EVALUATING THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE IOM CLINIC IN EASTLEIGH, NAIROBI

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DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research thesis that it describes are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

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DEDICATION

To the resilient returnee victims of trafficking whose courage, strength, and determination to rebuild their lives continue to inspire hope and action in the fight against human trafficking. Despite enduring exploitation, abuse, and immense hardship, your perseverance and resilience demonstrate the power of human dignity and recovery. This work honors your journeys, amplifies your voices, and recognizes your role in shaping more humane, survivor-centered approaches to voluntary return and reintegration. May this study contribute, to strengthening protection systems and preventing others from experiencing the same suffering.

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking remains a serious global concern affecting millions of vulnerable individuals, particularly in regions characterized by high migration flows. Kenya, being situated along major migration routes, faces challenges associated with trafficking in persons (TiP), which disproportionately affect women and children. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi County, plays an important role in addressing this issue through its Voluntary Return and Reintegration (VRR) programs that provide support for victims' recovery and social reintegration. Despite the presence of the programs, a majority of the returnees continue to face challenges associated with economic hardships which increases their vulnerabilities to re-trafficking. This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of VRR programs implemented by the IOM Clinic in preventing trafficking in persons in Kenya. The study examines contribution of VRR in combating trafficking, evaluates the role of socio-economic interventions, analyses challenges faced by returnees and evaluates effectiveness of VRR programs by the IOM Clinic. The research addresses a key gap in existing literature, which offers limited empirical evidence on the long-term impact of reintegration programs in reducing re-trafficking risks and promoting sustainable livelihoods among survivors. The research was guided by the Theory of Change and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which together explain how VRR programs meet survivors' basic and psychological needs while promoting socio-economic empowerment and long-term stability. The study applied a mixed-methods approach to obtain comprehensive data. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 228 individuals from beneficiaries of return and reintegration programs, programme administrators, case and law enforcement officers. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and key informants. The study found that VRR contributes largely towards reduced trafficking in that at least 81% of the participants understood the return processes and procedures that they should follow. Similarly, the study found positive association between social economic interventions and risk reduction ($r = 0.722$) which means that participation in economic empowerment programs was association with greater reduction of trafficking. In terms of challenges, economic challenges were the most common barriers to re-integration. From the findings, 49% of the participants were unable to find employment or start a business which further exposes them to trafficking due to income instability. Other common challenges identified were legal, shelter and accommodation as well as social-cultural challenges. In terms of the clinic, 85% agreed that the programs offered aligned with the international best standards. However, there were mixed concerns in regard to the effectiveness of the programs in addressing the local concerns of beneficiaries. As a result, the study recommends that there is a need for developing programs that not only meets the short-term survival needs but also provides avenues for sustainable livelihoods. The study concludes that the VRR programs reduces the likelihood of re-integration by increasing awareness, enhancing socio-economic resilience and supporting re-integration of returnees. The study contributes to the existing knowledge of anti-trafficking literature and efforts by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the programs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVRR: Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

CBO: Community-Based Organisation

CTiP: Counter Trafficking in Persons Secretariate

GoK: Government of Kenya

GCM: Global Compact on Migration

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IEC: Information, Education, and Communication

ILO: International Labour Organization

IOM: International Organisation for Migration

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

NACOSTI: National Commission for Research, Technology and Innovation

NCRC: National Crime Research Centre

NEA: National Employment Authority

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NRM: National Referral Mechanism

NPA: National Plan of Action

PVOT: Prevention of Victimization and Trafficking

UN: United Nations

UNDG: United Nations Development Group

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

STTK: Stop the Traffic Kenya

TiP: Trafficking in Persons

VHR: Vulnerable Host Reintegration

VREN: Voluntary Return European Network

VRP: Voluntary Return Programs

VRR: Voluntary Return and Re-integration

VOT: Victims of Trafficking

OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS

Assisted Return: The support and guidance provided to you during your journey back to your home country or region. In the context of this study, this assistance includes travel arrangements, logistical support, or any challenges you faced during your return.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR): Programs that offer administrative, logistical, and financial support to migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in the host country and wish to return to their country of origin.

Counter-Trafficking in Persons (CTiP): Efforts and programs aimed at combating and preventing trafficking in persons through legal, social, and educational means.

Human Trafficking: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals through various coercive means for the purpose of exploitation.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM): An intergovernmental organisation providing services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers.

Prevention of Victimization and Trafficking (PVOT): Efforts and strategies aimed at preventing individuals from becoming victims of trafficking through education, awareness, and protective measures.

Psycho-social Support: The emotional and psychological assistance provided to help cope with the challenges of reintegration. This may include counselling, mental health support, or any positive or negative experiences related to psychosocial support.

Refugee: A person who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group and cannot return home or is afraid to do so.

Reintegration: A multifaceted process that empowers individuals to rebuild the economic, social, and psychosocial connections essential for sustaining their well-being, livelihood, and self-respect.

Trafficking in Persons (TiP): The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion for the purpose of exploitation.

Victims of Trafficking (VOT): Individuals who have been subjected to trafficking and exploitation, often requiring support and protection to recover and reintegrate into society.

Voluntary Return: The return of an individual to their country of origin, a transit country, or another nation. This return can be either assisted or independent and is contingent upon the voluntary choice made by the person who is returning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the research limitations, the theoretical framework, and the conceptual framework. Lastly, the chapter sets the groundwork for how the Voluntary Return and Reintegration (VRR) programmes can help prevent human trafficking among vulnerable groups in Kenya, especially at the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi.

1.2 Background of the Study

Trafficking in persons is one of the most severe forms of transnational organized crime, and also a significant human rights violation. Human trafficking, according to article 3, paragraph (a) of the Palermo Protocol, is the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or obtaining of individuals through enforcement, fraud, deceit, or abuse of power, all with the intent to exploit them (United Nations General Assembly, 2001). This Exploitation can manifest itself in different ways, for example, through forced marriage, slavery-like practices, servitude, sexual exploitation, or forced labour (United States Department of State, 2020). Even though the efforts of the international community, trafficking in persons still impacts millions of lives around the world, creating a serious problem in the land of human security and sustainable development.

At the global level, trafficking in persons continues to be driven by both structural and emerging risk and protection factors, such as scarcity, conflict, economic inequalities, environmental shocks and increased migration movements. In their study, the United Nations (2025) estimates that at present over 25 million individuals are trafficked or are engaged in other forms of contemporary slavery around the world. Equally, the Global Slavery Index evaluates that in 2021, around 50 million people lived in conditions of modern slavery, 27.6 million in forced labour, and 22 million in forced marriage (Walk Free, 2025). Thus, this demonstrates the size and severity of trafficking and the necessity for interventions that tackle not only immediate vulnerabilities but also the factors that create the need for trafficking.

Trafficking can be manifested in different ways in different regions, depending on the socio-economic and political context. Trafficking in Southeast Asia goes hand-in-hand with movements of refugees and labour migration. Notably, one instance is the trafficking of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar seeking protection in other countries (Wahab & Khairi, 2020). They are often trafficked to Thailand and Malaysia where organized criminal networks hold them under ransom, detain them and subject them to forced labour and sexual exploitation (Wahab & Khairi, 2020). Therefore, these cases highlight the high vulnerability to exploitation of forced displacement and irregular migration, especially without strong protection.

There is also a significant amount of trafficking between Africa and Europe along migration routes. Libya and Tunisia are now established as key transit countries for migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe via illegal routes. Migrants are often subjected to sexual exploitation, extortion, forced labour, detention and other types of abuse on these routes by trafficking and smuggling networks (Mzoughi, 2021). Such experiences reflect the increasing overlapping of migration and trafficking and the importance of bolstering protection measures for vulnerable people. In West Africa, more than 75% of detected victims were children exploited for labour (UNODC Country Office Nigeria, 2021). Similarly, in South Africa, the number of identified victims more than doubled during the 2021–2022 period, showing the increasing threat across the continent (Masson, 2025). These regional realities underline the urgent need for coordinated programmes that focus on rehabilitation, reintegration, and empowerment of survivors as part of the broader strategy to prevent re-trafficking and strengthen community resilience.

Kenya continues to face several issues related to migration, poverty, and displacement which continue to fuel trafficking in persons (TiP). Kenya is considered to be a tier 2 country which has had an impact on vulnerable populations including trafficked women and children for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation and forced labour (United States Department of State, 2020). In trafficking terms, it means that despite a continued progress toward compliance, it is yet to achieve the minimum standards for eradicating trafficking (United States Department of State, 2020). This means that more than policy responses are needed to address these

challenges. The above would include survivor-centred reintegration strategies which should be implemented in order to address underlying vulnerabilities and achieve sustainable recovery.

Socio-economic and systemic issues are some of the cause factors for continued cases of trafficking in Kenya. According to Wright (2015), poverty and unemployment causes people to look at job opportunities elsewhere which increases vulnerability for getting into forced labour or exploitation by traffickers. Furthermore, the lack of strict regulations for recruitment agencies that run the labour migration to the Gulf and other countries exposes Kenyan migrants to recruitment abuses (Ross & Martinez, 2025). Even after the passage of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010, the creation of several coordination mechanisms, and enforcement remains weak due to corruption, lack of sufficient funding, and poor inter-agency cooperation (Alcantara et al., 2012). These vulnerabilities further underscore the importance of evidence-based approaches that strengthen prevention and reintegration efforts, particularly by providing structured programmes to support survivors' economic and social empowerment.

Trafficking in Kenya is manifested mainly in forms of labour and sexual exploitation. In their report, the National Crime Research Centre (2023) affirms that in 2021, labour cases were 98.3% of all cases representing an increase from 96% in 2020. Evidence further show that sexual exploitation is still prevalent, especially in Nairobi County where women and children are at a higher risk. As a result, Kenya has taken significant steps including enacting the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010), setting up the National Assistance Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking and creating the Counter Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee to facilitate coordination of responses from all stakeholders. While these actions demonstrate progress, there remain problems, such as insufficient funding, corruption, gaps in victim identification, and poor inter-institutional coordination (U.S. Department of State, 2020). It is, therefore, necessary to strengthen reintegration mechanisms as a way of filling this operational gap and to achieve sustainable anti-trafficking outcomes.

According to the International Organisation for Migration (2019), VRR programmes are initiatives aimed at supporting migrants who decide to return to their countries of origin. Their help is in the form of administrative, logistical and financial. Reintegration assistance supports them to re-establish their lives and restore stability in their communities. These programmes are part of a wider protection and recovery plan, which covers survivors' economic, social and psychological needs. Skills training, entrepreneurship support and access to education are part and parcel of socio-economic interventions that are integral in restoring the self-reliance of the individual and reduce vulnerability to further exploitation. VRR programmes enable returnees to become financially independent, helping to prevent trafficking in the long term and supporting personal recovery and community resilience.

Returnees, however, face a number of difficulties on reintegration which can make them more vulnerable to trafficking. Such challenges include social stigma, cultural factors and economic limitations which have an impact on the ability to obtain stable livelihoods. According to Paasche and Skilbrei (2017), returnees are also restricted in accessing basic services and formal work opportunities by legal and administrative barriers. Such restrictions often leave survivors in risky jobs or underdeveloped, which increases their likelihood of being re-exploited. Analysis of these barriers will be essential in making interventions to ease reintegration more effective and will contribute to the overarching goal of strengthening protection of trafficking survivors.

The IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi County is a key component in implementing VRR activities. It provides services to victims of trafficking such as medical services, counselling, legal assistance and reintegration services as part of its mandate. These services encompass medical screening, psychosocial therapy, skills training and employment facilitation (IOM, 2019). The strategic location of Eastleigh as a commercial and migration hub in Kamukunji Sub-County makes it an important case to be studied in terms of migration related vulnerabilities. It has a vibrant but informal economy and cross-border mobility often offers opportunities and risks to migrants. The lack of regulated employment opportunities and legal protections makes the area particularly vulnerable to exploitation (Stop the Traffic Kenya [STTK] & Freedom Collaborative, 2020; Waigi

& Sakwa, 2023). Examining how VRR programmes operate within such an environment offers precious insights into the practical challenges and outcomes of reintegration efforts.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite growing efforts to prevent and protect, TiP is still a global and regional issue. According to the International Labour Organization (2022), more than 28 million people are in forced labour, and millions more are exploited through forced or coerced recruitment and abuse of vulnerability. From an African perspective, structural drivers like unemployment, poverty, conflict, and irregular migration continue to increase vulnerability to trafficking. In Kenya, for instance, the country is a source, transit, and destination country, and children, women, and youth migrants and refugees are disproportionately affected. To respond, the Government of Kenya, in partnership with the IOM, has established VRR programmes that assist survivors in psychosocial, economic, and social reintegration. Although existing literature has focused on trafficking prevention and the socio-economic vulnerability of trafficked victims, there has been less work focused on the long-term effects of reintegration efforts.

Nevertheless, trafficking continues, even though these efforts, indicating that current efforts are not necessarily effective and sustainable. Labour exploitation and sexual trafficking is still a feature of the region, as is the lack of employment, poverty and social exclusion among returnees (Laczko and Thompson, 2014). These are deteriorated in urban centres like Eastleigh in Nairobi County where there are high migrant populations and informal economy. While the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh offers key services, such as counselling, livelihood assistance, and health many returnees are living in precarious situations. As a result, they remain vulnerable to re-trafficking and challenging questions are posed as to whether current reintegration programmes are sufficient tackling root causes of vulnerability.

While there are few studies that have examined trafficking patterns, and even fewer studies that have examined the effectiveness of reintegration support, the few empirical studies on the effectiveness of VRR programmes in preventing re-trafficking and sustainable reintegration in Kenya suggest that there is little empirical

evidence. The extent to which these interventions are able to meet long-term socio-economic needs and help to decrease vulnerability for returnees remains uncertain (Zimmerman and Kiss 2017). Therefore, this study examines the effectiveness of the IOM Clinic's VRR programmes in the prevention of trafficking in persons (TIP) in Kenya. Hence, it aims to provide empirical evidence to guide policy, build reintegration systems and improve the design of sustainable anti-trafficking interventions.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This research examines the voluntary return and reintegration programmes and assess their role in tackling trafficking in persons in Eastleigh. The study also examines extent to which the re-integration is influenced by socio-economic factors. Equally, it examines possible barriers and implementation outcomes within the selected location.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 General Objective

The study evaluated the role of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in Preventing Human Trafficking: A Case Study of the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

i. To determine how the VRR programmes contributes to reduced risk of re-trafficking among the beneficiaries at IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi County
ii. To assess the role of socio-economic empowerment interventions within voluntary return and reintegration programmes in reducing the risk of TiP.
iii. To examine the challenges faced by returnees during the reintegration process that may heighten their vulnerability to trafficking.
iv. To examine the implementation and outcomes of the IOM Clinic’s voluntary return and reintegration programmes in preventing trafficking in persons among vulnerable populations in Eastleigh, Nairobi County.

1.6 Research Questions

i. How does the VRR programmes contributes to reduced risk of re-trafficking among the beneficiaries at IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi County?

ii. How do socio-economic empowerment interventions within voluntary return and reintegration programmes reduce the risk of TiP?

iii. What challenges do returnees face during the reintegration process that may heighten their vulnerability to TiP?

iv. How do the implementation strategies and outcomes of the IOM Clinic's voluntary return and reintegration programmes contribute to preventing trafficking in persons among vulnerable populations in Eastleigh, Nairobi County?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is important in relation to the continuing and complex problem of trafficking in persons because it explores the effectiveness of the voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Kenya. However, it offers detailed information on the prevalence, experiences and reintegration effects of IOM assisted trafficking survivors in Eastleigh, a community with high levels of migrant vulnerability and socio-economic difficulties. Thus, the study's empirical findings provide a valuable and much-needed contribution to the literature and interventions on returnees' profiles and needs, which will help to advance knowledge about reintegration processes and outcomes.

The results informed government authorities, policymakers, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working to combat trafficking. Specifically, the study will guide policy development, adaptation and improvement, provide input for the design of context-dependent and targeted interventions and improve the efficient allocation of resources. Additionally, it will make recommendations based on the findings to the IOM clinic and its partners about ways to enhance coordination, service provision and bridge identified gaps to support sustainable reintegration and long-term recovery for returnees.

Therefore, the study helps to support efforts to prevent trafficking in persons and to ensure safe and orderly migration at the international level. The results are consistent with global frameworks like the SDGs and the Global Compact on Migration, providing evidence-based information for policy implementation and programme improvement. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to knowledge about trafficking dynamics, restoration strategies, and on-going issues faced by vulnerable populations related to re-trafficking.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of VRR programmes by the IOM in preventing TiP in the context of Eastleigh, Kenya. The study is geographically restricted to Eastleigh in Nairobi County. Eastleigh is chosen because of its role as a key, dynamic urban hub with a high density of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, including those from the Horn of Africa. The area has high levels of informal employment, little regulatory control and social-economic vulnerabilities, resulting in higher levels of exposure to irregular migration and trafficking concerns. The Eastleigh community is a critical community where the IOM clinic operates and works on reintegration services and therefore is an appropriate and relevant setting to study the impact and effectiveness of the VRR programmes to vulnerable communities.

The study is further restricted to a time frame from 2018 to 2022. However, this timeframe is regarded as appropriate because it reflects the recent trends in the trafficking in persons and migration field, including the socio-economic changes that came with the Covid-19 pandemic and influenced migration patterns and vulnerability to trafficking. Besides, the timeframe coincides with the rollout of key IOM voluntary return and reintegration activities in the region, thus enabling a comprehensive evaluation of programme effectiveness and reintegration results. This time frame also guarantees the use of more up-to-date and relevant information to boost the reliability and policy relevance of the study results. Therefore, the study focuses on the reintegration experience, challenges and outcomes of returnees supported by IOM's VRR programmes in the designated area and time frame and how vulnerable they are to re-trafficking and the sustainability of reintegration.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study focuses exclusively on the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi County, Kenya, and does not encompass a broader geographic scope. This localised approach means that the data can be analysed in detail for Eastleigh, but is unlikely to be representative of the situation for trafficking in other parts of the country.

The research specifically examines the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in preventing trafficking in persons. While other anti-trafficking strategies and interventions are relevant, they fall outside the primary focus of this study.

The study is mainly conducted among people who are trafficked, those who have returned voluntarily, those who participated in reintegration programmes in Eastleigh and those who are vulnerable of being trafficked. This delimitation does not include the views of people who have not been trafficked and of people who are not included in the categories of participants.

This study only covers the specific timeframe of 2018-2022 and may not fully represent the potential impacts that may have taken place prior to and/or subsequent to this time frame. This limitation helps to ensure that the analysis is conducted using the most up-to-date information, but it might not reflect historical trends or long-term changes.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study have been limited by several methodological and contextual factors that were carefully addressed to ensure the credibility and reliability of the results. Among them was that the data were collected from voluntary participants, and the majority of returnee trafficking victims and stakeholders were reached via the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, which may have contributed to selection bias. In order to overcome this limitation, the researcher employed purposive and snowball sampling approaches with the help of programme staff to gain access to a more diverse sample of respondents and to provide greater representation of experiences.

Furthermore, the study was conducted using self-reported data, which can have a tendency of being subject to recall bias and social desirability bias, especially given the sensitive nature of the subject and some subjects being reluctant to disclose personal experiences fully or accurately, which could affect the accuracy of the data. However, this shortcoming was overcome by adopting a mixed methods approach, in which in-depth interviews were supplemented by key informant interviews, anonymous responses, and programme documentation, providing triangulation of data sources to improve validity and reliability.

Besides, there were challenges in terms of reaching the participants since some of the potential ones were not available as they had relocated elsewhere in the country or were reintegrated elsewhere which decreased the

sample size and diversity of views obtained from the study. To mitigate this, the researcher adapted the schedule to allow for flexibility in conducting interviews, worked with local facilitators to help identify participants, and used convenient locations for conducting interviews to increase participation.

Additionally, language difficulties, unequal education levels, and social dynamics affected the level of participation of the participants, so simplified data collection tools, translation services and a culturally sensitive approach were used to make sure that participation is open and communication is inclusive. Lastly, a cross-sectional approach prevented the evaluation of reintegration outcomes in the longer term, though this was partially compensated for by retrospective reports and by existing programme data, and was recommended to be replicated in future studies with a longitudinal design, which would better capture the longer-term reintegration results.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed a reasonable level of implementation and accessibility of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Eastleigh, Nairobi County. These programmes are presumed to be available to victims of trafficking and have voluntarily returned to the subcounty.

It is assumed that individuals who have been trafficked, returned voluntarily, or engaged with reintegration programmes in Eastleigh are willing to share their experiences and provide insights into the impact of these programmes on their lives.

The study assumes that participants, including trafficking survivors, returnees, and other stakeholders, will provide accurate and truthful information during interviews, surveys, and interactions. Efforts will be made to ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable sharing their experiences.

The methodology of this research is based on the assumption that the participants would be drawn from a wide spectrum of experiences related to trafficking (in different forms), differing lengths of time in the country of

destination, and a variety of social and demographic backgrounds. This diversity will be expected to help to provide a full picture of the effectiveness of the programmes.

The study assumes that data sources, including programme documentation, official reports, and interviews with programme implementers, will provide sufficient information to evaluate the implementation and key features of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Eastleigh.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

The current study is grounded on the following theories.

1.12.1 Theory of Change

According to the theory, a specific intervention or a collection of them yields a given change in development depending on a causal analysis of accessible evidence, data, and information. It outlines the causal pathways through which a programme or intervention follows to achieve its desired outcomes (UNDG, 2017). The theory has been used extensively for development by non-governmental organisations, humanitarian aid organisations, non-profit organisations, and community-based organisations from which it was popularised and mainstreamed (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

The concept of how social interventions bring about change has roots in multiple disciplines. The formalized approach known as the Theory of Change gained recognition in the late 20th century, particularly within the fields of international development and social change. The Theory of Change is a process that evolved over time, building on the contributions of multiple thinkers and practitioners, and it has no one origin or founder.

Weiss (1995) examined application of the theory in community settings. The author highlights the importance of taking into account Logic Based Evaluation in the evaluation of local and community-based strategies. Weiss argues that sound theoretical frameworks must be used to comprehend the underlying mechanisms by which interventions are expected to elicit desired outcomes to achieve them. Weiss argues that theories are important enough to include in the evaluation process and not just use for the programme activities and outputs, but to go deeper to the causal paths that get us to the outcomes. A theory-based approach allows evaluators to

articulate the assumptions and the logic underlying intervention strategies and gives a depth and clarity of understanding of how programmes work and why they are successful or unsuccessful. Weiss' findings highlight the importance of theory-informed assessments, as they elicit a more considered and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of complex social programs.

At the same time, Michael Quinn Patton (2010) applied the theory in demonstrating how to approach evaluation, in complex and dynamic environments. Patton highlight the constraints of the preconceived notion of change and assessment that emphasizes a linear model of the two, and suggest that a developmental perspective is more appropriate that acknowledges that interventions in complex systems are dynamic and change over time. He recommends that the Theory of Change should be flexible enough to adapt and learn from the programme, and stay relevant in an evolving context. The use of complexity concepts leads to a more dynamic and responsive evaluation framework, which Patton believes is necessary to keep pace with the evolving landscape of social intervention. His findings call for a different approach to the conceptions of change for evaluators and practitioners, and can be seen as a reflection of the theory's emphasis on a more fluid understanding of change, which resonates with the theory's emphasis on continuous learning and improvement in the context of complexity.

Connell and Kubisch (1998) argue that the theory presents a novel challenge to traditional evaluation differences, combining activities and outcomes in a systematic and cumulative study. Instead of traditional assessments that are conducted at the end of the initiative, approach involves understanding how and why activities have an impact over the course of the initiative. It emphasizes the need to evaluate implementation quality, as well as connections between activities and outcomes. The approach is intended to give timely, useful and rigorous information on the development of initiatives, providing information to stakeholders for decision making. Its appeal is that it focuses on understanding how things work, helping social learning to take place, and informing the design of programmes. Theory of Change is a framework used to structure evaluations and does not solve all of the problems of dealing with complex initiatives, but rather provides a framework that can be tested in the real world of on-going initiatives.

Theories of change are often used in three ways to achieve their intended outcomes or results: to communicate, to learn, and to be held accountable (Valters, 2014). This is reiterated by the UNDG (2017), who posit that a theory of change is used in the face of complex development challenges and is thus used to discover the various underlying reasons for development challenges and their influence on each other, to provide a learning framework, and to provide a more impelling and integrated communication system. The concept of Theory of Change is often tailored to the unique aspects of a project and is intimately linked with the process of evaluation. It serves to make the purpose and reasoning behind a project clear and explicit. This, in turn, assists in the organized planning, execution, and assessment of the project. (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

All initiatives and projects on voluntary return, reintegration, and prevention of trafficking are expected to have specified outcomes and results that ought to lead to developmental and social change. In essence, voluntary return and reintegration conduct and carry out specific activities, which in turn are expected to combat trafficking in persons. They are therefore required to have expected outcomes and indicators of assessment for success or failure.

The theory thus informs the variables and objectives of voluntary return programmes, reintegration programmes, and satisfaction of beneficiaries. The study seeks to examine whether these variables are effective in minimizing cases of trafficking by examining evidence and data. The theory will help in the determination of key factors that are critical to the success of the programmes. It allows researchers to pinpoint the essential inputs, activities, and preconditions that need to be in place for the programmes to achieve their desired effects. Though the theory is strong, it has several shortcomings. First, it makes an assumption that programme activities and interventions work through predictable causal pathways, while social problems like trafficking in persons are brought about by various factors in the economy, culture, society, and politics, which are beyond programme control. Second, the theory emphasizes programme design and implementation and results, but underplays individual motivations and personal factors affecting reintegration success. The theory does not necessarily provide an explanation for why some beneficiaries continue to be vulnerable to trafficking despite

receiving reintegration support. Therefore, such constraints support the use of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to better understand the needs and motivations of the individual, which play a role in vulnerability and reintegration results.

1.12.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The theory indicates that human beings are driven by five levels of universal needs which include physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In his paper, Maslow put forth the concept that human needs follow a hierarchical structure, with the most essential needs forming the foundation at the bottom, and the aspiration for self-actualization and transcendence at the top. Essentially, the theory suggests that the satisfaction of human needs begin with foundational needs before pursuing higher-level needs (Maslow, 1943).

Structuring of Maslow's hierarchy of needs follows a pyramid shape to emphasize the order of significance of fulfilling certain needs to achieve the highest possible state of well-being. The bottom of the pyramid consists of the most fundamental needs, which are psychological and safety needs. These two tiers form the basis for basic needs. Further up the pyramid are the middle two tiers, which encompass the needs for belongingness, love, and esteem. These tiers are essential for psychological well-being. At the pinnacle of the pyramid is the concept of self-actualization, representing the fulfilment of highest potential and serving as the key component for achieving self-fulfilment needs (Maslow, 1943). In summary, the theoretical framework indicates that all needs of human needs could be categorized into different levels as described below.

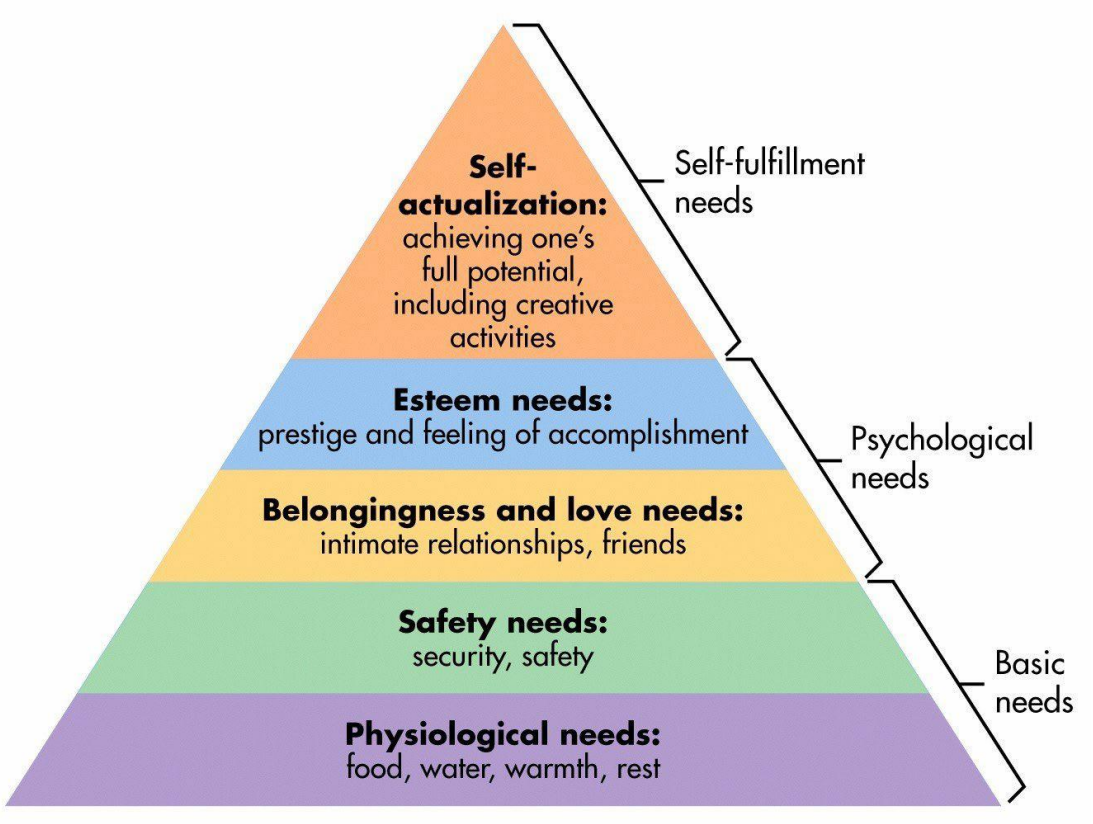


Figure 0.12: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

(Source: McLeod, 2018)

The needs in the hierarchy can also be categorized into deficiency needs (D-needs) and growth needs (B-needs). The difference in these needs is in their roots. Deficiency needs arise from want. If unmet, they become stronger with time, whereas growth needs stem from a desire for individual development. Self-actualization, the pinnacle of the hierarchy. These needs are met when a person realises their full potential in pursuit for personal growth (McLeod, 2018). Recent studies, however, have been in favor of universal human needs and have challenged the ordering of the hierarchy. Needs may be given priority when they are not being met, but they are not necessarily the requirements for the benefits of other needs. This means that multiple needs can be working at the same time and highlights the multi-faceted and interdependent qualities of human motivation (McLeod, 2018).

Effective voluntary return and reintegration programmes should be implemented in a progressive manner similar to Maslow's pyramid in the context of the recovery and healing of human trafficking victims. The first priority should be on meeting basic needs like shelter, clothing, access to food, and a sense of security and safety, especially from their traffickers. Psychological needs are the next step following basic necessities. This

can be done by group work, therapeutic interventions, trauma therapy and making the healing process feel like a success. This way, survivors can proceed with Maslow's hierarchy in order to find themselves in the potential state of self-actualization (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019).

The variables and objectives of reintegration and satisfaction of beneficiaries are thus informed by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs that also provides evidence to support the aid in combating trafficking in persons. Reintegration programmes must be based on the physical and emotional and safety needs of trafficking survivors and returnees. The assessment should include whether these programmes provide a safe place, food, health and support, thus allowing the participants to address their basic needs. Reintegration programmes should include psychosocial support and foster a sense of belonging and build a supportive community for survivors and returnees in their reintegration in society.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

The framework of this project outlines the association between different variables. The independent variables are the contribution of voluntary return and reintegration programmes; the role of socio-economic empowerment interventions; and the implementation and outcomes at the IOM clinic in Eastleigh. The dependent variable is the prevention of trafficking in persons.

Awareness and capacity building on voluntary return and reintegration programmes is important when it comes to determining the contribution of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in combating trafficking, to make sure the victim is aware of his or her rights and can navigate the processes properly and reduce the vulnerability to trafficking. The returnees and vulnerable persons should also be provided opportunities to access sustainable livelihoods for their stable and sustainable income, earning a living independently without becoming victims of trafficking and re-trafficking by economic desperation. The provision and access to support services play a vital role in supporting transitions, in responding to immediate needs and in facilitating long term reintegration into the home community.

When assessing the role of socio-economic empowerment interventions in voluntary return and reintegration programmes, economic support is vital for returnees and vulnerable persons as it enables them to meet their financial needs to rebuild their lives, thus promoting sustainable reintegration and reducing the likelihood of trafficking and re-trafficking for economic reasons. Access to training opportunities is needed by returnees and vulnerable individuals to gain skills and competencies that enhance their employability and ability to start sustainable businesses, thereby supporting their long-term economic reintegration and self-sufficiency. Change in socio-economic status is the shift in the economic and social standing of returnees and vulnerable persons because of the support and opportunities provided. Successful reintegration efforts aim to improve their living conditions, income levels, and social inclusion, contributing to a more stable and prosperous life in their home communities.

Some of the challenges faced by returnees during the reintegration process that may heighten their vulnerability to trafficking include social-cultural challenges that limit their access to support networks, heightening their vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking as they struggle to find secure and dignified livelihoods. Economic barriers such as unemployment and limited economic opportunities can lead to financial instability, making returnees and vulnerable persons more susceptible to trafficking, as they may resort to risky means of earning a livelihood. Legal barriers such as a lack of proper documentation, restricted access to legal rights and protections, and bureaucratic obstacles can prevent returnees and vulnerable persons from accessing essential services and employment, increasing their susceptibility to trafficking.

The evaluation of implementation and outcomes of the IOM clinic's voluntary return and reintegration programmes will cover adherence to international best practices to ensure that the support provided is effective, ethical, and sustainable; enhances the well-being of returnees; fosters successful reintegration; and sets a standard for similar initiatives globally, ultimately leading to improved stability and reduced vulnerability among returnees. The evaluation will also cover stakeholder engagement strategies to ensure collaboration, promote local ownership, and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the programmes, ultimately leading to better outcomes for returnees and their communities. The evaluation will also examine service

delivery of programmes to ensure they are delivered effectively and efficiently to facilitate successful reintegration, improve the well-being of returnees, and contribute to the overall stability and resilience of the community. Finally, the evaluation will review the coordination with local authorities to foster strong partnerships with local authorities, ensure alignment with local policies, facilitate access to resources and support networks, enhance community engagement and acceptance, promote sustainability, and contribute to the successful reintegration of returnees into the community.

To integrate the theoretical framework into the conceptual framework, the relationship between the independent variables, voluntary return and reintegration programmes, socio-economic empowerment interventions, and implementation at the trafficking in persons, is understood through the lens of the two theories. The first theory provides a causal pathway for how these interventions are expected to lead to the desired outcome of trafficking prevention. It helps to identify the essential inputs and activities needed for successful reintegration and how these activities, such as socio-economic support and capacity building, contribute to reducing vulnerabilities and preventing re-trafficking. The second theory informs the conceptual framework by emphasizing the importance of addressing both the basic physiological and safety needs of returnees before progressing to higher-level needs such as self-actualisation, which ultimately supports successful reintegration and empowerment. By integrating these theories, the framework ensures that interventions are designed to address both the immediate needs and long-term empowerment of trafficking survivors, with the ultimate goal of breaking the cycle of exploitation and preventing future trafficking. This integrated approach underscores the need for a comprehensive, multi-level strategy that combines the practical elements of VRR programmes with the psychological and socio-economic aspects critical for achieving sustainable reintegration and reducing the risk of trafficking.

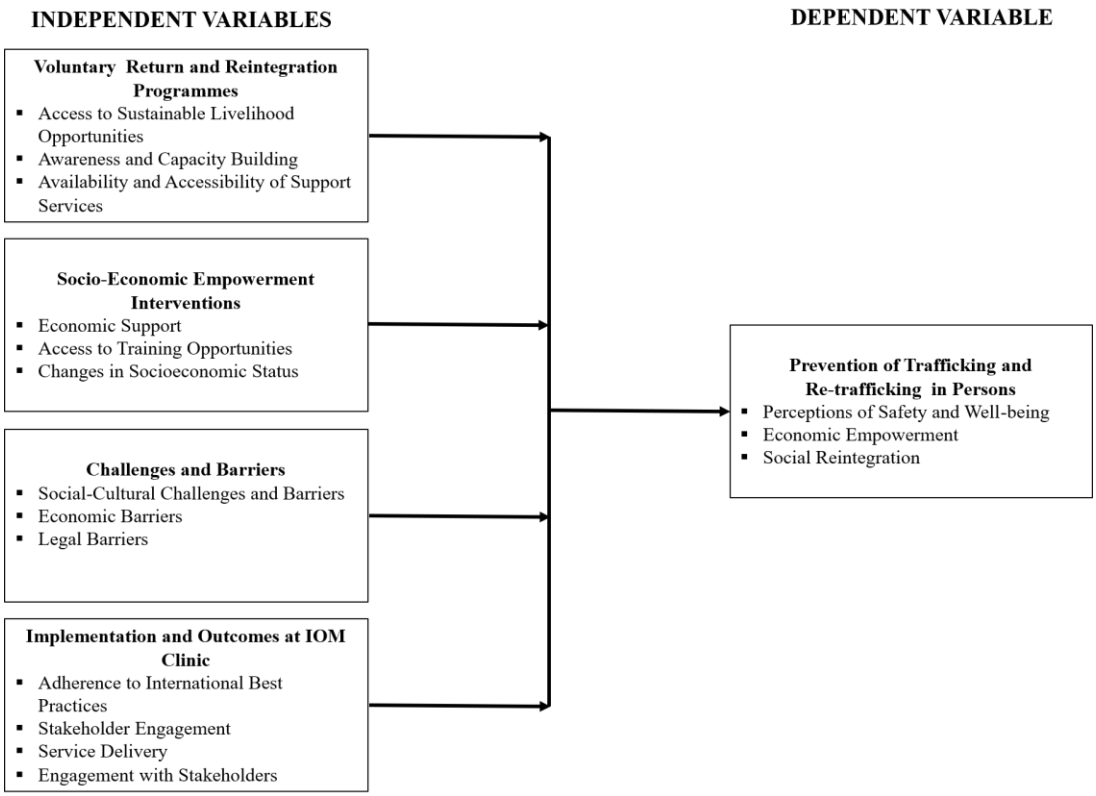


Figure 0.13: Conceptual Framework

(Source: This Research, 2026)

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents an evaluation of the VRR programs and their contribution towards reducing the risk of re-trafficking. It begins with an empirical review of the current literature and ends by presenting the gaps in literature. The review of literature is presented in line with the objectives of the study.

2.2 Review of the Literature

2.2.1 The Concept of Human Trafficking

Although laws against human slavery were enacted in the 19th century, the prevalence of human trafficking today surpasses the levels seen at the end of the United States Civil War (ILO, IOM, 2022). This contemporary form of human slavery, known as human trafficking, takes various forms. The most prevalent is sex trafficking, which involves the sale of women and children for forced prostitution. Another form is labour trafficking, where men, women, and children are sold into demanding labour situations, often receiving minimal or no compensation (Barrows & Finger, 2008). Recent global estimates for 2021 revealed that approximately 50 million individuals experienced modern slavery (ILO, IOM, 2022). Within this group, 28 million suffered subjection to forced labour, and 22 million were trapped in forced marriages (ILO, IOM, 2022). Unfortunately, there has been a notable increase in modern slavery over the past five years. In 2021, the number of individuals impacted exceeded the 2016 global estimates by an additional 10 million (ILO, IOM, 2022).

Human trafficking and trafficking in persons exhibit similar characteristics worldwide. These characteristics often involve abduction, the exploitation of power or vulnerabilities in society, and the exchange of benefits to secure the cooperation of individuals and to exercise control over others for the purposes of exploitation, recruitment, transportation, or receiving individuals through coercive means or force (Cafferty et al, 2020). Trafficking of human beings is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world; it feeds off the desperation of groups of people and their vulnerabilities, especially women. Traffickers are able to lure their victims by giving false promises and a desire for a brighter future for themselves and their families (UNODC, 2018).

Throughout history, individuals vulnerable to trafficking have often been viewed as commodities and exploited by those in positions of power and wealth (Barrows & Finger, 2008). Human trafficking is a grave global issue with significant implications for Kenya, a country that serves as both a source and destination for TiP (UNODC, 2022).

The root causes and consequences of TiP are complex, interrelated, and vary depending on the context and the characteristics of the victims and the traffickers. Some of the main factors that create vulnerability to TiP are poverty, inequality, discrimination, marginalization, lack of education, unemployment, social exclusion, violence, corruption, and weak governance (UNODC, 2020). These factors push many people to migrate in search of better opportunities and livelihoods, often through irregular and unsafe channels, and expose them to the risk of being deceived, coerced, or exploited by the traffickers. The consequences of TiP are devastating for the victims, their families, and their communities, as they suffer from physical, psychological, and emotional harm, stigma, isolation, and loss of dignity, rights, and resources.

Africans face an increased vulnerability to human trafficking that disguises itself as economic opportunity. This susceptibility is primarily attributed to a combination of factors, including prolonged political instability, porous borders, inconsistent governance in many African nations, the growth of well-funded international criminal networks, and entrenched corruption within law enforcement agencies (ILO, IOM, 2022). These circumstances have given rise to specific instances, such as the sexual exploitation of women from central and west Africa in Italy. Modern day slavery in the form of forced labour has thrived, especially for domestic workers, predominantly those of East African and Middle Eastern descent. The actions, or lack thereof, taken by African governments have, regrettably, facilitated the organisation and trafficking of a significant number of Africans to destinations like Western Europe and the Middle East (Bellucci & Eckert, 2019). This has resulted in the failure to proactively curtail and limit the continued proliferation and consolidation of human trafficking syndicates. (Bellucci & Eckert, 2019).

According to the National Crime Research Centre (2015), child trafficking stands out as the most widespread form of human trafficking in Kenya, with labour trafficking and trafficking for prostitution following closely behind in prevalence. This same study found that 60.4% of the victims of human trafficking were victims of external trafficking (trafficking of victims outside Kenya) and 33.8% were victims of internal/ domestic trafficking (trafficking within the borders of Kenya). The oft-cited reason for becoming a victim of human trafficking was seeking employment opportunities and thus a desire to reach employment destinations. This desire was then exploited by human traffickers.

In Kenya, the most significant factors driving human trafficking are poverty and unemployment. These two factors play a primary role, but other elements also contribute to human trafficking. These include the personal attributes of the trafficked individuals, their economic circumstances, family characteristics, social networks, and the conditions within their communities. Additionally, factors like insecurity, religious influences, lack of awareness and education, as well as a desire for financial gain, also contribute to the occurrence of human trafficking (National Crime Research Centre, 2015). Human trafficking in Kenya is deeply rooted in social, economic, and political factors. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of education play a significant role in rendering individuals vulnerable to exploitation (Malinowski & Schulze, 2017). Additionally, political instability, ethnic conflicts, and corruption create an environment conducive to trafficking.

In 2020, an international NGO reported that Kenya had reported over 30,000 cases which would be considered to be sex trafficking with more than half of those involved being children. Perpetrators include Kenyans and, to a lesser extent, foreign tourists. Existing report further indicate that traffickers have increasingly turned to exploiting children in private villas and vacation homes to evade law enforcement in hotels.

Additionally, children in areas like khat cultivation zones, gold mines in western Kenya, major highways, and Lake Victoria have become targets for sex trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in child sex trafficking, including online recruitment, as well as forced labour in domestic work and begging. Legal and fraudulent employment agencies recruit Kenyan workers for positions abroad, particularly in the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, Europe, Northern Africa, and North America. In these destinations, traffickers

exploit them in various sectors, including massage parlours, brothels, domestic servitude, and manual labour (Bellucci & Eckert, 2019). Migrant workers often face the withholding of salaries by foreign employers to compel them to stay longer, and some are resold to other employers without proper legal changes in their contracts, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. Furthermore, criminals with ties to terrorist networks, notably al-Shabaab in Somalia, deceitfully entice both adults and children in Kenya to join these groups with false promises of lucrative employment opportunities (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). Kenya is noted as an origin, transit, and target country. Men, women, and children are trafficked into Kenya from neighbouring countries like Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Ethiopia, where they are subjected to forced labour and sexual abuse, including forced sex work (IOM, 2018).

In 2021, the Kenyan Government detected a total of 482 trafficking victims, indicating an increase from the 383 victims identified in 2020 (Bellucci & Eckert, 2019). Among these victims, 217 were subjected to forced labour, while 265 faced unspecified forms of exploitation. The majority, 398 victims, were Kenyan nationals, while 84 came from foreign countries, mainly neighbouring nations and South Asia (Bellucci & Eckert, 2019). Notably, there was a significant decline in the number of Kenyan victims exploited abroad, with just one case reported in 2021, compared to 150 in the previous reporting period. The government maintained the use of its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for identifying victims. Additionally, the Counter Trafficking in Persons Secretariat (CTiP Secretariat) collaborated with immigration officers to screen for trafficking indicators among foreign migrants involved in cases related to migrant smuggling (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022).

The National Crime Research Centre [NCRC] (2015) noted that 59% of trafficking victims in Kenya were female. The report by NCRC indicates that male survivors of trafficking often remain hidden in the shadows of this already concealed crime. Their stories rarely make headlines, largely because feelings of shame and humiliation deter them from reporting these harrowing experiences. This resonates with the findings of the UNODC (2022) that girls and women are three times more likely to endure severe violence during trafficking

compared to boys and men. Additionally, children, in general, are twice as likely to experience violence as compared to adults in the context of trafficking. However, it's important to recognize that the number of male trafficking victims is on the rise, mirroring the overall increase in human trafficking cases. In contrast, women tend to be more susceptible to trafficking due to factors such as the allure of a promised better life (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). Many women shoulder the responsibility of caring for their families and are driven to seek employment opportunities, making them more susceptible to exploitation through trafficking.

Within Kenya, the Department of Immigration, in its capacity as the chair of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), retained the role of overseeing national coordination in matters related to migration, which encompassed addressing allegations of forced labour involving Kenyan citizens working abroad (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022).

To complicate things further, the National Employment Authority (NEA) remained responsible for overseeing labour migration and related matters, including labour trafficking. However, the NEA faced several challenges, including a lack of effective leadership, inconsistent enforcement of regulations, and issues related to corruption that impeded its operations. The number of registered private employment agencies under NEA's purview increased from 320 to 504 compared to the previous reporting period (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). Despite government efforts to scrutinize these agencies, NEA officials observed that unregistered agencies outnumbered their registered counterparts. To support the welfare of Kenyan migrant workers, including potential trafficking victims, the NEA continued to mandate that recruitment agencies contribute to a security fund meant to cover airfare for repatriation in cases of exploitation. Nevertheless, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) reported limited utilization of this security fund, as migrant workers often sought alternative assistance due to the government's lengthy complaint resolution process (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). Moreover, government regulations still allowed recruitment agencies to charge migrant workers a fee of up to one month's salary. The NEA persisted in using an electronic platform for the recruitment and

placement of Kenyan workers heading to Saudi Arabia to enhance the safety of migration. However, reports from observers indicated that Kenyan officials negotiated wages below the Saudi Arabian minimum wage, rendering Kenyan migrant workers susceptible to trafficking (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022).

The Kenyan government's data collection and reporting mechanisms concerning anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts continued to exhibit deficiencies (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). The government did not provide any documented instances of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions involving government personnel involved in human trafficking activities. Nevertheless, the persisting issues of corruption and official involvement in trafficking offenses continued to pose notable challenges, hampering the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts throughout the year. Notably, instances were reported wherein police officers accepted bribes to TiP off human traffickers about impending law enforcement operations and investigations, particularly in coastal regions (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022). Additionally, there were reports of alleged perpetrators evading legal consequences by corruptly influencing magistrates and court officials or through the intimidation and financial coercion of witnesses to present false statements (U.S. Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2022).

Kenya's geographical location, porous borders, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities have made it susceptible to human trafficking. The country is a source, transit, and destination point for various forms of TiP, such as sex trafficking, forced labour, and child exploitation. These nefarious activities impact a wide range of victims, including women, children, and marginalized communities (Ministry of East African Community, Labour and Social Protection, 2013). Kenya has made significant strides in addressing human trafficking through legislative and policy measures. The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2010) provides a legal framework to combat TiP, and the government has established specialized law enforcement units, such as the Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit (AHTCPU) (UNODC, 2022). These efforts have been crucial in prosecuting traffickers and rescuing victims. The introduction of the National Referral Mechanism

(NRM) in 2013 aimed to improve the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts, facilitating victim identification and referral to appropriate services (Ministry of East African Community, Labour and Social Protection, 2013).

2.2.2 Contribution of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programs in Combating Trafficking

Support to victims and vulnerable migrants to rebuild their lives after return is a core part of the voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes. Equally, it has been considered as a central element in global action to combat trafficking in persons. Return migration is an important aspect of human migration which involves the migration of persons back to their place of origin, whether within or across the borders of a country (International Organization for Migration IOM, 2019). Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes play a critical role in enabling to assist the above, by offering administrative, logistical, financial, and reintegration assistance to those migrants who want to return to their country of origin on their own (IOM, 2019). The programmes are increasingly being identified as part of the migration management system as well as vital preventive management and mitigation measures against trafficking and re-trafficking. Reintegration is a multi-faceted process that helps returnees restore their economic, social and psychosocial conditions, and thus reintegrate and participate in society (IOM, 2019). Trafficking survivors have specific needs for effective reintegration, since it can assist to tackle the underlying vulnerabilities that can lead to trafficking. Reintegration programmes usually include social and psychosocial counselling, medical care, family reunification, livelihood training, economic empowerment and social assistance services (IOM, 2013). The main significance of such programs is reducing the likelihood that survivors may end up returning to unsafe migration pathways or exploitative environments.

Empirical evidence indicates that well-designed reintegration programmes can play a significant role in the trafficking prevention. Samantha Lyneham (2013) conducted a study on trafficking survivors in Indonesia and based on their findings, effective reintegration programmes have been shown to reduce re-trafficking risk, as they encourage economic self-sufficiency and social recovery for the trafficking survivor. The study highlighted that if survivors can reintegrate their communities successfully then they are less likely to be subjected to further exploitation as they have better support systems and better livelihood opportunities. A similar study was conducted by Dell et al. (2019) where they found that post-exit interventions have a positive

effect on survivors' mental health, employment, and community reintegration. During their review they underscored the importance of reintegration support for the psychosocial well-being, and resilience of survivors. However, the scholars found out that that the current evidence base is rather limited and of poor quality, which calls for more empirical research to investigate the effectiveness of the programmes.

The support services and social inclusion facilitated by VRR programmes also contributes to reduction of trafficking. Voluntary return programmes offer sheltering, counselling, health, legal and protection services for victims, which help them to recover and reduce their vulnerability to future exploitation (IOM, 2019). These programmes can play a critical role in reuniting survivors with their families and communities, thereby building social capital and minimizing social isolation, which could increase vulnerability to trafficking. In addition, reintegration programmes will help the victim to go through legal procedures, to seek justice and protection from traffickers and thus to promote both recovery and prevention (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2018). However, a number of studies have identified some factors that affect the effectiveness of reintegration programmes. For instance, a study was conducted by Asis (2015) in Philippines where they reported that the legal framework and reintegration programmes were in place, but implementation of reintegration support services for trafficking survivors was affected by low coordination among stakeholders. The study also highlighted the crucial need for integrated multi-stakeholder strategies by Government, Civil Society and communities. A similar study was conducted by Paasche and Skilbrei (2017) where they noted that the challenges in AVoR&R programmes can make survivors more susceptible to exploitation, stigmatisation and social exclusion following their return. Their research indicates that the lack of reintegration assistance can leave returnees vulnerable to re-exposure to trafficking and marginalisation.

Questions have also been raised regarding the sustainability of reintegration programmes by several scholars. Bearup (2016) suggested that although many policies on reintegration are directed towards the mechanics of return, particularly on how to get people back, they do not major social and economic recovery. The study shows that success in reintegration should be determined not just by the process of reintegration itself, but also by 'enhanced long-term quality of life, social inclusion and economic independence'. Similarly, Marcos and Elopre-Carredo (2025) identified that one reason for leaving long-term psychosocial and economic support

out of many reintegration programmes is financial and institutional limitations as the stakeholders' major immediate recovery needs. The difficulties of reintegration issues are clearly recognized when social and economic issues are considered. In different research of trafficking survivors from Albania, Ramaj (2023) found that the main challenges that hinder the successful reintegration of trafficking victims in Albania are health issues, family rejection, a lack of economic opportunities, and stigmatization. These barriers can hinder survivors' ability to rebuild their lives and make them more vulnerable to further exploitation. These results are important in highlighting the need to incorporate the social acceptance, psychological recovery and community inclusion in reintegration programmes, along with economic reintegration.

On the international level, the IOM is still at the forefront of reintegration interventions. Overall, IOM country offices assisted with the reintegration of more than 113,000 returnees in 2021, which is a 7% rise compared to 2020 (IOM, 2022). The number of beneficiaries supported by AVRR programmes rose 17 per cent to 43,428 individuals during the same period (IOM, 2022). The figures illustrate the significance of reintegration programmes in dealing with migration and trafficking vulnerabilities. However, there still exist challenges in Kenya. The government has implemented a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to ensure access to protection and reintegration services, but the implementation of NRM has been inconsistent, as local authorities have not always followed the established procedures and instead directly referred victims to NGOs for protection services (U.S. Department of State, 2022). As a result, the quality and accessibility of assistance is unequal, which can have an impact on reintegration and trafficking prevention.

2.2.3 Role of Socioeconomic Empowerment Interventions within Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

Sustainable return and reintegration are achieved when returnees attain economic self-sufficiency, social stability within their communities, and psychosocial well-being, enabling them to effectively address factors motivating (re)migration. This state of sustainable reintegration empowers returnees to make migration decisions based on choice, rather than out of necessity (IOM, 2021). The return of a migrant should ideally bring about positive changes, or at the very least, not exacerbate the existing conditions within the community of return, including families and other stakeholders. For a returning migrant, achieving psychosocial well-

being depends on having a basic sense of safety and security, as well as access to essential services like education, housing, water, sanitation, and healthcare. Furthermore, the returning individual's optimistic outlook on rebuilding a sustainable life in their place of return is a fundamental foundation for all other reintegration efforts (International Organisation for Migration, 2019).

Achieving sustainable reintegration necessitates comprehensive and multifaceted strategies that encompass various dimensions: economic, social, psychosocial, and environmental. These approaches foster synergies among diverse interventions across domains such as humanitarian aid, community stabilization, sustainable development, migration management, policy coherence, and development cooperation (International Organisation for Migration, 2019).

Reintegration programmes should be long-term and comprehensive, providing support in various areas, such as education, health care, and housing (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2006). Reintegration programmes should provide victims with vocational training, education, and psychosocial support. Successful reintegration programmes require the cooperation of various stakeholders, including law enforcement, NGOs, and local communities (Bonard, Conoir, Cornieti, & Grosh, 2013). Ensuring effective coordination among various agencies and monitoring the long-term success of reintegration programmes can be challenging (IOM, 2019).

Economic empowerment is key to preventing re-trafficking. Reintegration programmes may include vocational training, job placement assistance, and microfinance initiatives to help survivors achieve financial independence (IOM, 2013). Skill-building and education programmes play a crucial role in reintegrating survivors into society. Providing access to training opportunities helps survivors develop marketable skills and build a sustainable future (UNODC, 2018). Access to healthcare services is a fundamental component of reintegration, addressing both physical and mental health needs (Ottisova, Hemmings, Howard, Zimmerman, & Oram, 2016).

Regarding the lasting viability of return and reintegration, there is a scarcity of literature on this topic, especially when it comes to defining and quantifying sustainability. Most of the existing research predominantly concentrates on the reintegration of individual returnees. It's important to note that the sustainability of return is only achieved when returnees can secure access to essential services, housing, and the freedom to move about without constraints (Black et al., 2004).

The sustainability of economic empowerment initiatives and access to training opportunities is essential for lasting impact. Long-term support may be necessary to ensure survivors remain self-reliant (UNODC, 2018). Social-economic empowerment initiatives for this study will focus on economic support, access to training opportunities, and changes in socioeconomic status.

2.2.4 Challenges faced by Returnees during the Reintegration Process

The significance of voluntary return and reintegration programmes as a tool for trafficking in persons highly increasing in literature, however, the evidence indicates that returnees often face a number of barriers to successful reintegration. Reintegration is now considered as a multi-faceted phenomenon, as the economic, social, psychological, and legal aspects, and challenges in one area can impact others (Ramaj, 2023). Thus, reintegration is a process more than just a physical return; it is the restoration of social inclusion, economic stability, psychosocial wellbeing and institutional support.

Social stigma and discrimination are a very often cited issue in the literature. An individual who has been trafficked is likely to re-engage with the community in which they were trafficked in, which may result in negative perceptions, rejections and social exclusion. A study by Ramaj (2023) on Albanian trafficking survivors revealed that stigmatization, family rejection, health issues, and social exclusion were among the most significant challenges to successful reintegration. Joshi et al. (2025) reported that the journey of reintegration was long and challenging for trafficking survivors in Nepal, with stigma, lack of family acceptance, safety concerns, and weak support systems as key obstacles. Similarly, Islam and Fay (2024) also found that discrimination, stigma and social isolation are significant factors that hinder reintegration efforts for women trafficking survivors. It is therefore clear that reintegration challenges are not only material but

also entail social relationships and the acceptance of the community. A different study was conducted by Riaduzzaman et al. (2026) where they argue that community rejection and lack of social support put survivors at risk for re-trafficking as it reduces their ability to participate in society and also pursue economic development. Similarly, Islam and Fay (2024) noted that negative family attitudes and forced repatriation are often a hindrance for reintegration process and may force the survivors back to exploitative situations. Although stigma is always reported as a great challenge, the explanations of why it is such issue vary between studies, with some pointing to attitudes within the community and others to more general structural inequalities such as gender discrimination and social marginalisation.

Another recurring challenge to effective reintegration is economic insecurity. Reintegration programmes may aim to enhance economic wellbeing of beneficiaries through vocational training, employment facilitation and livelihoods; yet, many returnees continue to lack employment, regular income and economic opportunities. According to Lyneham (2014), economic issues were experienced by Indonesian trafficking survivors shortly after repatriation, where they were unable to find a job and to earn a living. According to Lyneham (2014), the returnees often experienced unemployment, low wages, and other socio-economic adjustment issues. Yea (2025) also stated that financial instability negatively impacts survivors' resiliency and capacity to obtain sustainable reintegration. The above studies indicate that economic vulnerability is an important element to consider in reintegration outcomes. However, there are questions about how much the economic measures alone can ensure successful reintegration. Some experts focus on the conditions of getting a job and earning income as key indicators of successful re-engagement, while others believe that reintegration success depends on the combination of employment and income generation with social support, psychological healing and community integration.

Furthermore, psychological wellbeing and family relationships are emphasized in the literature as key aspects of reintegration. Kumari (2024) discovered that the survivors of child trafficking suffer from psychological trauma, poor family relationship, challenges in school re-integration and increased risk of re-trafficking upon family re-integration. In a similar study, Ramaj (2023) and Joshi et al. (2025) found that emotional distress and a lack of family support is a significant factor influencing the capacity of survivors to rebuild their lives

after returning. These findings are consistent with the general reintegration theories in which social inclusion and psychological recovery are important aspects of reintegration. If other reintegration measures are not complemented by psychosocial support, survivors' ability to regain confidence, trust and social ties might be hampered.

Legal and institutional obstacles have been recognized as significant factors that constrain outcomes of reintegration in addition to social and economic issues. Kenya has a fairly robust legal regime to address trafficking in persons and to provide for the protection of victims, including the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010, the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Regulations of 2012, the National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking, and the National Referral Mechanism. As a whole, these frameworks aim to improve responses to victims by providing coordinated action by government, international and civil society actors regarding protection, rehabilitation and reintegration. Yet, implementation challenges seem to remain a hindrance to effectiveness of these mechanisms. According to Kandigue and Adiku (2020), major challenges encountered in reintegration programmes are poor institutional coordination, budgetary constraints and logistical challenges. Equally, in Kenya, the U.S. Department of State (2022) noted that inadequate funding, poor interagency coordination and lack of consistency in the delivery of support and reintegration services remain challenges in victim assistance and reintegration. While legal frameworks offer valuable protection, literature indicates that the effectiveness of these frameworks' hinges on institutional capacity and resources as well as the coordination of implementing agencies.

Literature shows that there is generally a consensus that reintegration issues are complex and multifaceted. Social stigma can lead to economic marginalization and economic marginalization can exacerbate psychological distress, and lead to exploitation. Similarly, poor institutional support can restrict access to economic opportunities, legal protection and social services. While there have been many studies on reintegration challenges as they relate to individual cases and in a variety of contexts, a larger percentage of literature is from Asia and Europe, with relatively scarce evidence from Kenya and East Africa. Additionally, many studies focus on social, economic and legal barriers individually, and do not gain a full awareness of how these barriers converge to shape vulnerability to trafficking. To fill this gap, this study aims to explore the

social-cultural, economic and legal issues that beneficiaries of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Eastleigh, Nairobi County experience and how these issues affect reintegration outcomes and trafficking prevention.

2.2.5 Implementation and outcomes of the IOM Clinic's Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continues to be one of the major players in the world in delivering Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, offering returnees transport assistance, psychosocial support, health services, legal support, livelihood support, and case management. IOM Clinic in Eastleigh is an important component of IOM's work to assist victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants in Kenya through medical, psychosocial, legal and reintegration services in the context of the National Referral Mechanism (IOM, 2019). Over the years, there has been a consistent argument in the literature that mere facilitation of return is not sufficient. Stakeholders must invest in interventions that are geared towards sustainable economic, social and psychological reintegration. Prior to this, Araujo-Forlot (2002) conducted initial assessments that found that access to counselling, medical care, vocational training, education, and access to income-producing activities made a significant difference in reintegration. The main significance of such findings is bringing a change in reintegration programming from a narrow focus on repatriation to a more holistic change in focus on sustainable reintegration. Similarly, IOM (2012) highlighted that Voluntary Return Programmes (VRP) are effective when they are supported by holistic response packages covering short-term and long-term support for returnees. The report also highlighted the need for coordination between stakeholders, information exchange and the development of cooperation between them, including the Voluntary Return European Network (VREN) in improving programme effectiveness.

Different scholars have conducted research to understand what factors affect successful reintegration outcomes. In a study of IOM-supported AVRR programmes, Koser and Kuschminder (2015) found that migrants who voluntarily returned who had strong community connections and mainly returned for economic reasons were more likely to have successful reintegration. The study concluded that the outcomes of their

programmes are not only a function of the support provided to them, but also of the social and economic contexts to which migrants reintegrate. This view echoes reintegration theories which highly majors on the relationship between individual agency, acceptance within the community, and institutional support for reintegration success. Recent research has also focused on the need for individualized case management and post-return support. Kuschminder et al. (2023) observed that 'in-depth case management was an important tool in the facilitation of sustainable reintegration' within the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Africa. The study showed that regular communication with beneficiaries, needs-driven assistance and monitoring of changes increased the effectiveness of the programme, thus addressing the changing needs and challenges of returnees. Similarly, in analysing IOM-managed AVRR programmes across Southern Europe and North Africa, Smith (2019) identified local implementation capacity and coordination among stakeholders as key factors for programme success. The studies argued that reintegration will not happen without support and that such support will need to be sustained over time, not just after return.

The literature also emphasises the need for psychosocial support, social reintegration and economic empowerment to mitigate vulnerability to trafficking. Lyneham (2014) in an evaluation of IOM's Return, Recovery and Reintegration Programme for Indonesian trafficking victims noted over 3,700 victims benefiting from voluntary return and reintegration services, such as recovery services, counselling, and reintegration services. The study identified three indicators of reduced vulnerability to re-trafficking for the surviving households: economic self-sufficiency and social recovery. The results corroborate the existing evidence on other areas showing that the feeling of safety and wellbeing, economic stability and social inclusion are major indicators of successful reintegration. Accordingly, a number of current reintegration initiatives highlight the need for livelihoods support, vocational education, family reconstruction, psychosocial counselling and community reintegration as key elements of the reintegration program. Yet, there is a growing literature, which calls into doubt the sustainability of reintegration interventions, despite the positive outcomes. Though many programme evaluations have found high satisfaction among the beneficiaries and that services were well delivered, academics are increasingly suggesting that programme effectiveness should be measured in terms

of reintegration outcomes in the long term, not in terms of outputs in the short term. Paasche and Skilbrei (2018) noted that the lack of support in AVRR programmes can leave returnees at risk of re-exclusion, stigma and vulnerability upon return. Similarly, Marcos and Elopre-Carredo (2025) noted that a large proportion of reintegration programmes focus mainly on immediate recovery and stabilization and offer inadequate long-term psychosocial and economic rehabilitation.

Additionally, Bello and Eweka (2025) argued that while vocational training and financial grants aid in reintegration, a lack of adequate capital and weak implementation can reduce the long-term effects of the economic opportunities. A significant discussion is also emerging on the significance of coordination among stakeholders for the effectiveness of programmes. Scholars mainly insist on the need for a multi-national, multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach involving government, international and civil society organisations, law enforcement organisations and local communities. Poor anti-trafficking interventions, according to study by UNODC (2006), result from the fragmentation of service delivery and lack of institutional coordination. Such concerns have also been expressed within Kenya, where implementation hurdles, such as the National Referral Mechanism, are still impacting the quality and availability of reintegration services, resource scarcity, and inconsistencies in the engagement of stakeholders are still present (U.S. Department of State, 2022). The results indicated that the implementation of programmes should not be evaluated at the organizational level only, but take into account the wider institutional and governance context.

Review of literature shows that a holistic approach to service delivery, organizational coordination of services, psychosocial support and economic empowerment is positively associated to reintegration outcomes. However, there still exist a gap regarding the sustainability of programmes, their long-term effectiveness and the ability of monitoring systems to measure the effectiveness of reintegration. In addition, there is little empirical evidence on how and what the IOM Clinic did in terms of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Kenya and even less from the beneficiaries' and other key stakeholders' perspective. The aim

of this study is to fill this gap by investigating the implementation of the programmes at the IOM Clinic, as well as the impact of the programmes on perceptions of safety, wellbeing, economic empowerment and trafficking prevention awareness among vulnerable citizens in Eastleigh, Nairobi County.

2.3 Summary and Research Gap

The literature reviewed shows that voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes contribute to the fight against trafficking in persons in three important areas: economic empowerment, psychosocial recovery, social reintegration and access to support services. Previous research has shown that, generally, these interventions including vocational training, livelihood support, counselling, legal and case management can all reduce vulnerability to exploitation and re-trafficking (Dell et al. 2019). The literature also emphasises that reintegration cannot only be achieved through economic empowerment, but also through social integration, psychological health, family reintegration and institutional support (Paasche & Skilbrei, 2017). However, there are also ongoing challenges such as stigma and discrimination, limited coordination of stakeholders, poor long-term support, implementation gaps and unemployment that persist and continue to negatively impact reintegration outcomes (Joshi et al. 2025).

Although there is some considerable evidence on re-integration, there are still a few gaps in knowledge. First, most of the literature is from European and Asian contexts and much less research has drawn from Kenya and East Africa more broadly (Marcos & Elopre-Carredo, 2025). Secondly, the existing literature tends to focus on socioeconomic empowerment, reintegration issues and programme implementation as distinct fields of study, which may not highlight much about how these factors interact to affect vulnerability to trafficking (Ramaj, 2023). Third, there is limited empirical evidence on the association between reintegration interventions and trafficking prevention outcomes, as most existing studies have been based on qualitative methods and programme monitoring and evaluation. There is therefore not enough knowledge about the impact reintegration programmes have on decreasing the vulnerability of trafficking beneficiaries.

In addition, while IOM has been conducting voluntary return and reintegration (VR&R) programmes in Kenya for some years, there has been little research specifically focused on the implementation and effectiveness of IOM Clinic's programmes in Eastleigh, Nairobi County. Current research is limited in evidence around

beneficiaries' perceptions of safety and wellbeing, the socio-economic empowerment outcomes, their experiences of social reintegration and challenges during reintegration (Joshi et al. 2025). This has therefore resulted in limited understanding of the effectiveness of these programmes in preventing trafficking in persons in the local Kenyan context. This study aims to therefore examine the impact of voluntary return and reintegration programmes on combating trafficking in persons among vulnerable people in Eastleigh, Nairobi County. In particular, the study examines the impact that socio-economic empowerment interventions have on returnees, identifies reintegration challenges and examines the experience of reintegration programmes and their results within the IOM Clinic. The use of mixed-methods approach provides context-specific evidence that can be used to inform policy, programme design, and anti-trafficking interventions in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapters include approaches used to recruit participants, collect and analyse data in the study. It begins with a description of design and approaches used and proceeds to include the research location, target population as well as the approaches to sampling. The methods for collecting and analysing data are described and the chapter ends with description for legal and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is the overarching plan that brings together the various components of a study in a logical and cohesive manner. It serves as a blueprint for data gathering, measurement, and analysis, ensuring that the research problem is effectively addressed (Claybaugh, 2020). The study adopted a mixed-methods approach. This approach is justified because the phenomenon of trafficking and reintegration is multifaceted and cannot be fully understood through numerical data alone. Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires to measure indicators such as programme reach, reintegration success, and economic stability. Qualitative data, obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants and stakeholders, provided deeper insights into personal experiences, challenges, and perceptions of programme effectiveness. Integrating both methods enhances validity and reliability through triangulation, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The design adopted in the study was descriptive and cross-sectional given that it allowed for a detailed examination of the effectiveness of VRR programmes in preventing TiP. The descriptive approach was suitable because it provided an accurate portrayal of current conditions without manipulating variables, thereby enabling the researcher to collect factual information on beneficiaries' experiences, programme implementation, and reintegration outcomes (Creswell, 2014). The design was appropriate since the study sought to describe, interpret, and analyse existing conditions rather than test causal relationships.

At the same time, the design adopted was cross-sectional given that the study captured a snapshot of reintegration experiences among returnees and the implementation outcomes of VRR programmes within a

specific period. It was also suitable given time and resource constraints while still allowing for reliable comparison among respondents. The approach provided valuable insights into the current state of reintegration, the role of socio-economic empowerment interventions, and the factors influencing the prevention of trafficking in persons.

The survey method targeted beneficiaries of voluntary return and reintegration programmes at the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County. Survey designs are systematic methods used in quantitative research to collect information from a population or sample to describe attitudes, opinions, or experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design was ideal for reaching a large number of beneficiaries efficiently, providing an overview of their perceptions regarding programme effectiveness. Quantitative analysis helped establish statistical relationships, such as the association between socio-economic empowerment and the prevention of TiP.

Qualitative data collection involved in-depth interviews with key informants, including programme administrators, case officers, law enforcement officials, and representatives from partner NGOs. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative interviews enabled researchers to explore participants' experiences and perspectives in detail through open-ended questions. These interviews helped contextualize quantitative findings, explain observed trends, and capture the complexity of reintegration and prevention efforts in Eastleigh.

Overall, the combination of descriptive, cross-sectional, and mixed-methods designs was well-suited to this study because it allowed for an in-depth, evidence-based assessment of VRR programmes. The descriptive design captured existing realities, the cross-sectional design enables efficient data collection, and the mixed-methods approach enriches analysis by combining measurable data with lived experiences. Together, these methods ensured comprehensive coverage of all research objectives and contribute to a holistic understanding of how VRR programmes help prevent trafficking in persons.

3.3 Research Site

The study was carried out at the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, in the Kamukunji Sub-County of Nairobi County. Data from the national population census of 2019 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019) indicated that Eastleigh covers a total land area of 9.3 square kilometres. It has a total population of 225,815 persons, comprising 113,747 males and 112,064 females. Eastleigh has a population density of 24,234 persons per square kilometre (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019), which is significantly denser than the average density in Kenya at 97 persons per square kilometre (Worldometer, n.d.). There is a total of 67,552 households in Eastleigh. Eastleigh is further broken down into the administrative wards of Airbase, Eastleigh North, Eastleigh South, Kiambiu, and Uhuru. Between 2013 and 2012, the IOM provided 585 Kenyans with assisted return (IOM, 2022).

Eastleigh is characterized by mixed movement; thus, it is a destination for refugees, asylum seekers, migrant labourers, smuggled migrants, and victims of trafficking from all over the region. It serves as a transit area primarily for Ethiopians and Somalis migrating south towards South Africa. Eastleigh is home to numerous urban migrants with new numbers of migrants arriving each week. Eastleigh is one of the major smuggling hubs in Kenya, housing transit migrants destined for various locations. Within Eastleigh are housed migrants from various countries within the region.

There exist specific vulnerabilities in Eastleigh that can be exploited by traffickers. The presence of migrants, refugees, and marginalized communities makes it an area of concern. This trafficking concern prompts various stakeholders to implement voluntary return and reintegration programmes. These initiatives aim to prevent trafficking, assist survivors, and address the root causes that make individuals susceptible to exploitation.

The IOM plays a pivotal role in Eastleigh, Nairobi, by providing comprehensive support to migrants and returnees, including those who are victims of human trafficking. The IOM Clinic in Eastleigh serves as a key intervention point, offering essential healthcare services, psychosocial support, and VRR assistance to vulnerable migrants and returnees. The clinic provides medical screenings, mental health counselling, and case

management services, ensuring that returnees are physically and psychologically prepared for reintegration. The clinic also facilitates the AVRR programme, which enables migrants to return to their home countries safely and with dignity. Through this program, returnees receive pre-departure counselling, reintegration planning, and tailored post-return support, aimed at ensuring sustainable reintegration and reducing the risk of re-trafficking (IOM, 2022). The IOM Clinic collaborates with government agencies, local NGOs, and international organisations to provide holistic support, addressing the root causes of vulnerability among migrants. Given Eastleigh's status as a transit hub for migrants from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and other regions, the presence of the IOM Clinic is vital in mitigating risks associated with human trafficking and irregular migration. By offering these services, the clinic plays a significant role in strengthening migration management and protecting migrants from exploitation (IOM, 2022).

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised victims of TiP, individuals, and organisations directly involved in the prevention of TiP through VRR programmes in Eastleigh. This population was selected based on its direct relevance to the research objectives and variables, and its inclusion is fundamental to the comprehensive investigation of the effectiveness of these programmes in the context of TiP prevention.

The first subset of the target population encompassed the beneficiaries (victims of TiP) of voluntary return and reintegration programmes living and operating in Eastleigh. These individuals represented those who have directly engaged with these programmes as part of their journey in return and reintegration in their communities. Their participation was vital as they provide firsthand insights into the efficacy of these initiatives, along with offering their personal experiences, levels of satisfaction, and the tangible impact of the programmes on their lives. Based on the IOM annual report 2022, the clinic in Eastleigh had a total of 3,782 beneficiaries between 2018 and 2022 (IOM Kenya, 2022a, 2022b). From the reports, 1545 representing 41% of the beneficiaries were individuals below 18 years (IOM Kenya, 2022a, 2022b). The difference which was 2237 beneficiaries were above 18 years and therefore considered to be the target population.

Programme administrators, case officers, and staff responsible for the management and operation of the voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Eastleigh, and particularly the IOM clinic, form the second subset as key informants. Their inclusion serves to gain a profound understanding of the intricacies of programme implementation, the challenges encountered, and the successes achieved. Their perspectives and expertise are invaluable in shedding light on the operational aspects of these programmes and their contribution to TiP prevention.

While it is difficult to find a comprehensive list of INGOs and NGOs running voluntary return and reintegration programmes in Kenya, some of the notable and registered organisations include The International Organisation for Migration, Trace Kenya, Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART) Kenya, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Regional Centre for Combating TiP, The United States Department of Justice, Consolation East Africa, Anti-Human Trafficking Advocacy, The UNODC, International Rescue Committee, Love Justice Kenya, Stop the Traffic, and Counter Human Trafficking Trust-East Africa. It can then be assumed that each of these 13 organisations has at least one programme administrator/coordinator and at least one case officer. This would give a target population of 13 programme administrators/coordinators and 13 case officers.

The third subset of the target population is law enforcement officers, which includes but is not limited to police, chiefs, local administration, and immigration authorities operating in Eastleigh. These individuals play a pivotal role in the overall efforts to combat human trafficking within the region. Their perspectives and experiences provide a critical dimension to the research, elucidating the interaction between voluntary return and reintegration programmes and law enforcement activities in the prevention of TiP.

Law enforcement officers will include police officers engaged in the prevention of human trafficking, immigration officers involved in the prevention of human trafficking, chiefs and local administration, and officers and staff from the CTiP Secretariat.

Thus, the target population is as follows:

Table 3.1: Target Population

Category	Number
Beneficiaries of Return and Reintegration Programmes	2,237
Programme Administrators/Coordinators (Key Informants)	13
Case Officers (Key Informants)	13
Law Enforcement Officers (Key Informants)	15
Total	**2,278**

Source: IOM Kenya (2022a, 2022b)

The chosen population not only aligns directly with these research components but also offers a multi-stakeholder approach that ensures a comprehensive understanding of the complex issue of TiP prevention in Eastleigh. The selection was further justified by the feasibility of accessing the target population, as beneficiaries of the programmes are typically registered with the implementing organisations, and programme administrators and law enforcement officials can be approached through established channels. Further, this election enabled data triangulation from diverse sources, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the research findings. It ensured that the study's insights extend beyond mere academic inquiry and hold practical significance by informing policy recommendations, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of TiP prevention measures in the region. By incorporating the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries, programme administrators, and law enforcement officials, this research strives to offer a holistic understanding of the interplay between programme effectiveness, beneficiary satisfaction, and the broader TiP prevention landscape in Eastleigh.

3.5 Study Sample

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

In this study, the sample was selected using a combination of simple random and purposive sampling. The simple random sampling serves as a fundamental and unbiased method of participant selection. This approach, as explained by Creswell and Creswell (2018), ensured that every individual within the population under study has an equal and impartial chance of being included in the research sample. This methodology was instrumental in enhancing the generalizability of research findings to the broader population. The advantages

of employing simple random sampling in this research are that it facilitated representativeness by ensuring that every participant has an equal chance of being selected, thereby creating a sample that is more reflective of the entire population. Secondly, the findings derived from a sample selected through simple random sampling are more likely to be generalizable to the broader population, bolstering the external validity of the study. Finally, the methodology allowed for the use of statistical techniques to make meaningful inferences about the entire population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The next type of sampling involved the researcher deliberately selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research study (Dudovskiy, 2022). The goal of the sampling was to choose individuals or cases that possess the information or characteristics needed to address the research questions effectively. This sampling method allowed researchers to focus on participants who can provide rich, in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Purposive sampling was particularly well-suited for key informant interviews. Key informants were individuals who have specialized knowledge or expertise in the subject of the study and can offer valuable insights and perspectives (Dudovskiy, 2022). The selection of key informants was not random but intentional, based on their knowledge and experiences in regard to TiP. Since key informant interviews often involve individuals with limited time availability due to their expertise or position, purposive sampling allowed researchers to target specific individuals efficiently, maximizing the use of limited resources (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

For the beneficiaries of return and reintegration programmes (218), a list of all beneficiaries within the Eastleigh area was first obtained from the IOM clinic. The beneficiaries were randomly selected to ensure representation (simple random sampling).

Purposive sampling was used for the key informants. The population of the Programme Administrators/Coordinators (13), Case Officers (13), and Law Enforcement Officers (15) is small and specific, thus all individuals in each group can be directly approached.

3.5.2 Study Sample Size

The population (N)of beneficiaries of Return and Reintegration Programmes is relatively large at 2237; hence, a representative sample was calculated using the standard sample size formula for finite populations. A confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% will be applied. The formula for determining the sample size as defined by Chaokromthong and Sintao (2021) is defined below;

$$n=\frac{N}{1+\ Ne^2}$$

Where:

- n required sample size,
- N is the total population
- The margin of error (0.07).

Substituting these values:

$$n=\frac{2237}{1+2237(0.07)^2}=187$$

Thus, the final sample size for beneficiaries was approximately 187 respondents. On margin of error, Jessop (2018) argues that in cases where the participants are hard to access such the context of beneficiaries of IOM clinic in this study, a higher margin of error would assist in balancing between precision and the realities of data collection. Given that the population of key informants; programme administrators or coordinators (13), case officers (13), and law enforcement officers (15); was relatively small, a census approach was applied, targeting all 41 key informants. The total sample size was 228 as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Category	**Number**
Beneficiaries of Return and Reintegration Programmes	187
Programme Administrators/Coordinators (Key informants)	13
Case Officers (Key informants)	13
Law Enforcement Officers (Key informants)	15

Total	**228**

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process for the research on VRR programs in TiP prevention involved the development and administration of structured questionnaires (Appendix 1). These questionnaires were directed at beneficiaries of the programs and are well-suited for cross-sectional surveys with a relatively large sample size. They featured closed-ended questions designed to measure variables such as satisfaction levels, programme effectiveness, and demographics. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the help of research assistants ensuring that the administration process remains controlled and consistent. This control was crucial, as it assisted maintain a standardized format, reducing the likelihood of respondents misunderstanding or skipping questions. Additionally, having trained personnel present allows for real-time clarification of any doubts, further minimizing misinterpretation and ensuring that participants fully understand each question. This structured approach was anticipated to lead to higher response and completion rates, as the guidance provided during administration will encourage participants to engage fully with the survey. Moreover, the face-to-face interaction helps eliminate barriers related to limited literacy and language proficiency.

To gather insights from key stakeholders, a semi-structured interview guide, targeting Programme Administrators/Coordinators, Case Officers, and Law Enforcement Officers was applied. The guide (Appendix 2) consists of 18 questions divided across nine sections. The sections described were in line with the main variables and objectives of the study. The interview guide incorporated open-ended questions, encouraging respondents to share their qualitative insights, experiences, and recommendations in their own words. This qualitative dimension aimed to uncover the nuanced perspectives of the stakeholders, providing rich narratives about their daily roles, challenges, and successes while seeking their input on potential programme improvements.

Overall, employing both structured and hybrid questionnaires enabled the research to capture a well-rounded set of data. The quantitative data gathered from beneficiaries complemented the qualitative insights obtained from stakeholders, providing a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration programs in preventing trafficking in persons in Eastleigh. By triangulating qualitative and quantitative data, the study enhanced the validity and reliability of its findings, ensuring that the research accurately reflects the complexities involved in TiP prevention and the experiences of those directly engaged in these programs.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing

A pilot test was conducted before the actual data collection to ensure the reliability, clarity, and the appropriateness of the research instruments. As recommended by Green (2020), a 10% of the calculated sample amounting to 23 participants was selected. Green (2020) found such a proportion to be adequate in identifying potential issues in question wording, structure, and clarity while representing the characteristics of the main study population. The pilot sample was conducted in Nairobi through the beneficiaries identified through the Refugee Consortium of Kenya.

The pilot sample consisted of beneficiaries and programme administrators. The main finding was that a majority of participants found the questionnaire items to be ideal, reflecting the purpose of the study. Respondent feedback revealed that there were areas that needed to be clarified or simplified in terms of questions concerning social-economic empowerment and reintegration experiences. One of the most common challenges was on differentiating between trafficking and trafficking-in-persons which was addressed by restating the questions for enhanced clarity.

3.6.3 Instrument of Reliability

Evaluating the reliability of the chosen instruments, in this case, structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, is a crucial aspect of ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the research findings. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of measurement instruments over time and across different conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To assess the reliability of the questionnaires used in this study, several methods will be employed. One common method for evaluating the internal consistency of questionnaire items is Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The coefficient measures the extent to which the items within a scale or construct are interrelated and consistently measure the same underlying concept. A high coefficient (typically above 0.70) indicates good internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items (UCLA, n.d.). Any result below 0.60 is unacceptable, between 0.60 and 0.65 is undesirable, between 0.65 and 0.70 is minimally acceptable, between 0.70 and 0.80 is respectable, between 0.80 and 0.90 is very good, and anything above 0.90 is excellent (Ursachi, Horodnic, & Zait, 2015). Necessary revisions will be made based on pilot feedback before the main data collection begins.

Additionally, the test-retest method will be employed to assess the stability of the questionnaire over time. A random subset of participants were asked to complete the same questionnaire twice with a time gap in between. The responses from the two administrations will be compared using statistical techniques such as Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the questionnaire's temporal reliability.

To maintain the reliability of the hybrid questionnaire, explicit and uniform instructions were provided to all respondents. These instructions guide respondents on how to complete the questionnaire, particularly in terms of quantitative questions that require numerical or scaled responses. The use of clear, unambiguous language and instructions minimizes the likelihood of misinterpretation and ensures that responses are consistently understood and recorded.

By employing these methods to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaires, this study aimed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflect the intended constructs and participant perspectives, thereby strengthening the validity of the study's conclusions.

3.6.4 Instrument of Validity

Assessing the validity of research instruments is a critical aspect of ensuring that they measure what they are intended to measure. The concept refers to the extent to which an instrument accurately and effectively measures the specific constructs or concepts it is designed to assess (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Content validity focuses on whether the items or questions in the research instruments adequately represent the content or domain you intend to measure. To establish content validity for structured questionnaires, a thorough review of the questionnaire items was conducted by subject matter experts in the field of trafficking in persons (TiP), as well as individuals with expertise in the design of survey instruments. Their feedback and input were used to refine the questionnaire items, ensuring that they comprehensively and accurately capture the key dimensions of TiP prevention and programme effectiveness in Eastleigh. This expert review process enhanced the content validity of the questionnaires.

Face validity assesses whether the research instruments appear to be effective. Before administering the questionnaires and conducting interviews, a pilot test was conducted with a small subset of participants from the target population. This pilot test served to assess the face validity of the questionnaires and interview guides by gauging participants' initial reactions and perceptions. Any ambiguities or concerns raised by pilot participants was addressed through questionnaire revisions or interview guide adjustments to enhance face validity.

3.6.5 Data Collection Procedures

Structured questionnaires was administered to the selected beneficiaries of VRR programmes in Eastleigh. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected, a systematic approach was followed.

Upon obtaining informed consent from participants, a team of trained surveyors administered the structured questionnaires to each beneficiary. These surveyors were well-versed in the research objectives, questionnaire items, and ethical considerations. The surveyors guided participants through the questionnaire, ensuring clarity of questions and recording responses accurately. The face-to-face administration provided the opportunity for

participants to seek clarifications or express concerns, further enhancing data quality. Additionally, the surveyors maintained a respectful and non-biased demeanour throughout the process.

To accommodate participants who may prefer self-administration due to language or literacy considerations, a self-administered option was also provided. Participants received clear instructions for completing the questionnaire independently. In cases where participants opted for self-administration, assistants were available to provide assistance.

Programme Administrators/Coordinators, Case Officers, and Law Enforcement Officers were identified and invited to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, outlining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses.The hybrid questionnaire was administered to each participant either in person or through electronic means (specifically Google Forms), depending on their preferences and logistical considerations. For those who opted for a face-to-face interview, the researcher met with participants at convenient locations, ensuring a comfortable and private setting. The term hybrid questionnaire refers to a data collection instrument that can be administered using both online and physical methods. In this study, the hybrid questionnaire allowed respondents to choose between completing the survey electronically—through Google Forms—or through a face-to-face interview using printed copies. This dual approach ensured flexibility, wider reach, and increased response rates. Participants who prefer in-person interviews were engaged in private and comfortable settings, while those with internet access received a secure electronic link.

By implementing these data collection procedures for the questionnaires, this study aimed to gather comprehensive and high-quality data that aligns with the research objectives and variables, ultimately contributing to the robustness and validity of the research findings.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, a systematic data processing procedure was followed in preparing the gathered information for analysis. Quantitative data obtained through structured questionnaires was entered

into a secure digital database and data processing software (Excel and SPSS). This process involved data cleaning to identify and rectify any errors or inconsistencies in the responses. Missing data was also addressed through appropriate techniques, such as imputation or case deletion, as necessary.

Qualitative data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis, ensuring that themes and patterns within the data was identified accurately. All qualitative data was stored securely to maintain confidentiality and data integrity.

Descriptive statistics was employed to summarize and present quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires. This included measures such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, which provided an overview of participants' responses. Descriptive statistics was used to address the research objectives related to assessing the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in TiP prevention as well as determining the challenges. The next step was correlation analysis which was applied in evaluating the effect of the socio-economic factors in line with objective two of the study.

Qualitative data obtained was subjected to thematic analysis. This process involved systematically identifying, coding, and categorizing themes and patterns within the interview transcripts. By using qualitative analysis software, the researcher collaboratively analysed the data to ensure rigor and consistency in identifying key insights and recurring themes. The qualitative analysis provided a deeper understanding of participants' experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to TiP prevention and programme effectiveness. These qualitative findings complemented the quantitative data, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the research topic.

In sum, the data processing and analysis procedures outlined above were designed to meet the specific research objectives of this study. The combination of descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data, along with thematic analysis for qualitative data, facilitated a robust and comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in preventing trafficking in persons in Eastleigh.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

Conducting research on the sensitive topic of human trafficking, particularly within the context of voluntary return and reintegration programmes, necessitates careful attention to legal and ethical considerations. Throughout the study, the researcher was committed to upholding the highest ethical standards to ensure the well-being, confidentiality, and rights of all participants involved. In this study, the researcher began by acquiring the institutional ethical approval which provided the basis for conducting the study. (Appendix 3)

The study was conducted in compliance with the Data Protection Act of 2019. In line with these guidelines, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Prior to data collection, each participant was provided with detailed information related to the study. They were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns before providing written or verbal consent to participate.

Furthermore, respecting the principles of confidentiality and privacy is of utmost importance. All data collected whether quantitative or qualitative, was anonymized and securely stored to protect the identities and personal information of the participants. This assisted in maintaining the trust and confidence of participants, especially in cases where they may be vulnerable or at risk.

In compliance with legal and ethical guidelines, the researcher sought clearance and approval from the relevant authorities. This included obtaining clearance from the university's faculty, graduate school, and ethics committee to ensure that the study aligns with ethical standards and safeguards. Additionally, given the research's location in Kenya, clearance was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) – Appendix 4. The commission is responsible for regulating research in Kenya, and obtaining their clearance ensures that the study is conducted in accordance with national research guidelines and regulations.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter includes a description of the data, qualitative and quantitative obtained in the study. It begins with a description of the response rate and proceeds to presents the result of the data in line with the study objectives. In this chapter, qualitative results are presented to complement the quantitative results.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1 shows participant response rate. The achieved quantitative response rate of 85% is considered strong and methodologically acceptable in survey research. According to Fincham (2008), response rates of 60% and above are generally adequate for analysis and reporting in social science research, while rates above 80% are regarded as particularly robust and less prone to non-response bias. Similarly, Baruch and Holtom (2008) note that organizational and social research surveys often report mean response rates significantly lower than 85%, reinforcing the adequacy of the current study's response level.

From a methodological standpoint, an 85% response rate enhances the internal validity of the quantitative findings by reducing the likelihood that systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents significantly distort the results. However, it does not eliminate the possibility of non-response bias, particularly if the 15% who did not participate differ meaningfully in socioeconomic status, reintegration experience, or vulnerability profiles.

For the qualitative component, the 100% participation rate among key informants strengthens the credibility and completeness of the dataset, as no intended institutional perspectives were excluded. This full coverage improves data triangulation, allowing for more reliable cross-validation of findings across beneficiary and institutional stakeholders.

Overall, the response rates achieved in both study components are sufficient to support analytical reliability, interpretive confidence, and general methodological rigor, particularly when combined with appropriate sampling procedures and transparent reporting of non-response.

Table 0.1: Response Rate

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Target No. of Participants	169	100%
Responded	144	85%
No response	25	15%

4.3 Participant Demographics

This section presents the overall demographics of participants. Table 4.2 shows the age and gender distribution among participants. From the findings, a majority, 40% of the participants were aged between 46 and 60 years with 81% being aged above 30 years. In terms of gender, 59% were male while 41% were female. Findings are an illustration of fair distribution of participants based on gender.

Table 4.2: Age and Gender Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Gender	Frequency
18-30 Years	19%	Male	59%
31-45 Years	30%	Female	41%
46-60 Years	40%		
Above 60 Years	11%		

The age distribution shows that most respondents were 46–60 years (40%), followed by 31–45 years (30%), 18–30 years (19%), and above 60 years (11%). While younger populations are often considered more vulnerable to deceptive recruitment and irregular migration (IOM, 2020), the prominence of older age groups in this study highlights reintegration challenges linked to labour market exclusion, reduced employability, and economic dependency, which may increase reliance on precarious coping strategies.

Gender distribution indicates 59% male and 41% female respondents. This reflects growing evidence that men are significantly affected by trafficking for forced labour, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and construction (ILO, 2017). However, gender remains a key structural factor shaping the type of exploitation experienced and access to reintegration support, with women often facing additional barriers such as stigma and caregiving burdens (UNODC, 2024). The findings are therefore effective in determination of whether there are some gender-specific challenges associated with re-integration.

In terms of education, most respondents had primary education or lower, with only 6% attaining tertiary education. Low educational attainment is associated with increased vulnerability to exploitative recruitment and reduced access to formal employment pathways, thereby affecting reintegration sustainability (ILO, 2017). Additionally, 47% of respondents were married, suggesting household responsibilities that may influence reintegration decisions, including pressure to re-migrate due to economic demands. The contribution of these findings is that individuals with higher levels of education are likely to easily attract employment which would contribute towards reduced likelihood of re-trafficking.

Table 0.3: Level of Education and Marital Status

Level of Education	Frequency	Marital Status	Frequency
No formal Education	21%	Single	19%
Primary Education	32%	Married	47%
Secondary Education	24%	Separated	7%
Vocational Education	16%	Divorced	5%
Tertiary Education	6%	Widowed	22%

The next element of demographics was the employment status outlined in Figure 4.1. The findings show that slightly more than half of the participants were unemployed. The above could be as a result of economic vulnerabilities brought about by the re-integration barriers. The contribution in this case is that unemployed persons are most likely to experience more challenges associated with re-integration.

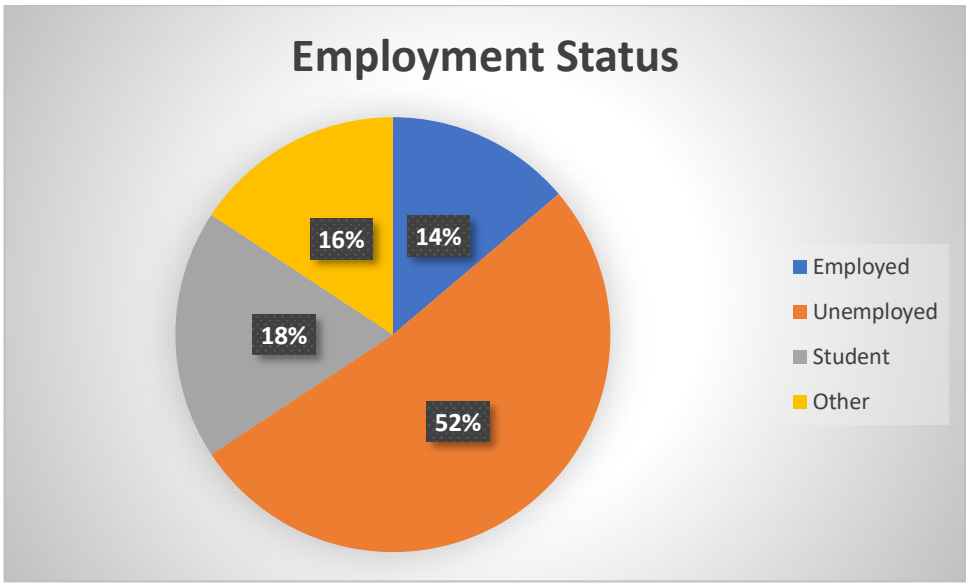


Figure 0.1: Employment Status

4.4 Presentation of Research Analysis and Findings

4.4.1 Contribution of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programs in Combating Trafficking

This section presents the results aligned with the first objective of the study. First, participants were required to indicate whether they were aware of the VRR programs before evaluating their effect on combating trafficking. From Figure 4.2, descriptive analysis indicates that a majority, 86% were aware of the services offered. At the same time a majority of participants also reported that they understood the steps required in applying for voluntary return and navigating through the systems.

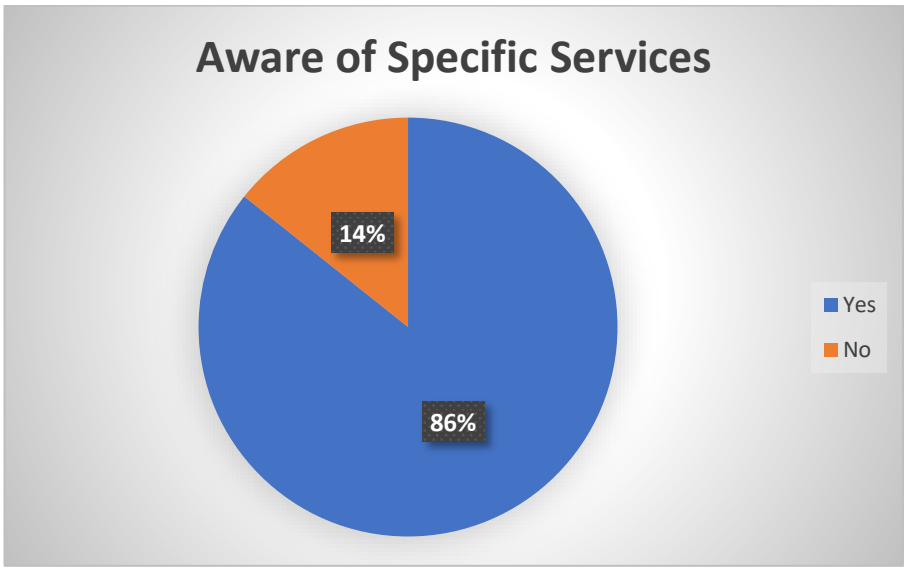


Figure 0.2: Knowledge of Specific Services

The findings on awareness can be interpreted to mean that there is high level of visibility for the programs. The visibility would be interpreted to be a sign of effective information dissemination mechanisms by governments and other relevant stakeholders. The high awareness represents strong program reach which is important in combating trafficking.

The next consideration was on the availability and accessibility of the support services. From the findings, a majority found the services to be fair which is an indication of average availability and accessibility. While 26% reported that they do not use the support services, only 6% indicated that the services were poor.

Table 0.4: Availability and Accessibility of Services

Service Attribute	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	14	10%
Good	29	20%
Fair	54	38%
Poor	9	6%
Do not use support services	38	26%

The findings could be interpreted to mean that available and accessible support services help stabilize beneficiaries upon return by addressing urgent needs, improving wellbeing, and restoring a sense of security. This reduces the likelihood that individuals will resort to risky coping strategies, such as unsafe migration or exploitative employment, which are key pathways into trafficking. Equally, the results showing high awareness of reintegration services among beneficiaries imply that the programme has implemented good reintegration outreach and information dissemination channels. Awareness is crucial as it is the first step towards access to support services and gives beneficiaries options on the type of support available. Awareness of trafficking prevention is instrumental in increasing beneficiaries' awareness of the various protection mechanisms available, regarding how to migrate safely and where to seek assistance in case of trafficking.

The contribution of VRR programs was also linked to the ability of individuals to secure income. As a result, a majority of the participants reported that they were not confident of their ability to secure stable income and maintain self-sufficiency after the programme as evident in Figure 4.3.

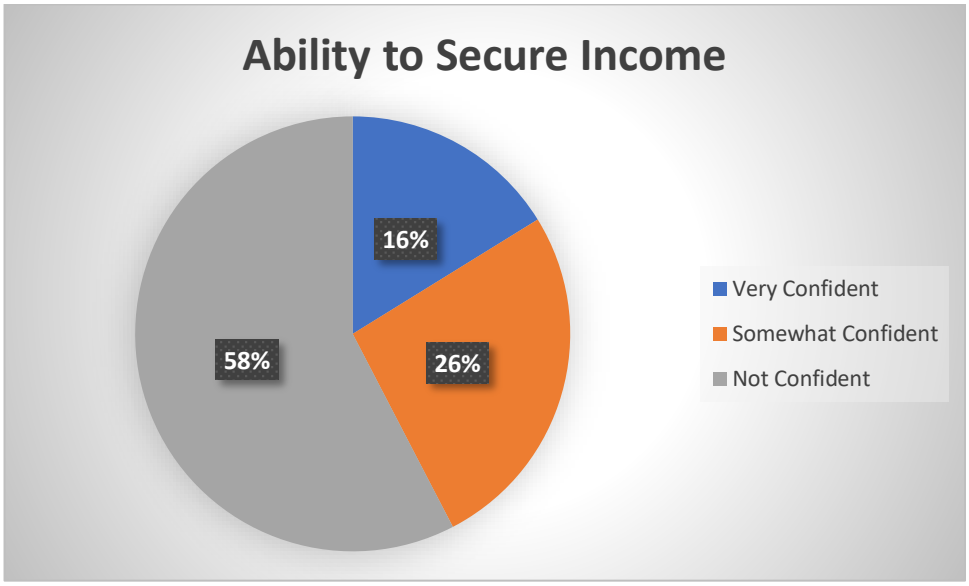


Figure 0.3: Ability to Secure Income

Findings are an indication that the programme beneficiaries have not been fully prepared for their roles. Given that Since economic vulnerability is a primary driver of trafficking, this lack of confidence implies that many beneficiaries may still be at risk of engaging in unsafe migration or exploitative work as coping strategies.

The effect of VRR in combating trafficking is also evident through reduction in vulnerability which would be evaluated in the context of changes in living standards. From findings in Table 4.5, a total of 72% of the participants reported that their standard of living had become either better (44%) or much better (28%). At the same time, only 9% reported that their living standard had become which is an indication that for a majority of beneficiaries, the programs were largely effective.

Table 0.5: Changes in Standard of Living

Living Standard	Frequency	Percentage
Much Better	40	28%
Better	64	44%
About the same	27	19%

Worse	13	9%

The findings would be interpreted to mean that participation in VRR would have a major impact on long-term wellbeing and economic stability. This means that the VRR programs provides support programs such as financial assistance, healthcare, and counselling which are critical in improving the quality of life and reducing vulnerability that would lead to trafficking.

4.4.2 Role of Socioeconomic Empowerment Interventions within Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

This section presents the results on the second objective of the study. The first consideration was on the different socio-economic empowerment interventions within the VRR programs. Based on findings in Figure 4.5, only 61% of the participants reported that they had received economic support from the programme either in the form of financial assistance or grants. The findings implies that almost a third of the participants had not received the relevant economic support from the program. For those who received the economic support, close to half, amounting to 49% found the support to be somewhat helpful, 30% found it to be very helpful while only 21% found it to be not helpful.

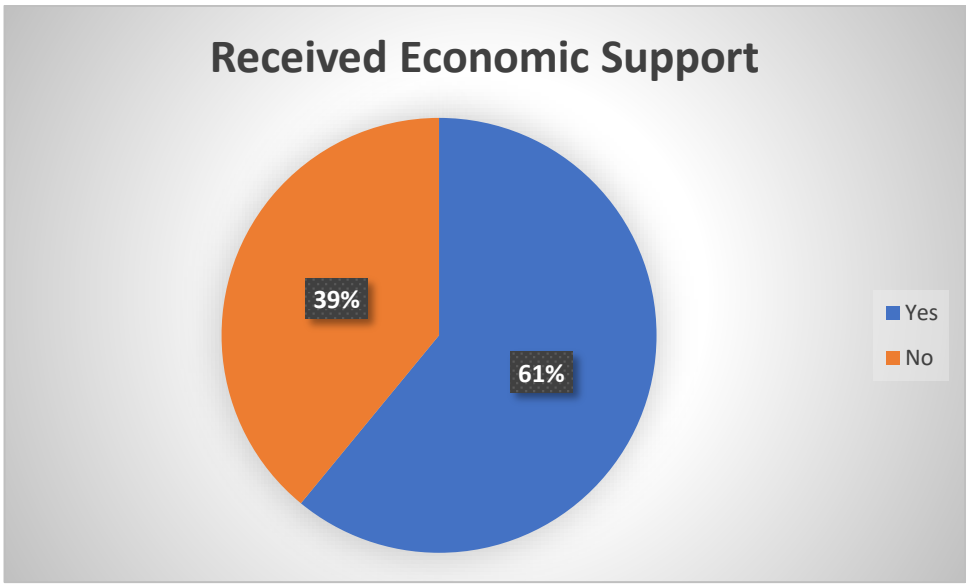


Figure 0.4: Received Economic Support

The findings are an indication of partial effectiveness of the economic support which would mean that for some participants, the findings may not be enough to meet their actual needs or capacities.

The study also sought to determine the impact of the economic program. From the findings in Table 4.6, a majority (38%) indicated that their lives had moderately improved after receiving economic support. In this regard, only 15% reported no improvement with 25% reporting significant improvement. The findings are a further indication of the partial effectiveness of the programme in terms of supporting the beneficiaries financially.

Table 0.6: Impact of Economic Support

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly Improved	36	25%
Moderately Improved	55	38%
Slightly Improved	32	22%
No Improvement	21	15%

In terms of training, only 65% of the participants reported that they had received some formal training. Table 4.7 shows the most common trainings offered. From Table 4.7, it is evident that close to half of participants (49%) received entrepreneurship training which was critical for preparing them to the realities of the new economy. In terms of the effectiveness of the training programs, 61% found the trainings to be very effective, 29% somewhat effective and only 10% found them not effective. The findings indicates that to a large extent, programme beneficiaries were effectively trained.

Table 0.7: Type of Training Offered

Training Offered	Frequency	Percentage
Vocational training	27	19%
Entrepreneurship training	70	49%
Job readiness training	39	27%

Other	8	6%

After receiving support and training, participants were required to indicate whether they had started their own business or secured some long-term employment. Findings in Figure 4.5 shows that close to half of participants (49%) had started business but they had neither started a business or secured a long-term employment. Only 32% had started a business which could mean that for a majority of the beneficiaries, the support might be enough for survival but not enough to support an enterprise.

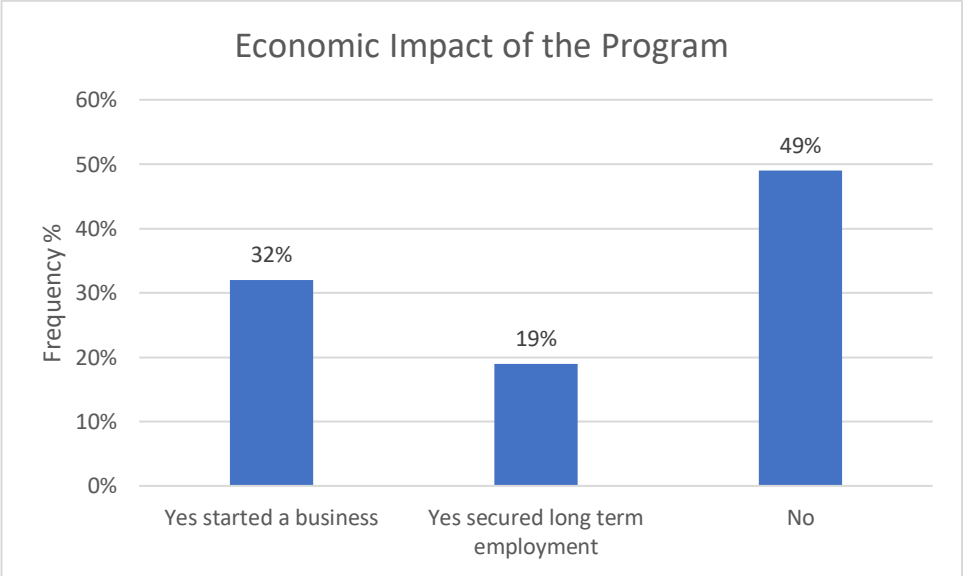


Figure 0.5: Economic Impact of the Program

Equally, participants were required to indicate the additional support they would need in order to enhance socio-economic empowerment. From Table 4.8, it is evident that financial assistance is the most common type of support required followed by access to job opportunities and social services. Findings implies that a majority of beneficiaries finds more financial assistance to be the most important additional support needed.

Table 0.8: Additional Support Needed

Additional Support	Frequency	Percentage
More financial assistance	59	41%
Advanced vocational training	19	13%

Better access to job opportunities	29	20%
Enhanced social services	23	16%
Other	14	10%

In meeting the second objective of the study, correlation analysis was conducted to determine the association between the socio-economic empowerment programs described above and risk reduction. In this study, risk reduction was measured by considering reduction in vulnerability in trafficking. From Table 4.9, the mean response for feeling safe was above average (M = 3.51; SD = 0.95) which is an indication that a majority of participants felt safe after their return and re-integration. At the same time, a majority of participants also reported that they had not received any cases of recidivism after their re-integration (M = 3.47; SD = 1.01). The same pattern was evident fore-integration into social community where the mean response was above average for (M = 3.29; SD = 1.13). However, for the economic situation, the average response was above average but below 3 (M = 2.86; SD = 1.24) which is an indication that a majority of participants disagreed that their economic situation had improved. The findings however confirm the prevention of re-trafficking.

Table 0.9: Prevention of TiP

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel safer and have a sense of well-being since my return and reintegration.	3.51	0.95
My economic situation has improved since my return and reintegration.	2.86	1.24
I have successfully reintegrated into my social community.	3.29	1.13
I have not experienced any incidents of recidivism or re-trafficking since my return and reintegration.	3.47	1.01

To test the relationship between socio-economic empowerment and risk reduction in trafficking of persons, a correlation analysis was performed. The findings showed that the relationship between the two variables was

positive and statistically significant (r = 0.722), which indicates that the increased levels of socio-economic empowerment are related to the greater decrease in the risk of trafficking.

Table 0.3: Correlation Analysis

	Economic Empowerment Programs	*Risk Reduction*
Economic Empowerment Programs	1	
Risk Reduction	0.72203	1

The observed correlation (r = 0.72203) suggests that beneficiaries who accessed and utilized economic empowerment interventions; such as financial assistance, vocational training, and livelihood support; tended to report better risk reduction outcomes. These outcomes include reduced exposure to vulnerability factors such as unsafe migration decisions, reliance on precarious labour arrangements, and other coping strategies associated with economic instability.

This observation means that those beneficiaries who received and made good use of socio-economic assistance (e.g., financial aid, skills training, livelihood opportunities) were more likely to achieve better reintegration outcomes and less vulnerability. The positive correlation implies that the more economically stable and self-reliant the beneficiaries are, the less likely they are to engage in risky coping actions, such as unsafe migration or exploitative labour.

From a statistical perspective, this relationship indicates shared variance of approximately 52.15% (r^2 = 0.5215), meaning that just over half of the variability in risk reduction outcomes is statistically associated with differences in economic empowerment levels. The remaining variance is likely explained by other structural, social, and contextual factors not captured in this model (Babbie, 2016).

These findings should be interpreted as evidence of a strong association rather than a causal pathway. While economic empowerment is closely linked to reduced risk exposure, it cannot be concluded that it directly produces risk reduction without longitudinal or experimental designs. Instead, the findings support the argument that economic empowerment programs are an important correlate of improved reintegration

conditions, potentially operating alongside other reintegration factors such as psychosocial support, social acceptance, and institutional protection systems.

4.4.3 Challenges and Barriers faced by Returnees during Reintegration

All participants in this study reported that they had experienced challenges with their return and reintegration process. From Table 4.11, economic challenges (34%) were the most common followed by legal challenges (25%) in terms of the lack of appropriate documentation as well as the shelter and accommodation challenges (20%). At the same time, all participants reported that they had experienced some form of financial difficulties with 69% indicating that they had been unemployed since their re-integration. From the findings, it is evident that economic challenges were most evident which might have been reinforced by other factors such as the lack of legal status as well as psycho-social issues.

Table 0.11: Challenges Experienced

Additional Support	Frequency	Percentage
Family Challenges	13	9%
Economic Challenges	48	34%
Legal challenges	36	25%
Psycho-social challenges	18	13%
Shelter and accommodation challenges	29	20%

At the same time, all participants reported that they had experienced some social and cultural challenges. Figure 4.6 shows the extent to which the challenges had affected the ability to re-integrate. From the findings, 34% of the participants reported that the socio-cultural challenges had moderately affected their ability to re-integrate. At the same time, 29% were significantly affected which is an illustration of the effects of the social-cultural challenges.

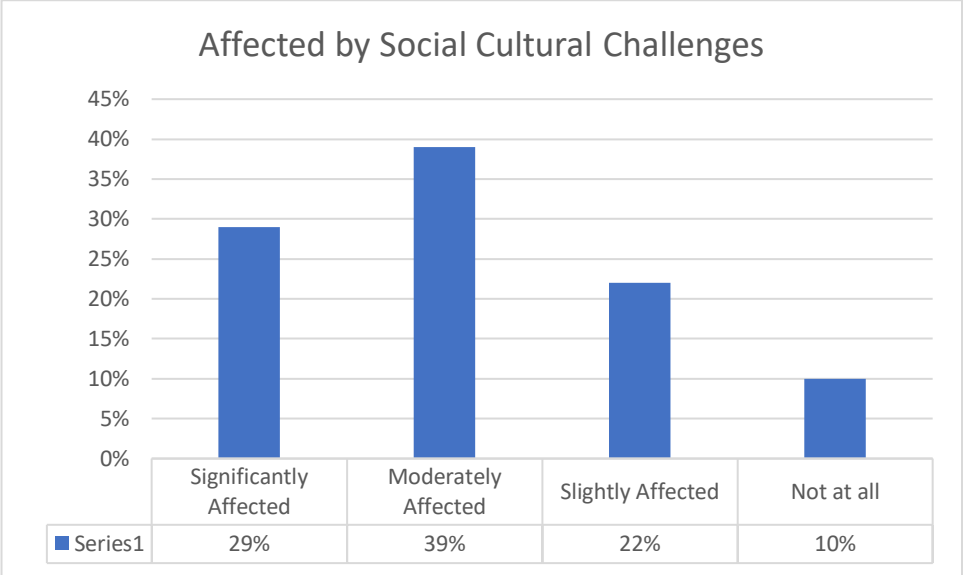


Figure 0.1: Effects of Social Cultural Challenges

In terms of legal issues, 55% reported that they had experienced challenges especially with regard to poor documentation. At the same time, participants were also required to indicate the level of difficult in accessing legal rights and protections. From Figure 4.7, 51% of the participants reported that they found it somewhat difficult accessing legal rights and protections. In this context, socio-cultural challenges such as stigma have an effect on the ability of people to recover psychologically which also have an effect on re-integration.

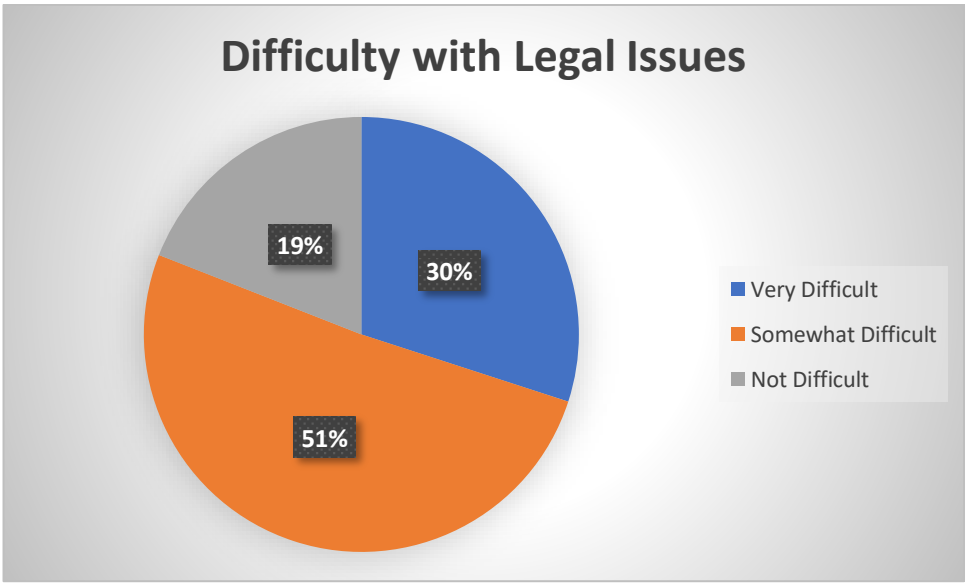


Figure 0.2: Difficulty in Accessing Legal Issues

While the above could be as a result of personal reasons such as lack of proper documentation as well as limited awareness of legal rights, participants also reported experiencing some systemic challenges such as

bureaucracies which limited their access to legal protections. The findings could be interpreted to mean that while legal and policy frameworks exist in Kenya, implementation remains uneven which has resulted in current gaps in re-integration.

4.4.4 Implementation and Outcomes at IOM Clinic

A large majority of the participants (85%), reported that the support provided by the IOM clinic adhered to the international best standards. Participants were further required to indicate the extent to which they found the support to enhance their wellbeing. As evident in Figure 4.8, 35% of the beneficiaries reported that they found the programme to be moderately effective with only 14% finding it to be very effective. Notably, close to a third of the participants (31%) reported that they did not find the programs to be effective at all. Findings are an indication of varying levels of effectiveness for the programs offered by the IOM clinic.

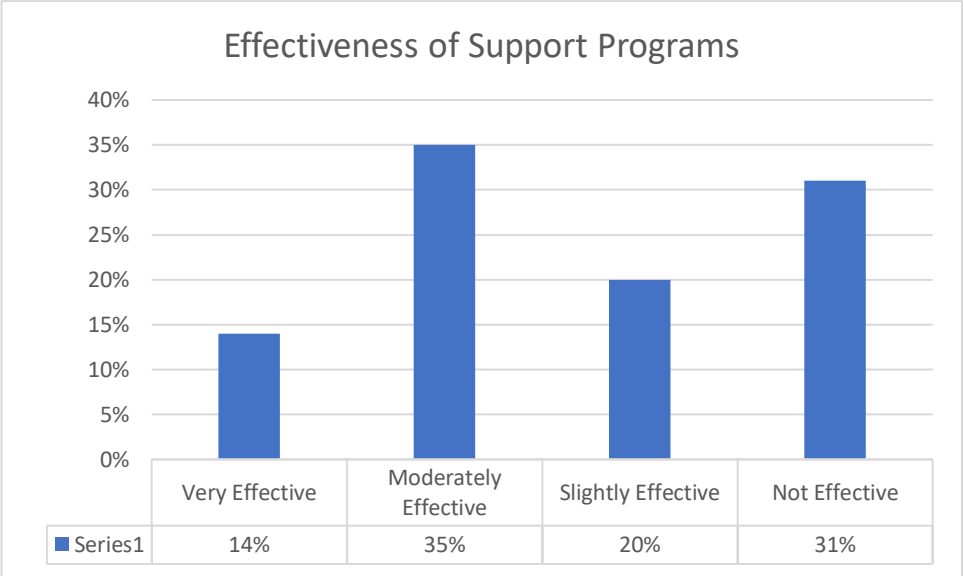


Figure 0.8: Effectiveness of Support Programs

However, a majority of participants reported that the clinic maintained strong partnerships with the local authorities. Specifically, more than three quarters of participants observed that the programs offered by the clinic aligned with the policies by the local authorities. Figure 4.9 shows how coordination with the local authorities facilitated access to resources.

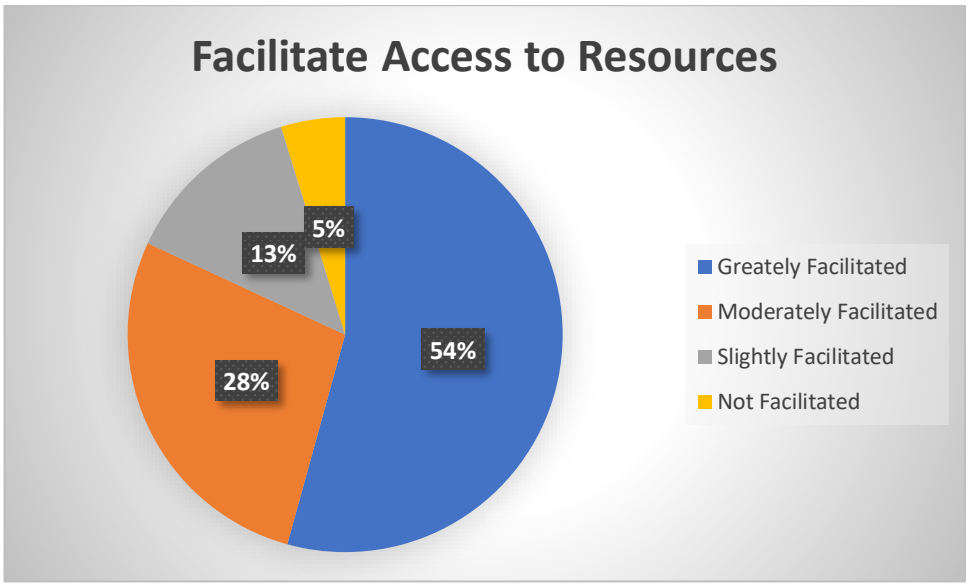


Figure 0.9: Facilitate Access to Resources

4.5 Qualitative Analysis

An analysis of the interviews provided resulted in six main themes. The themes have further been grouped in line with the study objectives as described in Table 12.

Table 0.4: Summary of Themes

Objective	Theme	Description
How voluntary return and re-integration programmes contribute to combating TiP	More Awareness and Risk Recognition Among Stakeholders	Beneficiaries were more aware of VRR interventions and risks associated with TiP
	Short Term Stability vs. Long Term Vulnerability	Programs found to be effective for immediate interventions and safety but not appropriate in addressing vulnerabilities in the long-term
The role of socio-economic empowerment interventions in reducing risk of TiP	Economic Empowerment as the Key to Prevention of Trafficking	Economic empowerment minimizes reliance on risky approaches and therefore key to minimizing TiP

	Mismatch between Skills Training and Labour Market Realities	The trainings offered in VRR programs do not always match the market realities making it difficult for beneficiaries to secure employment
Challenges faced by returnees during the reintegration process	Sustained Economic Hardship as a Cause of Vulnerability	Economic hardships increase vulnerability making it difficult to re-integrate
	Social Reintegration and Psychosocial Barrier	Beneficiaries face isolation and social exclusion which makes it difficult to re-integrate
Implementation and Results of IOM Clinic Programmes	Effectiveness for Immediate Response and Service Delivery	VRR programs confirmed to be effective in addressing the needs of beneficiaries in short term

4.5.1 Contribution of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

4.5.1.1 More Awareness and Risk Recognition Among Stakeholders

Across beneficiaries, case officers and law enforcement personnel, there was consensus that voluntary return and reintegration programmes contribute towards increased awareness of trafficking risks. Beneficiaries described better skills to detect fraudulent recruitment practices, but programme administrators focused on structured sessions for awareness as a key intervention. Law enforcement officers further added that returnees who have experienced reintegration support showed more caution and were less likely to be victims of repeat trafficking.

"*Most people who undergo through the program become more informed and as a result are more cautious which may limit their ability to engage in trafficking again*." Law Enforcement Officer

This convergence of views seems to be the point: that awareness-building is one of the mechanisms by which programmes are contributing to prevention. The above is evident from one of the case officers who observed that;

"*We put a lot of emphasis on sensitization as many of the returnees are not very aware of how the networks of trafficking work*."

The qualitative findings support quantitative results especially where participants were found to be aware of the VRR programs and the support mechanisms. From quantitative and qualitative results, awareness is important in influencing reintegration outcomes. Awareness of services leads to greater uptake of counselling, care, livelihood support and legal services which helps to enhance the social wellbeing and socio-economic status of beneficiaries. Raising awareness in turn can promote the use of support measures to enhance resilience and minimise vulnerability to trafficking. This is especially relevant in the early post-return period when there is a need for access to timely support that is essential for stabilization and recovery. However, the results also indicates that knowledge alone is no guarantee of programme effectiveness. While the majority said that they know about the available services, there was still a large number who experienced financial difficulties, unemployment and struggled to be self-sufficient.

4.5.1.2 Short Term Stability vs. Long Term Vulnerability

While all respondent groups acknowledged that reintegration programmes help to bring about immediate stability, there was concern raised about the sustainability of these gains. Beneficiaries spoke of feeling safer and more supported upon their return while programme administrators confirmed that they were able to provide basic services such as counselling and financial help. However, both case officers and law enforcement officers noted that economic instability over time could make them vulnerable to trafficking again. This suggests that the contributions that programmes make are important but often limited to the short term unless supported by sustained support. This is evident from a programme beneficiary who observed that;

"*The support got me through the process of settling but without income, things can be hard*."

In agreement, a police officer reported that;

"*Immediate assistance is helpful but if people keep on struggling financially, the likelihood of being exploited increases*."

The results show that reintegration programmes are effective at reducing the acute vulnerability, but lack of socio-economic challenges limits the impact of reintegration in the long term. Qualitative findings are consistent with the quantitative findings that only a small number of participants were confident that they would be able to earn a sustainable income following reintegration. This indicates that in the short-term, programme effectiveness in preventing trafficking is more effective than in the long-term.

4.5.2 Role of Socio-Economic Empowerment

4.5.2.1 Economic Empowerment as the Key to Prevention of Trafficking

There was strong agreement among all categories of the respondents that socio-economic empowerment is the most important factor to reduce the risk of trafficking. Beneficiaries focused on the importance of financial support and income-generating opportunities, with programme administrators advocating for livelihood interventions as an integral part of reintegration. These findings make economic empowerment a core pillar to prevention strategies. In this regard, one of the beneficiaries observed that:

"*The little capital I got helped me to start something and not resort to risky options*."

Law enforcement officers supported this perspective and observed that economic vulnerability is a major driving factor in trafficking cases.

"*For most people, the reason behind trafficking is economic issues which is solved by finances*."

The results indicate that socio-economic empowerment helps to prevent trafficking by decreasing economic desperation and improving self-reliance. The qualitative findings align with the quantitative findings in supporting the finding that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between socio-economic empowerment and trafficking risk reduction. The results however also showed that not all the beneficiaries were equally affected by the economic support, with some of the participants reporting that the support they received was not enough to assure their long-term stability.

4.5.2.2 Mismatch between Skills Training and Labour Market Realities

Despite provision of vocational training, respondents indicated a mismatch between vocational training programmes and actual employment opportunities. From the findings, beneficiaries reported challenges in finding employment or maintaining businesses while programme administrators admitted challenges in matching training with market demands. Specifically, one of the participants reported that;

"*I found the training to be beneficial but there were not enough opportunities to apply these skills*."

At the same time, the law enforcement officers observed that as a result of the skill mismatch, people end up looking for unsafe migration options. This suggests that while skills development is valuable, the development of skills depends on the context in which they are developed and how they are integrated in the labour market. In this regard, one of the enforcement officers observed that;

"It is obvious that the market cannot absorb all the beneficiaries. Lack of opportunities drives people in search of opportunity in even risky ways."

These findings suggest that training can lead to an increase in skills and knowledge, but that is dependent on the wider economic conditions and market realities. The results supports quantitative analysis where a majority of participants confirmed that they had they had received training but had not started or engaged in an economic activity.

4.5.3 The Challenges of Reintegration

4.5.3.1 Sustained Economic Hardship as a Cause of Vulnerability

Economic hardship was the most important reintegration challenge among all groups of respondents. Beneficiaries described of constant battle with unemployment and income instability, while the programme staff pointed to a lack of funding as a constraint in providing continued support. This is evident from a case officer who observed that;

"*We try to support them economically but there is a shortage of resources. The support is also needed continuously because the beneficiaries are not able to sustain themselves over time. Most of the traffickers tend to capitalize on this.*"

In agreement, a la enforcement officer reported that;

"*Traffickers understand that most people need assistance financially. As long as economic hardships exist, the problem may not be addressed conclusively*."

The results indicate that there is a high prevalence of trafficking vulnerability due to economic insecurity, which is a structural vulnerability. The consistency of this theme highlights the structural nature of economic risk factors in dynamics of trafficking. The qualitative information supports the quantitative results indicating that high levels of unemployment are experienced among beneficiaries with low levels of confidence in obtaining sustainable income following reintegration. Findings imply that the ability to re-integrate is primarily influenced by the ability of beneficiaries to obtain sustainable income.

4.5.3.2 Social Reintegration and Psychosocial Barrier

Respondents also identified social stigma, isolation and psychological distress as major reintegration problems. Beneficiaries have described experiences of discrimination and difficulty in re-establishing social networks. Specifically, some of the beneficiaries reported that they were stigmatized and negatively labelled which affected their relationships and the ability to re-integrate. These findings point to the multidimensional nature of vulnerability, which goes beyond economic. In support of the above, one of the beneficiaries argued that;

"*There are some people who judge you when you come back and it affects your interactions with other people*."

As a result of these experiences, one beneficiary reported that;

"*The whole experience had a very negative psychological effect on me. I find myself not able to easily trust again*."

These results suggest that reintegration issues are not just about the economic issues, but also about social and psychological issues that have implications for the resilience and wellbeing of the beneficiaries. The qualitative findings supports the quantitative findings as participants indicated social reintegration problems and challenges in accessing support systems. This highlights the need for both economic and social inclusion for reintegration to work.

4.5.4 Implementation and Results of IOM Clinic Programmes

4.5.4.1 Effectiveness for Immediate Response and Service Delivery

Among stakeholders, the programmes of the IOM Clinic were seen as being efficient in meeting immediate post-return needs. Beneficiaries were grateful for timely access to healthcare, counselling and basic support. While all participants agreed that the programs were efficient for immediate support and re-integration, some questioned the efficacy of the programs from a long-term perspective. This demonstrates good performance in the early stages of reintegration. One of the beneficiaries noted that;

"*At the point of my return, I was in a bad shape. The clinic assisted me when I needed them most*."

Equally, a case officer engaged in the program reported that;

"*I have seen firsthand how the immediate assistance offered by the clinic improves the lives of victims. I find this to be highly efficient*."

The results indicate that the programme is successful in meeting some of the immediate needs and lowering the vulnerability to trafficking in the short-term. The qualitative results align with the quantitative results with a few respondents stating their satisfaction with the availability of support services and also their ability to access them.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a detailed discussion of the results of the study, in relation to the research objectives, as well as in relation to current literature on voluntary return and reintegration programmes and trafficking in persons. A mix of quantitative and qualitative findings is included to give a detailed and nuanced picture of how these programmes have been effective in cutting the vulnerability to trafficking (VoT) among returnees in Eastleigh, Nairobi County. The discussions across the chapter are presented in line with the objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study found that a majority of participants (86%) were aware of the VRR programmes with government agencies being the most common platform for learning about the programmes. At the same time, 81% reported that they were aware of the procedures required or undertaken in VRR. The high levels of knowledge and visibility was found to be the key to enhancing the likelihood of combating re-trafficking.

On economic empowerment, only 61% of participants reported that they had received financial support which had an impact on their ability to start some income generating activity. Correlation analysis also found that the study had a positive and direct effect on risk reduction ($r = 0.722$). Findings indicate that the presence of economic empowerment programs reduces vulnerability within the target population which results in reduced risk of re-trafficking.

In terms of challenges, financial or economic challenges were the most common followed by legal and then the shelter and accommodation challenges. The economic challenges for instance imply that individuals are most likely to accept risk migration offers which increases their overall risk for re-trafficking.

On IOM Clinic, participants found it to be effective in meeting the immediate post-return needs for the participants. The effectiveness of the clinic was in terms of facilitating access to resources. However, the programs were not largely sustainable in the long-term.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Contribution of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

The first research goal focused on the role of VRR programmes in the prevention of TIP. The results show that VRR programmes have a direct impact on trafficking prevention, in the short term, mainly in terms of awareness creation and better understanding of migration risks. The respondents' high awareness (86%) and understanding of return process (81%) places them in a better position to detect misleading recruitment practices and to not engage in exploitative migration activities. This reinforces the claim that informed migration decision-making (IDDM) is an important preventive measure against trafficking (UNODC, 2018).

These findings align with past literature which highlights the importance of voluntary return and reintegration programmes to provide immediate protection and recovery services, such as psychosocial support, counselling, legal assistance and information sharing to vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking (International Organization for Migration [IOM] 2019a). Likewise, research on migration governance has shown that awareness-raising actions decrease information asymmetry and increase the ability of migrants to make decisions regarding migration that are safer. (IOM 2017). In this context, the results consolidate the idea of the effectiveness of VRR programmes in tackling information vulnerability, an element which is well known as one of the factors that increases the risk of trafficking.

Despite this, the results indicate some moderate access to reintegration services and some limited preparedness for sustainable livelihoods among respondents, the results also highlight low levels of these services and livelihoods preparedness. This means that both the immediate post-return needs and the long-term socioeconomic reintegration of people with disabilities is less well covered by VRR programmes. This gap resonates with previous studies indicating that the reintegration programmes are often affected by fragmented service delivery, insufficient financing, and poor institutional coordination (IOM, 2019b; de Boer & Zieck, 2020). In addition, reintegration is broadly defined as a multi-dimensional process that includes not only

economic, but also psychosocial and social inclusion aspects and is not always implemented in practice (IOM, 2019a).

Qualitative findings support these observations given that the interviewees stated that awareness building exercises led to their better understanding of the risks of trafficking and reduced susceptibility to re-trafficking. Likewise, the key informants from government and law enforcement institutions reported better decision making among returnees after engaging in VRR programmes. But beneficiaries also noted the lack of long-term support after return as a significant challenge for achieving durable reintegration results. This indicates that there is a gap between the inputs of initial interventions and longer reintegration goals.

Theoretically, these results can be explained using the Theory of Change approach which suggests that programme inputs (awareness creation, services, and initial reintegration support) should be linked to improved resilience and sustainable reintegration outcomes. Although the entry and immediate result phases are accomplished to some degree, the process of structural reintegration is not well established and continuity of support services is weak, leaving a gap in long-term impact. This means the programme has shown some support for its theory of change, as it has demonstrated short-term outputs but not long-term outputs have been constrained due to gaps in implementation.

In general, the evidence indicates that VRR programmes have proven to be a key prevention tool against trafficking in persons but in order to be effective, they need to be accompanied by strong long-term support for reintegration, as this requires better institutional coordination, continued funding and service delivery models that incorporate reintegration.

5.3.2 Role of Socio-Economic Empowerment

The second aim of the study was to investigate socio-economic empowerment and its contribution to reducing vulnerability to trafficking in persons. The results show that socio-economic interventions are useful for reintegration outcomes, especially in improving immediate living conditions. The quantitative findings indicated that 61 percent of the respondents received financial aid and 72 percent reported better well-being. As a result, this implies that economic assistance is an imperative for alleviating immediate vulnerability and increasing stability among returnees. Additionally, these results align with the literature economic

empowerment as a key strategy for preventing trafficking and supporting sustainable reintegration (IOM, 2013; UNODC, 2018). The literature highlights that access to financial resources, vocational training, and livelihood opportunities enables returnees to achieve self-reliance and mitigates the likelihood of engaging in risky migration practices. Thus, the positive changes identified in this study confirm the significance of socio-economic interventions in managing vulnerability.

Nevertheless, despite these positive results, only 32 percent of the respondents could create a sustainable source of income. This implies that support and training do not provide adequate financial support to ensure long-term economic independence. Additionally, the qualitative results showed that training programmes and labour market requirements did not match, which restricted job opportunities for the beneficiaries. This observation addresses the gap identified in the literature, where the sustainability of reintegration programmes remains a significant issue (Black et al., 2004). Moreover, the qualitative information revealed that financial aid could only serve short-term needs but could not achieve long-term sustainability. Programme administrators also noted limited funding as law enforcement officers cited a limitation, and economic hardship as being the cause of trafficking. This implies that economic vulnerability is a chronic risk factor even with the interventions. According to the theory of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the findings would mean that a person should first become economically secure before he or she can be more stable and self-sufficient. In the same approach, application of the theory would mean that if the goal of reduced vulnerability was not to be achieved, there would be no economic inputs to achieve it. This means there is a need for socio-economic empowerment, but this cannot be achieved by short-term, market-oriented and targeted actions.

5.3.3 Challenges and Barriers to Reintegration

The third aim of this study was to explore the difficulties faced by returnees in the reintegration process. The results show that mainly economic issues were the most significant factor, as 34% of the respondents stated that the main reintegration problem is the lack of employment and financial stability. This places economic vulnerability at the bottom of the failure to reintegrate; it directly impacts on access to housing, food security, health care and livelihood stability. Economic deprivation is a key driver of exposure to re-trafficking, as those

facing financial difficulties are often more susceptible to accepting offers of migration, or to working in poor conditions that present a risk opportunity (IOM, 2019a; NCRC, 2015).

Importantly, economic constraints are not the only constraints in play; they are also intertwined with legal and social constraints. Lack of stable income reduces the ability of returnees to regularly their status or to access administrative processes, adding to exclusion from formal labour markets and state services. The cyclical nature of poverty and exclusion is in line with other evidence that reintegration is a multi-faceted process that demands addressing simultaneously the three facets of poverty related to the economy, the social and the institutional (IOM, 2019b).

Legal barriers, such as lack of identification documents, were also cited by 25% of respondents, in addition to economic barriers. This greatly constrained the access to formal jobs, banking services, and social protection systems. At the institutional level, it is a general problem of civil registration gaps and broken links to identity documents experienced by vulnerable groups, such as returnees and trafficking victims in Kenya (U.S. Department of State, 2022). Delays in documentation recovery and access to services worsens due to weak coordination between immigration authorities, civil registration offices and reintegration service providers.

The results aligns with worldwide evidence of the importance of legal identity as a key facilitator for reintegration, and its lack as a driver of structural exclusion that continues to render marginalized populations vulnerable (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] 2018). The study could have further identified the policy gaps and institutional inefficiencies, within the protection framework, and procedural delays, which are all major delays in reintegration programming in Kenya.

While economic and legal obstacles were cited most often, the sociocultural factors such as stigma, discrimination, and family rejection proved to be influential psychosocial obstacles. These are less measurable factors which have a detrimental impact on psychosocial recovery and social reintegration. Returnees face stigmatization, leading to social isolation, limited integration and informal support networks, that are critical for building resilience. Empirical evidence also indicates that stigma and rejection heighten risk of re-trafficking, by undermining protective social relationships and access to community-based coping resources

(Zimmerman et al., 2021). Rejection, especially by the family, undermines reintegration paths, depriving many returnees of their main safety net and leaving them relying on precarious livelihoods or unsafe migration routes.

One restriction of the initial analysis was the absence of prioritisation of barriers and interactions between barriers. The results indicate a reinforcing and hierarchical relationship: that economic deprivation is the most fundamental factor, that legal exclusion exacerbates economic deprivation, and that the sociocultural rejection further enhances long-term psychosocial vulnerabilities. All of this puts individuals in a double jeopardy situation, making them more susceptible to re-trafficking.

Qualitative results show beneficiaries' general satisfaction with the services delivered by the IOM clinic but this perception-based assessment does not fully reflect the effectiveness of the programme in terms of sustainability and coordination efficiency, or reintegration outcomes. Immediate assistance (counselling, referral and temporary assistance) was welcomed, but there were shortcomings in post-service follow-up, livelihood sustainability and inter-agency coordination. This has been seen in other data that reintegration programmes tend to focus on short-term outputs rather than tangible outcomes like income security, social inclusion and reduced re-trafficking risk (IOM, 2019b). Further, low coordination of the service providers and limited structural resources at implementing institutions were recognized as main problems of the overall effectiveness and continuity of reintegration support.

In interpreting these results, it is important to examine the principles of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as these needs were considered more basic and fundamental than the higher psychosocial needs of reintegration. However, all the social, psychological and basic needs are equally important and are all linked to challenges to reintegration.

Likewise, the theory of change approach highlights that reintegration is a process which requires multiple inputs; economic, legal, psychosocial, and institutional coordination to achieve sustainable outcomes. The results show that while some immediate outputs were achieved, there were insufficient effects on long-term

reintegration outcomes, meaning that there are gaps in the causal chain between the programme inputs and the longer-term reintegration outcomes.

5.3.4 Implementation and Outcomes of IOM Programmes

The fourth objective was to explore the programmes and practices carried out by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) clinic in supporting reintegration and preventing trafficking in persons (TIP). Notably, the results revealed that such programmes are mostly effective in addressing the immediate needs of returnees. The quantitative results revealed that 85% of the respondents felt that the programmes were in line with the international standards, and the majority of beneficiaries indicated that they had access to necessary services, such as health, psychosocial counselling, and financial assistance. These interventions however had a real and very important contribution in the immediate safety and overall wellbeing of the returnees which resulted in their ability to return to society after exploitation. The findings align with existing studies that underscore IOM's crucial role in facilitating the reintegration of people, particularly in terms of medical, psychosocial and legal services (IOM, 2019). The literature also highlights that these interventions play an important role in safeguarding the dignity, safety, and rights of returnees; especially at the early stages of reintegration. In this regard, the respondents' positive perceptions support the effectiveness and usefulness of IOM programmes in addressing the immediate reintegration needs.

However, despite these positive aspects, the study also reveals several weaknesses in the programmes. Only 14% of respondents judged the programmes as being very effective, but 31% rated them as ineffective, suggesting that the immediate support does not lead to long-term results. This means that while the programmes would have good short-term effect, they would not have long-term effects, it is to be noted. This is also reflected in the qualitative findings, which suggest that beneficiaries were concerned that there was not sufficient follow up support, resources, or continuity of support beyond the first phase of reintegration. These concerns have negative implications for reintegration sustainability and can increase the risk for re-trafficking. In addition, this is aligned with the available evidence that reports of lack of funding, poor coordination between stakeholders and lack of effective monitoring systems are the primary challenges in successful

reintegration (IOM, 2013). Furthermore, the literature highlights the need for sustained support to achieve durable reintegration results (IOM, 2021), and this is not the case in the current situation.

Theoretically, the Theory of Change is a useful concept for explaining these results because it underscores the importance of sustained inputs, continuous monitoring, and feedback systems in achieving long-term results. The process of transitioning immediate assistance to sustainable reintegration is not complete without continuous support and follow-up. Thus, although IOM programmes are crucial in assisting returnees, their long-term success in preventing trafficking can be achieved by improving follow-up mechanisms, resource distribution, and stakeholder coordination to guarantee sustainable reintegration outcomes.

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes for vulnerable populations in Eastleigh, Nairobi County, in addressing trafficking in persons. According to the findings, several important conclusions can be drawn. In line with the first objective, the study concludes that VRR programmes play a key role in reducing vulnerability to trafficking in persons. In this case, the study found such programmes are especially successful in increasing awareness of the dangers of trafficking and in providing immediate post-return assistance that improves beneficiaries' sense of safety and stability. Nevertheless, their effects are mostly short-term because the sustainability of reintegration outcomes is determined by broader socio-economic factors that are not well addressed in the programmes.

Second, the research confirms that socio-economic empowerment is a key factor in successful reintegration and the prevention of trafficking. Financial assistance, skills training, and livelihood opportunities are among the interventions that are significant in enhancing the positive outcomes of reintegration and minimizing vulnerability. However, such interventions have not been effective for all, as many beneficiaries can no longer transition to sustainable income-generating activities. This implies that support access is not enough, and applicability, the quality, and sustainability of socio-economic interventions are critical to long-term effect.

Third, the paper concludes that reintegration issues become a serious source of vulnerability to trafficking. Conversely, the most common difficulties were economic hardship, especially unemployment and income insecurity, and social stigma, isolation, and inability to access legal rights, further complicating the

reintegration process. These observations demonstrate that the process of reintegration is multidimensional and that a lack of focus on these integrated issues would invalidate the ultimate success of reintegration programmes.

The findings of this study can further be understood through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which posits that individuals must satisfy basic physiological and safety needs before achieving higher levels of stability, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes under the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh focus on addressing the short-term physical and security needs of returnees by offering healthcare, psychosocial support, temporary shelter and financial assistance. These interventions help to contribute to reduction of immediate vulnerability to trafficking in persons. The study, however, highlights that long-term reintegration and re-trafficking prevention cannot be achieved without ongoing support, which is beyond the scope of emergency services, including socio-economic empowerment, social inclusion, livelihoods and restoring dignity and self-worth. Unemployment, negative attitudes, stigma, social exclusion, and poor institutional coordination are all obstacles to returnees achieving higher-order needs related to stability, belonging and self-reliance. Based on Maslow's theory, the study concludes that sustainable reintegration and effective trafficking prevention can only be realised if reintegration programmes are long-term and holistic: when basic and developmental needs of returnees are addressed.

In line with the last objective, the research paper concludes that the implementation of the VRR programmes of the IOM Clinic is effective in addressing the immediate needs of returnees particularly in terms of providing healthcare, social support, and initial financial assistance. However, the sustainability of these benefits is limited by the lack of long-term support, follow-up and coordination among stakeholders. The study also shows that VRR programmes are key to reducing vulnerability to trafficking in the short-term, but their sustained effectiveness relies on the continuity of socio-economic support in addition to improved institutional coordination and the ability to address the systemic challenges faced by returnees.

5.5 Recommendations

From the results, strategic recommendations on improving the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes in preventing trafficking in persons case be drawn. These recommendations are set out along four areas as described below;

5.5.1 Policy Recommendations

The Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) and the Counter Trafficking in Persons Secretariat (CTiP Secretariat), should establish and implement a National Reintegration Framework for Victims of Trafficking and Vulnerable Returnees that embeds voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programming into existing national employment, social protection and economic empowerment programmes. This framework must include compulsory referral channels between reintegration actors and government programmes like the National Safety Net Programme, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, Ajira Digital Programme and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. County-level reintegration coordination committees (RCCs) for implementation, case follow-up and localized service delivery should be formed at the county level, especially in high-migration counties (International Organization for Migration [IOM] 2019; Government of Kenya, 2010).

The international organisation for Migration, in cooperation with the Department of Children Services, the State Department for Social Protection and civil society groups, should also set up uniform systems of long-term case management and monitoring for returnees for at least 12-24 months following return. This should involve periodic socio-economic evaluations, psychosocial support, monitoring of livelihood and referral to community-based support mechanisms. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), the Judiciary, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), and the CTiP Secretariat should increase efforts in the enforcement of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act by implementing survivor-centred legal aid, strengthening witness support, and establishing user-friendly reporting channels for returnees at risk of re-trafficking. More sustained implementation can also be encouraged through dedicated budget lines, creation of multi-agency coordination structures and regular monitoring and evaluation processes for

reintegration outcomes, employment stability, and re-location risks (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] 2020; IOM, 2017).

5.5.2 Programme and Practice Recommendations

The International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with the State Department for Social Protection, National Employment Authority (NEA), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, county governments, and private sector actors, should redesign reintegration assistance packages to prioritize sustainable socio-economic reintegration rather than short-term emergency support alone. Financial assistance provided to returnees should be linked to individualized reintegration plans and phased livelihood support mechanisms, including business start-up grants, savings schemes, apprenticeships, and market-driven vocational training. Skills development interventions should be informed by periodic local labour market assessments conducted jointly by county governments and employment agencies to ensure that beneficiaries are trained in sectors with realistic employment opportunities such as digital work, agribusiness, construction, transport, hospitality, and informal trade (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019).

Furthermore, reintegration programming should move beyond entrepreneurship-focused models by establishing formal partnerships with private sector employers, microfinance institutions, and cooperative societies to create employment placement pathways and income-generation opportunities for returnees who may not be suited for self-employment. IOM and implementing partners should also institutionalize structured mentorship and business incubation programmes, including peer-support networks and continuous technical coaching for at least 12–24 months after return. To strengthen programme accountability and sustainability, implementing agencies should establish comprehensive monitoring and follow-up systems with clear reintegration indicators covering employment stability, psychosocial wellbeing, housing security, and re-trafficking vulnerability. These systems should include regular household visits, digital case tracking mechanisms, and multi-agency referral coordination to ensure returnees receive continued support and early intervention when reintegration challenges emerge (IOM, 2017; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2020).

5.5.3 Institutional and Coordination Recommendations

Existing coordination between key reintegration actors including government, international and non-governmental organisations, and law enforcement institutions should be further enhanced by formal engagement through structured policy actions that require policy cooperation across the continuum of reintegration. Governments should develop or revise national return and reintegration policies to establish clear roles, standards and accountability mechanisms for all actors involved (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2019). These frameworks should be operationalized through measures such as inter-ministerial coordination platforms and national referral committees, i.e. ministries of interior, labour, social services, and foreign affairs.

From an operational perspective, the development of standardised referral pathways and an integrated case management approach is key to providing timely, effective and holistic support. This may be achieved by digital case management systems that are interoperable and managed by lead government agencies in partnership with IOM and CSO partners, with service tracking and a decrease in fragmentation of support in real-time. (IOM, 2021) Governmental bodies should be formally included in the referral system and protection-sensitive approaches should be implemented for trafficked victims and other vulnerable returnees.

Additionally, there is need to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to meet the multi-faceted needs of returnees, such as accessing legal assistance, psychosocial supports, and sustainable livelihoods. Structured service level agreements (SLAs) between implementing partners and clearly defined minimum service packages must be put in place. The local authorities and social protection systems should be the first point of contact and NGOs and international organisations should be used for the provision of specialized services.

Equally, enhanced communication and data sharing, including national reintegration coordination dashboards, joint review meetings, and shared reporting templates, would minimize duplication, transparency and strengthen efficiency of actors. In addition, capacity building programs such as on-going professional development programs for frontline officers and case workers need to be built into public service training academies and partner institutions.

Finally, there is a need for ongoing funding mechanisms, including specific lines in the national budget for reintegration, donor funding pools, and multi-year funding agreements with donors to ensure stability and continuity of institutions and programmes. Such financial instruments need to be embedded in national migration governance frameworks to ensure sustainable and predictable service provision.

5.5.4 Community-Level Recommendations

First, there is a need to strengthen community sensitisation programmes as one of the key policy actions that can deal with stigma, discrimination and social exclusion of returnees. Targeted and evidence-based awareness campaigns would be important in changing the attitudes and promote acceptance in communities that significantly limits sustainable reintegration. These campaigns need to be planned and executed by government social development departments, alongside international organisations (including IOM), civil society organisations and local media outlets with culturally relevant messages and a broad geographical reach (IOM, 2019).

Community based reintegration interventions need to focus on the active involvement of local leadership structures (such as chiefs, religious leaders, community based organisations and grassroots networks) as implementing actors. These stakeholders are key to rebuilding social norms, social cohesion, and informal protection and support networks for returnees. They should be connected to national referral systems and their engagement should be institutionalised in the form of community reintegration committees or local protection networks.

At the same time, community reintegration programmes should be integrated in the national reintegration programme and provide an enabling environment for sustainable reintegration and social isolation reduction. Such programmes should also incorporate dialogue forums, peer support schemes and reintegration focal points at the community level to enable dialogue to occur in both directions between returnees and service providers.

In addition, there is a need for increased public sensitisation campaigns to raise awareness about reintegration services available and eligibility criteria and referral processes. These interventions can be delivered, for instance, via multi-channel strategies (radio, community efforts, digital platforms and schools), and can help

early identify individuals at risk, bolster prevention, and mitigate unsafe migration. These preventive communication strategies need to be coordinated between local government authorities, education institutions and civil society actors through national migration governance mechanisms.

5.6 Areas for Future Research

Further research is needed in evaluating the effectiveness of reintegration programmes are in the long term. Such research would help to identify the sustainability of reintegration outcomes and factors that impact on long-term reintegration success. Further, there would be a need to conduct comparative studies on a regional and programme model basis to develop best practices and feed into evidence-based policy and programme design. In addition, the study should focus more on effective interventions that promote sustainable livelihoods including financial assistance and training in entrepreneurship. Finally, it would be important to evaluate how labour markets and the economy as a whole affects the reintegration results, as this would provide more insights into structural factors that affects the effectiveness of the program. Hence, this kind of research would have generated more reactiveness, context adaptation and sustainability of reintegration strategies.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1-Questionnaire for Beneficiaries

Introduction

Welcome to the survey on Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (TiP). Your participation is crucial for this research. Please read each question carefully and answer honestly. No individuals or names will be mentioned in the final report. Personal information received from you will not be passed on to any third party.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please provide some basic demographic information.

1.1. Age: _____ years

1.2. Gender: Male □ Female □ Other (please specify): _____

1.3. Highest Educational Level:

□No Formal Education: You have not received any formal education.

□Primary Education: You have completed primary level education.

□Secondary Education: You have completed secondary level education.

□Vocational/Technical Training: You have received specialized technical training or vocational education.

□Tertiary Education: You have completed higher education (College or University).

□Other (please specify): _____

1.4. Marital Status:

□Single: You are not married.

□Married: You are currently married.

□Separated: You are no longer living together as a married couple but have not yet finalized your divorce.

□Divorced: You have legally ended your marriage.

□Widowed: Your spouse has passed away.

1.5. Employment Status:

□Employed: You are currently working.

□Unemployed: You are not currently not working.

□Student: You are pursuing education.

□Other (please specify): _____

1.6. Length of Stay in Eastleigh (in months): _____

Section 2: Experiences with Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes

Please rate your experiences with voluntary return and reintegration programmes.

2.1. How did you first learn about the voluntary return and reintegration programme? (Select all that apply):

□Social media □The internet □Government agencies

□ Community organisations □Friends or Family □Very Satisfied

□Other (please specify): _____

2.2. Are you aware of the specific services and support provided by the programme?

□Yes □No

2.3. If you answered yes to 2.2 above, please list the services you are aware of:

_____

2.4 Do you understand the steps involved in the voluntary return and reintegration process?

□Yes □No

2.5 Have you received any information sessions or briefings on how to navigate the reintegration process?

□Yes □No

2.6 Have you had access to the support services you need during the reintegration process? (e.g., counselling, healthcare, legal assistance)

□Yes □No

2.7 How would you rate the availability and accessibility of these support services?

□Excellent □Good □Fair □Poor □Did not use any support services

2.8 Are there any specific services you found difficult to access or lacking in availability? (Select all that apply)

□Counselling □Healthcare □Legal assistance □Education

□Vocational training □Other (please specify): _____

2.9 Have you been provided with information on sustainable livelihood opportunities?

□Yes □No

2.10 How confident are you in your ability to secure a stable income and maintain self-sufficiency with the support of the program?

□Very confident □Somewhat confident □Not confident

Section 3: Socio-Economic Empowerment Interventions

Please rate your experiences with socio-economic empowerment interventions.

3.1. Have you received any form of economic support from the program? (e.g., financial assistance, grants)

□Yes □No

3.2 How helpful was the economic support in meeting your financial needs?

□Very helpful □Somewhat helpful □Not helpful

□Did not receive economic support

3.3 How has the economic support impacted your ability to rebuild your life?

□Significantly improved □Moderately improved □Slightly improved

□No improvement

3.4 Have you participated in any training opportunities provided by the program?

□Yes □No

3.5 What type of training did you receive? (Select all that apply)

□Vocational training □Entrepreneurship training □Job readiness skills

□Other (please specify): _____

3.6 How effective was the training in enhancing your employability?

□Very effective □Somewhat effective □Not effective

□Did not attend any training

3.7 How has your socioeconomic status changed since participating in the program?

□Significantly improved □Moderately improved □Slightly improved

□No change

3.8 How would you describe your current living conditions compared to before the program?

□Much better □Better □About the same □Worse

3.9 How has the programme affected your social inclusion in the community?

□Significantly improved □Moderately improved □Slightly improved

□No improvement

3.10 Do you feel more self-sufficient after participating in the program?

□Yes □No

3.11 How confident are you in maintaining a stable income independently?

□Very confident □Somewhat confident □Not confident

3.12 Have you been able to start your own business or secure long-term employment?

□Yes, started a business □Yes, secured long-term employment □No

3.13 What additional support would further enhance your socioeconomic empowerment? (Select all that apply)

□More financial assistance □Advanced vocational training

□Better access to job opportunities □Enhanced social services

□Other (please specify): _____

Section 4: Challenges and Barriers faced by Returnees

4.1. I encountered challenges obstacles during my return and reintegration.

□Strongly Disagree □Disagree □Neutral □Agree □Strongly Agree

4.2. What kind of obstacles did you face during your reintegration?

□Family Challenges □Economic Challenges □Psycho-social Challenges

□Legal Challenges □Shelter and Accommodation Challenges

Describe the most significant obstacles you faced during your reintegration:

_____

4.3 Have you faced any social or cultural challenges that isolated you from your community?

□Yes □No

4.4 How much have these social-cultural barriers affected your ability to reintegrate?

□Significantly □Moderately □Slightly □Not at all □Not applicable

4.5 Have you experienced unemployment since your return?

□Yes □No

4.6 Have you had difficulties accessing financial resources or economic opportunities?

□Yes □No

4.8 Have you faced any legal issues, such as lack of proper documentation, since your return?

□Yes □No

4.9 How difficult has it been to access legal rights and protections?

□Very difficult □Somewhat difficult □Not difficult

4.10 Have bureaucratic obstacles prevented you from accessing essential services and employment?

□Yes □No

Section 5: Implementation and Outcomes at IOM Clinic

5.1 Do you believe the support provided by the IOM clinic adheres to international best practices?

□Yes □No

5.2 How effective do you find the support provided in enhancing your well-being?

□Very effective □Moderately effective □Slightly effective □Not effective

5.3 How sustainable do you think the support provided by the programme is?

□Very sustainable □Moderately sustainable □Slightly sustainable

□Not sustainable

5.4 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered by the program?

□Excellent □Good □Fair □Poor

5.5 Do you believe the services are delivered efficiently?

□Yes □No

5.6 How have the services impacted your reintegration process?

□Significantly improved □Moderately improved □Slightly improved

□No improvement

5.7 Have you observed strong partnerships between the IOM clinic and local authorities?

□Yes □No

5.8 How well do the program's efforts align with local policies and regulations?

□Very well □Moderately well □Slightly well □Not at all

5.9 How has coordination with local authorities facilitated your access to resources and support networks?

□Greatly facilitated □Moderately facilitated □Slightly facilitated □Not facilitated

Section 6: Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (TiP)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

6.1 I feel safer and have a sense of well-being since my return and reintegration.

□Strongly Disagree □Disagree □Neutral □Agree □Strongly Agree

Describe any changes in your feelings of safety and well-being:

_____

6.2. My economic situation has improved since my return and reintegration.

□Strongly Disagree □Disagree □Neutral □Agree □Strongly Agree

Share any improvements or challenges in your economic status:

_____

6.3. I have successfully reintegrated into my social community.

□Strongly Disagree □Disagree □Neutral □Agree □Strongly Agree

Discuss your experiences and the support you received during social reintegration:

_____

6.4. I have not experienced any incidents of recidivism or re-trafficking since my return and reintegration.

□Strongly Disagree □Disagree □Neutral □Agree □Strongly Agree

If applicable, please provide details about any incidents of recidivism or re-trafficking:

_____

Section 7: Additional Comments

Is there anything else you would like to add, such as suggestions or additional insights related to your experiences with voluntary return and reintegration programmes and TiP prevention?

_____

Appendix 2- Semi Structured Interview Guide for Key Informant Interviews

Introduction

Welcome to this interview on Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons. Your insights are valuable for this research. The interview will be semi-structured, allowing for open discussion. Please feel free to share your experiences, thoughts, and suggestions. Your responses will remain confidential. No individuals or names will be mentioned in the final report. Personal information received from you will not be passed on to any third party.

Question-Actual question asked of the respondents.	**Data Sought**-Information or insight that question is designed to capture.
Section 1: Background and Role	
1.1. Can you please provide some background information about your role and responsibilities within the voluntary return and reintegration programmes?	To establish the interviewee's organisational position, scope of work, and specific functions in voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) programmes, which will help contextualise their responses and the perspective they bring.
1.2. How long have you been involved in these programmes, and what motivated you to work in this field?	To gauge the depth of experience, length of service, and personal or professional drivers for working in voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) and TiP prevention, offering insight into their commitment and perspective.
Section 2: Programme Implementation	

2.1. Can you describe the key components of the voluntary return and reintegration programmes you are involved in?	To identify and understand the main features, processes, and activities that make up the programme, providing a foundation for assessing its structure and comprehensiveness.
2.2. What are the main objectives and goals of these programmes as you perceive them?	To capture the respondent's understanding of the programme's purpose, priorities, and intended impact, and to compare this with stated organisational objectives.
2.3. How are the programmes structured and organized to ensure successful implementation?	To explore the operational frameworks, management arrangements, and delivery models used to ensure effectiveness and alignment with programme goals.
Section 3: Beneficiaries and Services	
3.1. Who are the primary beneficiaries of these programmes, and what criteria are used for their selection or eligibility?	To define the main target groups served, understand inclusion and exclusion criteria, and explore how selection processes relate to TiP prevention goals.
3.2. Could you explain the range of services and support provided to beneficiaries during the voluntary return process?	To map the types of assistance available during return, such as transport, counselling, documentation, and emergency support, and to assess their adequacy.
3.3. How do these programmes facilitate reintegration, and what specific services	To understand reintegration approaches, including livelihood support, psychosocial care, community integration, and monitoring,

are offered to support beneficiaries in this phase?	and how these contribute to preventing re-trafficking.
Section 4: Challenges and Successes	
4.1. In your experience, what are the most significant challenges or obstacles faced by beneficiaries during the return and reintegration process?	To identify practical, social, and economic barriers to successful reintegration, including factors that increase vulnerability to re-trafficking.
4.2. Can you share examples of successful cases where the programmes have effectively prevented trafficking in persons or contributed to beneficiaries' well-being?	To collect concrete examples of positive outcomes, demonstrating what has worked well in practice and highlighting best practices.
Section 5: Collaboration and Coordination	
5.1. How do you collaborate with other organisations, agencies, or stakeholders in the field of TiP prevention and reintegration?	To understand partnership dynamics, levels of cooperation, and how inter-agency collaboration strengthens the voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) process.
5.2. What coordination mechanisms are in place to ensure a holistic approach to addressing TiP in the community?	To explore existing systems, referral pathways, joint planning mechanisms, and how they ensure integrated, comprehensive responses.
Section 6: Impact Assessment	
6.1. How is the effectiveness of voluntary return and reintegration programmes in	To capture monitoring and evaluation practices, indicators used, and how data is

preventing TiP measured or assessed within your organisation?	applied to assess prevention outcomes and guide improvements.
6.2. Can you describe any notable outcomes or impacts of these programmes on beneficiaries and the broader community?	To identify tangible results and wider social or economic benefits, including reduced vulnerability to TiP and improved community resilience.
Section 7: Future Improvements	
7.1. Based on your experience, what improvements or enhancements do you think could be made to the voluntary return and reintegration programmes to enhance their effectiveness?	To gather informed suggestions for strengthening voluntary return and reintegration (VRR) processes, service delivery, and long-term impact.
7.2. Are there specific areas or aspects where you believe additional resources or support are needed to better address TiP prevention and reintegration?	To pinpoint resource gaps (financial, human, technical) and priority areas requiring further investment or support.
Section 8: Ethical Considerations	
8.1. How does your organisation ensure the ethical treatment of beneficiaries, including informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of their rights?	To explore policies, protocols, and safeguards that ensure dignity, safety, and rights protection in programme delivery.
Section 9: Closing Remarks	

Is there anything else you would like to add, such as additional insights, recommendations, or challenges you believe are important for addressing TiP and enhancing the effectiveness of these programmes?	To provide an open space for respondents to raise issues, insights, or recommendations not addressed in previous questions, ensuring completeness of data collection.

Appendix 3 – Institutional Ethical Approval

MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Tel: 056-31375
Fax: 056-30153
E-mail: ierc@mmust.ac.ke
Website: www.mmust.ac.ke

P. O. Box 190,
50100.
Kakamega,
KENYA

Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee

REF: MMU/COR: 40312 Vol 6(01)

Date: April 30th, 2026

To: Ms. Linda Kola Odeko,

Dear Ms. Kola,

RE: VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN THE PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP) IN KENYA: A CASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) CLINIC IN EASTLEIGH, NAIROBI COUNTY.

This is to inform you that the ***Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MMUST-ISERC)*** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **MMUST/ ISERC/123/2026.** The approval covers for the period ***April 30th, 2026 to April 30th, 2027.***

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by ***MMUST-ISERC.***
iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to ***MMUST-ISERC*** within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to ***MMUST-ISERC*** within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to ***MMUST-ISERC***.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. Gordon Nguka (PhD)
Chairperson, Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee

Copy to:
- The Secretary, National Bio-Ethics Committee
- Vice Chancellor

Appendix 4: Research Permit

AFRICA NAZARENE
UNIVERSITY

P.O.Box: 53067 – 00200
Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: 020 252 7170/1 – 5
Email: vc@anu.ac.ke
www.anu.ac.ke

9th January, 2026

Dr. David Ngigi
Ag. Director General /CEO
National Commission for Science & Technology
And Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P. O. Box 30623 -00100
Nairobi, KENYA

Dear Sir,

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT: Linda Kola Odeko (Student ID#21s01dmgp016)

This is to confirm that Linda Kola Odeko (Student ID# 21s01dmgp016) is a bona fide Master of Arts student at Africa Nazarene University (ANU), School of Humanities & Social Sciences. She is pursuing a Master of Science in Governance, Peace and Security degree, a program that entails both coursework and thesis.

Linda successfully completed her coursework and defended her thesis proposal entitled:

"Evaluating the Role of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programmes in Preventing Human Trafficking: A Case of the IOM Clinic in Eastleigh, Nairobi."

We kindly request that she be granted the necessary research permit to facilitate data collection and the successful completion of her thesis. Any assistance provided to her in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Faithfully,

Prof. Orpha Ongiti
Dean, Postgraduate Studies & Director, Institute of Research

Appendix 5: NACOSTI Certificate

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **172990**

Date of Issue: **04/May/2026**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Miss.. LINDA KOLA ODEKO of Africa Nazarene University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: EVALUATING THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A CASE STUDY OF THE IOM CLINIC IN EASTLEIGH, NAIROBI for the period ending : 04/May/2027.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/26/4184864**

172990

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

Appendix 6: Study Area Map

