recovery services to the returnee migrant workers and in policy advocacy; and Caritas Bangladesh has specific expertise on livelihood interventions and covers 49 districts. The other two partners, CAFOD and GFEMS have vast experience of migration programming with explicit relevant priority within their strategies.

The adaptive management approach of GFEMS contributed to the project's effectiveness and impact, to adapt new activities, and revising budgets. Respecting and trusting the partners is a strength and generosity of an organization in itself. Similarly, CAFOD reflected that same spirit towards its implementing partners in Bangladesh, i.e. CB and OKUP.

The evaluation found gaps felt by both the implementing partners in getting internal referral services, and shared concerns about the quality of the services provided. The evaluation finds that the activities by the respective organizations were largely implemented in an isolated manner with less opportunity of cross learning from each other. Caritas Bangladesh could benefit from OKUP about policy / advocacy and OKUP could benefit from Caritas Bangladesh about livelihood support. There is scope

to build a stronger bondage, otherwise, the application of holistic approach in an effective and efficient manner may fail. Team building activities may be strengthened to complement each other.

As two partners are different; their niche lies in two areas: migration for OKUP and livelihoods for Caritas Bangladesh. The aim of the project was to bring together the two types of expertise and work towards one goal. However, the beneficiaries' needs were not standalone. Every returnee has their own personal story and needs mental health support to some extent. Thus, whilst CB focused on livelihoods with its beneficiaries, it referred those with psychosocial needs to OKUP. This worked well where the two partners were in the same geographic location. However, OKUP was not present in all Caritas Bangladesh target areas and vice versa; this created a gap in addressing needs in an efficient and timely manner. Therefore, activity design and resource allocation should be reconsidered so that they meet beneficiaries' needs in a holistic manner in all working areas irrespective of the implementing organization.

The evaluation understands that more in-person engagement of CAFOD, and implementing some joint events around team building, coordination, adaptive field management, joint learning sharing event, cross visits, etc. could help substantially to bring closer and exercise openness during the coordination meetings. This was not possible until the end of the project due to COVID-19. Integrating the Innovation for Wellbeing Foundation into the project consortium as a provider of mental health support to both project staff and participants was an important strength; further advocacy to increase referral support from mental health professionals would be beneficial. Women's rights organizations/ local gender experts can also be linked to add value to the project's outcomes.

5.8 Replicability

The project has demonstrated several good practices with the potential to be replicated in larger scale by both government and non-government stakeholders working on promoting and protecting the rights of the migrant workers including the reintegration upon return. This subsection highlights several good practices and lessons learned.

As the previous sections of the report mention the benefits and long-lasting impact of the project in the community, there are further needs and they have recommended the extension of this project in general. There are also specific mentions of some activities and added activities that they feel would be beneficial to others as well. Not only the beneficiaries and the community, local government as well as higher level government institutions have mentioned the need for such an intervention. Thus, the project has demonstrated many good practices with the potential of replication at a larger scale by both government and non-government stakeholders working on promoting and protecting the rights of the migrant workers including the reintegration upon return.

Applying holistic approach of reintegration: Considering that returnee migrant workers face various interrelated challenges on return, and there is huge lack of comprehensive support services focusing on both social and economic reintegration, providing both immediate and long-term recovery and reintegration services following a holistic approach sets a unique example of successful reintegration program for returnee migrant workers. In almost all the FGDs with beneficiary and community men and women, migrant forums, local government representatives, and higher officials of government institutions working on migrant workers' issues mentioned the need for replication of the project. Specifically, it mentions that the 'total project' should expand, and that 'no such activity was found useless or not relevant' says it all. While the immediate support of medical and mental wellbeing was mentioned by many beneficiaries, others added that livelihood training and seed money was very helpful. On the other hand, Migrant Forum and community people's FGDs mentioned mass awareness on reintegration and information of safe migration by way of outreach campaign and pre-employment training should be continued.

Some areas that can be given attention in the next possible time, are effective grassroots referral partnerships, absence of which has hampered the process of tailoring reintegration plans to each returnee as many services remain centralized within Dhaka. The development of effective and accountable referral systems is key to ensuring tailored support programs for returnee migrants. With comprehensive guidelines in place, it will be far easier in the future for returnees to access support and for service providers to be linked up and better coordinated. It is worth mentioning that the project had aimed to address this through advocacy and worked on a referral guideline that is soon to be in place.

Priority on Women Returnee Migrant Workers: Women migrant workers experience gender-based discrimination and exploitation in all the three phases of migration, from pre-departure, to during stay abroad and return. Upon return, they face additional challenges compared to men associated with societal gender stereotyped norms and values. But there is a lack of focused interventions for women returnee migrant workers. In such a context, targeting 75% women of total beneficiaries is an important aspect of the project to create evidence of supporting women returnee migrant workers to successfully reintegrate into society with increased self-esteem and confidence. All women respondents said that they benefitted from the project by way of psychosocial assistance, legal aid, livelihood assistance, awareness and confidence building. They were comfortable with the project approach, as the project ensured separate toilets in training venues, provided accommodation facilities to bring breast feeding babies to the training venues, and the project staff were respectful towards them. The evaluation team also recognizes

the increased rate of participation in family decision making reported by the women beneficiaries as a result of their participation in the project.

Despite the positive changes, the evaluation noted different gender specific challenges still prevailing in the working areas as also highlighted in different sections above, such as gendered roles and expectations/barriers preventing women to participate in trainings, sole dependence on husbands or male family members for running the economic activities/running of the business by the husbands, dissatisfaction of men community members over the project's priority for targeting women, family pressure, particularly from the husband, and domestic violence as underlying reasons for women's risky migration. Such a scenario reflects the existing biased gender relations and discriminatory norms; and lack of understanding of the vulnerability of women, and indicates the need for thorough gender analysis and designing interventions on sensitizing men and community members in general on the value of empowering women and facilitating their growth in the future.

Developing peer support groups through Migrant Forum: The Migrant Forum, a community-based group of returnee migrant workers and family members of in-service migrant workers have been mobilized by OKUP to raise community awareness about safe migration process and to act as a bridging point of the returnee migrant workers to avail different local services as well as in healing trauma and overcome mental stress, psychosocial support. Given that mental health issues are generally neglected in Bangladesh, and there remains a huge dearth of mental health professionals, and that there are a very few trained/certified psychosocial counselors available in Bangladesh, developing peer group support mechanism to ensure basic counseling to the fellow returnee migrant workers is an effective approach that could be replicated at a larger scale. However, they need more advanced training followed by regular coaching and mentoring along with the provision of refresher training for a certain period of time, at least for one year to make them well equipped and fully confident to provide the very essential, but specialized service like psychosocial counseling. Both OKUP and CAFOD are supporting this work in the coming years. The same was noticed during the collection of a case story in Naraynganj where a neighborhood woman was consulting a beneficiary on her husband's visa. There is scope to use the beneficiary to be change agents themselves, based on their maturity continuum.

Adaptive management: Given that realities of all returnee migrant workers are not same, and their needs vary based on different attributes of the migrant worker's gender identity, economic condition, existing skills, geographic location, physical and mental ability etc. 'one size fits all' approach cannot effectively address their needs. This has been realized in implementation and thus, an adaptive management approach was used in the implementation, which enabled the partners to include new activities in different stages of the project implementation. For example, considering the lack of awareness among project staff about the risks of re-traumatization of survivors, the project added a new activity to provide basic training to the project staff on Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Informed Counselling, that enabled the field staff to identify the signs of trauma and how best to support returnee migrants presenting psychological problems. The project also provided confidential counselling to staff members to help them address the traumatic stories they were dealing with on a day-to-day basis.

App based RBM: The project used a comprehensive monitoring process using CommCare to digitize and make available information relating to the profile of returnee migrants who received support. Data was recorded every six months by interviewing project beneficiaries using CommCare Apps. Using app based RBM is another good practice that could be replicated in a larger context by other stakeholders.

Life skills training: The project organized life skills training for the beneficiaries focusing on confidence building, stress management, physical and mental health management, remittance etc. which significantly contributed to rebuilding confidence and improving the overall quality of life for project beneficiaries. However, the evaluation finds that duration of the life skills training is two days for Caritas and three days for OKUP. While beneficiaries recognized the benefit of the life skills training as described in sections above, conversation with the project staff members stressed the need to extend the duration of training to five days and provide refresher courses. They also mentioned the need to use updated methods and materials in the life skills training. While having similar views with the project staff members about the duration and use of updated methods and materials, the evaluation team suggests using a unified module on life skills training by both the partners that is specific for migrant workers and returnee migrant workers. The evaluation also thinks that including the topics on the rights of migrant workers and the contribution of migrant workers to the national economy as well as embedding gender-based challenges and the ways to overcome those would further strengthen the intervention. There should also have provision of inviting experts on the topic and role models/change agents to facilitate different sessions and or sharing their respective experiences.

Trauma Informed Counselling Training and Monthly Mentoring Meeting on Mental Health First Aid: This is a unique intervention of the project. The project organized Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Informed Counselling training for the project staff with the aim that the field staff can identify signs of trauma and can provide primary support to project participants in addressing their problems. This training has been followed up by monthly online mentoring meetings with Caritas Bangladesh and OKUP project staff, as well as individual one to one counseling provided to partner staff. Interviews with the project staff revealed the usefulness of this initiative, as it enabled them to understand the mental situation of the survivors and provide primary counseling services. Some also found the training useful in overcoming their personal depression.

5.9 Lessons Learned

This subsection presents the areas where there is need and scope to revise the approach or add value to the existing approach towards meeting needs more effectively in the future.

Ensuring emphasis on both short-term recovery and long-term economic reintegration support equally for all the enlisted beneficiaries: The evaluation finds dissatisfaction of both the implementing partners to ensure the required services for the beneficiaries: for example, a number of cases referred to OKUP by Caritas Bangladesh for psychosocial services were not responded to (out of 202 cases referred, 116 were responded), and similarly a number of cases referred to Caritas Bangladesh by OKUP for livelihood support were not responded to (out of 205 cases referred, 172 were responded). This demonstrates the level of migrants' need far exceeding the scope of the project. Unavailability of the required services due to lack of well-coordinated management in responding to internal referral across the implementing partners, as well as the absence of adequate services in some implementation areas deprived the beneficiaries of access to acceptable services, and created dissatisfaction among the partners as well as the beneficiaries. The limiting factors of the project that hindered reaching more people in need can be dealt with by possible extensions of the project and a revised design in terms of tenure and budget. As a common feature of any project, a fixed budget can be managed by prioritizing beneficiaries and their urgencies as well as through using external linkages and referrals. Both short term and long-term reintegration activities can be offered for all, as their needs are not isolated. Also, in case of needs exceeding the resources, efficient management of the situation is required. Monitoring, internal coordination, and information sharing between the implementing partners need to be strengthened. There should also be a clear provision for referring to external service providers, if the internal referral fails for any valid reason.

Discussion should focus on how the internal referral process can be fast-tracked to ensure that there is no lag in providing emergency services to returnees. Goal-oriented quarterly targets may also be set in this regard to aid the project's implementation and monitoring team. In instances where service requests are not fulfilled, the existing internal referral system should be updated to include a section on whether it was possible to refer the beneficiary to any external service providers. Currently, the referral process does not have this segment despite a project-specific list of agreed referral service providers. It was also observed that the referral list was often Dhaka -centric and did not have adequate avenues to refer returnees to district based services, where too professional and quality service lacks.

Strengthening external referral with regular follow up: Though project has shown successes in making external referral by both the implementing partners, (in case of OKUP provision of external referral was explicit and CB included external referral at a later stage) there is a gap to strengthen external referral mechanism with regular follow up as well as keeping track of the unattended cases. To strengthen the external referral, the guidelines need to include project location specific service providers, compared to existing Dhaka centric ones (while recognizing that some services of sufficient quality are not available in some districts), and to include service providers on economic reintegration. There also needs to develop staff capacity on the referral mechanism, as well as institutionalization of the referral mechanism, signing MOU with the respective government and non-government service providers.

Engaging survivors as change makers: The evaluation finds several promising beneficiaries both women and men who can act as change agents and spokespersons. To enhance their capacity will contribute towards sustainability. They could link the returnee migrant workers to other services as well as act as peer support in time, like the migrant forum. This would enable the use of a survivor centric approach and CB can use its MAWTS (Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School²⁷) alumni to advocate in the future. This has been raised by OKUP officials: It can be worth dreaming that they will run a center, there will be a community led psychosocial support center, migrant information center. It is possible if we only believe and take passion. OKUP and CAFOD are working on this now in other projects by supporting peer to peer counseling amongst other initiatives.

Scaling up psychosocial counseling: Trauma counseling is a specialized service, and it is critical for the returnee migrant workers to overcome trauma and regain confidence. Though basic counseling can be provided by the trained project staff, there needs to ensure adequate skilled counselors to enable providing services to the returnee migrant workers following proper ethical protocols. The evaluation reveals that counseling had been provided sitting in a tea stall raising the question of quality and confidentiality. This might be an isolated case, but can dilute the overall achievement of the project and hamper the reputation of the organizations. Individual counseling as well as family and community counseling are important. Counseling needs to be focused on social perspectives, rather than only focusing on clinical counseling.

Considering longer periods for training with refresher training, and providing market linkage support: While the entrepreneurship development training does cover the issue of market linkages, many returnees are not able to put it into practice themselves. They require further follow-up support after entrepreneurship development training. The project can achieve this by including goal-based activities, and market linkages once they have received seed funding. This can be done by

²⁷ A Trust of Caritas Bangladesh which provides technical and vocational training and education.

exploring value chain linkages along with the returnees and then developing these linkages through introductions and rapport building with the market actors

Strengthening community feedback mechanism: The evaluation finds the use of the community feedback mechanism only to know about the project services and about selection criteria, and the mostly used tool is the community feedback meetings. Though Community feedback mechanism is a proven accountability tool, there was space to use this mechanism for safeguarding concerns as well. There is also a need for capacity building of the field staff about the community feedback mechanism.

Modifying the M&E system: The monitoring system for the technical aspects of the project went well and helped in the adaptive management mechanism of the Project. What needs to be done in the future intervention is the monitoring of financial aspects or budget monitoring of the Project.

Providing tailored amounts of seed funds: As it has been observed that an equal amount of money has been provided to all the beneficiaries as seed money, but in reality, the requirement of the capital depends on the type, size and locations of the enterprise and the cost of starting the business. There should be flexibility to fix the amount of seed money based on the respective business plan as well as willingness.

5.9 Challenges

The evaluation found the following key challenges that hampered the implementation of the project in different stages of the project cycle.

- Restrictions on movement related to Covid-19 impacted the implementation of the project from the very beginning, as the project started during complete lockdown. It was very difficult to start the project in person, particularly to provide immediate recovery services to the returnee migrant workers by OKUP. Advocacy events and meetings with the government were not possible.
- Lack of education for most of the beneficiaries was a challenge to offer economic reintegration services like skills training, job placement, running businesses, etc. Beneficiaries' have shown lack of interest and enthusiasm to attend the three-months vocational/skill development training due to old age, their educational status, family restrictions, and debt burdens. For women, it was more challenging to offer the skills building training at a distance from home due to gender specific restrictions, being day laborer, doing household chores etc. For some, three-month training is too long to forego generating income. Most of the beneficiaries who did not participate in training did so due to family problems; having responsibility of cleaning, washing, cooking, feeding, fetching water, children and other agricultural activities.; lacked motivation to invest time for greater gain in the future.
- Two-day awareness sessions and small entrepreneurship training were found inadequate for the participants to increase their awareness, capacity and confidence building, mental healing, enterprises and family and social level bonding. Long distances and being far away from one project participant to another at union and Upazila level also provided logistical challenges.
- The project duration was a challenge for such a qualitative intervention like livelihood and immediate recovery service leading to total reintegration. Being an action research project, a longer duration would have allowed the project to take new initiatives and see the impact informed by different research initiatives, for example the PKB research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

In Bangladesh, though there is no standalone policy framework on reintegration of the migrant workers in operation yet, issues of reintegration of the migrant workers has been included in different legal and policy instruments that includes the 'Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act, 2018 which ensures the government's commitments to the reintegration process of migrant workers, and the Eighth (2020-2025) Five Year Plan of the government that include commitments on reintegration in the 'ten points agenda on overseas employment'. However, reintegration services in Bangladesh are fragmented, mostly focusing on economic reintegration, with limited coverage.

Besides government services on reintegration, several NGOs are addressing immediate and long-term economic aspects. However, there is no composite package of reintegration services that targets women and men returnee migrant workers. Despite different challenges and constraints including COVID 19, the "Recovery and Reintegration Support for Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers" project during its 29 months period created a unique example of a holistic approach to a reintegration program. It has produced several good practices that potentially can be replicated for the longer term and at a

larger scale. The project also identified many important lessons to be considered in future project design and implementation on reintegration, particularly for women returnee migrant workers.

Based on the evaluation findings and the proposed solutions to the gaps expressed by the different stakeholders consulted, a set of recommendations has been put forward below for consideration in designing and implementing reintegration programs/projects:

Recommendations:

Extending community outreach campaign

- Extend mass awareness for all the working areas irrespective of the focus of the interventions of those areas (for example, equal emphasis for outreach campaigns for partners leading the livelihood interventions); and ensure integration of a rights-based perspective in community outreach campaigns.
- Design interventions targeting the intermediaries to raise awareness about the legal pathways of migration and engage them in reintegrating returnee migrant workers so that they can also play a facilitating referral role to accessing services from different government and non-government service providers.

Integrating gender equality perspectives

- Strengthen integration of gender perspectives in the project design and implementation by identifying gender specific risks, vulnerabilities and mitigating measures to ensure equal rights, and access and utilization of opportunities.
- Organize training at the local level/provide mobile training for the participants from remote locations, particularly for women beneficiaries, and facilitate referrals for beneficiaries experiencing family violence through developing partnership with relevant organizations, such as Technical Training Centers for skills development, skills training providing organizations like Underprivileged Children's Education Program (UCEP), and legal aid organizations for referral for beneficiaries experiencing family/ domestic violence.
- Explore employment opportunities in Bangladesh for women who were engaged as domestic/care workers abroad, and design targeted interventions facilitating their employment in the country by engaging multiple stakeholders, the concerned ministries and the private actors etc.

Adopting a survivor led approach

- Introduce a survivor led approach by engaging active participation of the survivors in the total project cycle: problem identification, needs assessment, project design, implementation, feedback, monitoring and reporting. For instance, introducing community-based program monitoring system cross-checked /followed up by project staff. This might also mitigate gaps created by remoteness, restrictions in movement, etc. that negatively affects project. This will strengthen sustainability as well as contribute to the empowerment of local migrant communities. Identifying the promising beneficiaries (both women and men) of this project who can act as change agents and provide capacity building and mentoring support to them would be beneficial. In this project, OKUP has created some good practices in this regard by engaging Migrant Forums. Caritas Bangladesh can learn from this approach and explore the potentials of mobilizing the promising women and men beneficiaries of this project for the next phase, and it can explore the scope to mobilize the alumni of MAWTS who are returnee migrant workers.
- Strengthen the capacity of community-based groups, particularly the Migrant Forum members; so that they can sustainably act as local resource groups. At this moment, they don't have the maturity in planning and implementing activities independently, they need further development as mentioned earlier.

Strengthening livelihood support

- Carry out market analysis for each geographic location as part of the planning for livelihood interventions to ensure they bring financial gain and meet market demand, and include provision of individual need- based capital support considering the business plan of the respective beneficiary and other available resources for him/her.
- Ensure mentoring support by livelihood experts along with market linkage support (both backward and forward linkage) for the beneficiaries supported by individual business strategies to ensure effective running of the business; and expand duration of the trainings, such as entrepreneurship training to include financial management, business planning, trauma management, etc. with the opportunities for follow up/refreshers

- Establish institutional linkage with the central and local government, and non-government service providers to facilitate skills development of the returnee migrant workers, including their access to recognition of prior learning (RPL) program.
- Strengthen linkages with the local government (Union Parishad (UP)) to facilitate access to different social safety net services by the beneficiaries; and carry out advocacy to categorically include the migrant workers to be covered by different government services including the social safety net programs.
- Continue advocacy with the Bangladesh Bank / private commercial banks, and other specialized financial institutions to facilitate better access to CMSME loan by returnee migrant workers.

Short term recovery support

- Ensure adequate professional psychosocial counselor capacity either by undertaking new recruitment or by providing advanced level training to some selected staff on psychosocial counseling to ensure quality counseling services to all the beneficiaries, and continuing advocacy to ensure mental health/ psychosocial services at least at the district level.
- Continue research and advocacy efforts to strengthen access to justice for aggrieved returnee migrant workers, and design appropriate interventions to address the constraints in this regard (as per the wider work of OKUP and CAFOD); partnership with legal aid and human rights organizations might be a potential approach to explore.

Strengthening referrals

- Include clear guidelines for referral services for both immediate recovery and long-term economic services, as well as mental health and legal services. Referral services should be designed with project location-specific mapping of available services, apart from the national level services, and strengthen local level advocacy with the relevant stakeholders in the form of advocacy meetings, learning etc.
- Do/continue advocacy to develop an institutional referral system through MoUs with the different government and non-government organizations, such as, One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), Victim Support Centre, National Trauma Counselling Centre (NTCC) etc.

Advocacy at national and international level

- Explore the relevance of activities that aim at influencing actors in the destination countries, such as state authorities, employers, non-government service providers, the labor attachés and consular missions to reduce vulnerabilities of the migrant workers abroad, such as violence, discrimination and exploitation, wage theft, inhuman living conditions, lack of medical facilities, physical and sexual abuse, inadequate food, delayed payment and less or non-payment, restrictions on social contacts etc.
- Take leverage of OKUP's reputation, to carry out continued advocacy to implement the reintegration policy and referral guideline, for better implementation of these instruments, once approved by the government.

Provision of human resources

- Ensure adequate numbers of staff to ensure efficient and effective implementation and monitoring and follow up of the project interventions, and strengthen staff capacity on thematic areas, like sustainable livelihoods, skills development, market analysis for skills development, entrepreneurship training, and trauma-informed counseling. If possible, ensure expert support in livelihood interventions to better design and implement livelihood interventions.

Partnership and coordination

- Carry out team building activities among the consortium partners to minimize the coordination gaps and assist the implementing partners to work as one team; design and implement more joint activities. For example, joint advocacy events could lead to more effective collaboration towards the project goal. Ensure more in person engagement of CAFOD and GFEMS to ensure better coordination and motivate project staff and beneficiaries.
- Facilitate more frequent coordination meetings between implementing partners, monthly for instance, and ensure participation of field staff in coordination meetings, or organize periodic learning sharing events among partner field staff.

Dissemination of project learning and good practices

- To ensure wider dissemination of the project learning and good practices, evidence-based reporting/communication materials should be produced and disseminated to influence the different stakeholders including the government and development partners to replicate the project model in a customized way.

Annexure:

- 1. Evaluation methodology**
- 2. Data collection questionnaire and checklists**
- 3. Survey data**
- 4. Transcriptions of FGDs and KIIs**