



MAPPING OF REINTEGRATION SERVICES IN NEPAL

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MAPPING OF REINTEGRATION SERVICES IN NEPAL



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FOREWORD

International labour migration has become a major contributor to Nepal's socioeconomic landscape. In addition to financial gains returning migrants also bring back skills, knowledge, networks, and social and cultural capital.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Nepalese migrant workers, who have been key contributors to the socioeconomic development of Nepal. During the pandemic, the two primary geographical areas from which Nepalese migrants returned were India and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. During the migration cycle and upon return, migrant workers continue to face vulnerabilities and challenges to fully reintegrate in their home communities due to their migration experiences.

IOM Nepal, with support from the IOM Development Fund, conducted the project, Mapping of Reintegration Services in Nepal. This study attempts to map the services that are available and directly or indirectly contribute to sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The research has identified good practices, gaps and challenges and shows the way ahead, and as such, it can be a departure point for addressing the identified gaps in efforts towards sustainable reintegration.

I am confident that the important insights offered by this mapping report will support all relevant stakeholders in the development and planning of reintegration programmes to benefit migrant workers and society.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Nepal Institute of Development Studies for this study; my colleagues, for their technical guidance and supervision; IOM thematic specialists for Asia and Pacific; the team from the IOM Development Fund; and the Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development at IOM Headquarters. I also express my sincere thanks to concerned authorities and officials at all three tiers of the Government of Nepal, development partners, civil society organizations, researchers, the private sector and academicians for their engagement, inputs and other contributions.



Lorena Lando

Chief of Mission

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Nepal

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ACRONYMS

CSO	civil society organization
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
FEB	Foreign Employment Board
FY	Fiscal Year
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
MoLESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
MRC/MID	Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Information Desk
NGO	non-government organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
PMEP	Prime Minister Employment Programme
RERP	Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project
SaMi	Safer Migration Project
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International labour migration has become a crucial part of Nepalese society. The number of youths leaving the country for employment is significantly high, with around half a million people receiving labour permits every year. Lack of employment opportunities in the country is cited as one of the major reasons for seeking foreign employment. The Government has planned to create employment opportunities in the country so that international labour migration becomes a choice and not a necessity.

The remittances sent back home by Nepalese migrant workers contribute to a large share of the economy, as more than half of households in the country rely on the remittances. Foreign employment has been one of the major contributors to poverty reduction in the country. Migrant workers bring back financial, social, human and cultural capital. According to Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/2018, only less than half of returnee migrant workers are engaged in employment in the country, while a significant proportion of returnees are assumed to plan to remigrate. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) considers reintegration as sustainable when it ensures levels of economic self-sufficiency, social stability and psychosocial well-being for returnees that help them make any further migration decision as a choice and not one of necessity. This study attempts to map the services that directly or indirectly support the reintegration of returnee migrant workers, including laws, policies, programmes, institutions and services.

The study was primarily based on the review of literature on federal, provincial and local policies and services, after which the findings were substantiated by key informant interviews. Documents related to plans, policies, programmes and budgets at the national, provincial and local levels were reviewed to explore how they were aiming to directly or indirectly support reintegration of migrant workers. The websites of 746 local governments were consulted to collect information on existing policies, programmes, services and mechanisms. The information from the remaining seven local governments were gathered through phone calls. Civil society organizations, international organizations and international development agencies working for migrant workers in Nepal provided information about their reintegration programmes. In addition, a multi-stakeholder consultation was held to verify the information and receive feedback on the draft report. The information collected from the literature was quantified and categorized. Available qualitative information was analysed thematically; the quantitative data were analysed through statistical analysis software, namely Stata and SPSS.

The study found that reintegration has been widely understood within the framework of financial capital and its economic impact, with social, psychosocial, human and cultural capital mostly absent from the discussion. Only immediate and short-term support are envisioned as requirements for reintegration. The plans and programmes contributing to the reintegration of returnee migrants do not focus on their families and communities. Various government and non-government entities, international development organizations, and private sector actors have implemented programmes to respond to youth employment and entrepreneurship development that can contribute to the reintegration of migrant workers. The federal, provincial and local governments are concerned about reintegrating returnees. Some of them have provided support to returnee migrant workers, with a vision to utilize their capital in the nation-building process. However, support is on an ad hoc basis. Not all local governments have policies and programmes that can directly contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Based on the findings, the ways forward are offered under the three levels of reintegration, as follows:

Structural level

- All levels of government should introduce policies and related laws that govern the reintegration of migrant workers and their family members, adopting whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches and considering the needs, capacities and interests of returnee migrant workers.
- Local governments should be capacitated and encouraged to manage reintegration, ensuring the participation of returnee migrants. The local governments should run activities to encourage returnee migrants and their families to utilize their remittances in productive sectors.
- The Federal Government should formulate a national policy and accompanying guidelines; the local government should work towards effective implementation of these; and the provincial government should play a coordinating and monitoring role.
- The Federal Government should develop a standard template for local governments for keeping disaggregated data of returnees, including returnees from India, for data consistency.

- The Government should consider including the components that can support reintegration of migrant workers in bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with destination countries.
- Reintegration services should be embedded in broader sustainable development priorities of the country, which require linking with labour gaps, education needs and so on.
- The Government and other actors working for migrant workers' welfare should increase the number of programmes directly supporting the reintegration of migrant workers.

Community level

- In addition to the economic dimension, the social and psychological dimensions of reintegration should also be considered in designing activities for sustainable reintegration. Also, services should be gender-responsive.
- Support should not be limited to traditional agriculture and livestock farming; returnee migrant workers should be encouraged to bring new and innovative ideas.
- The Government and other actors working in reintegration should ensure that returnee migrant workers are well informed about available services, such as soft loans, that support their sustainable reintegration. Migrant resource centres and employment information centres at the local levels should play a major role in disseminating information.
- Reintegration programmes should target returnees collectively, as much as possible, to avoid the risk of limiting the coverage of returnees by the programmes.
- The impacts of available resources can be amplified through collaboration and cooperation between different institutions by forming a sharing and referral mechanism.
- The processes for availing the services should be easy and simple.

Individual level:

- Returnee migrant workers should be provided with access to social protection and services, and increased access to justice, psychosocial assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad and financial services to build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital.
- Migrant workers should be provided with information on reintegration services in the pre-departure phase of migration, so that they can plan their reintegration well before going abroad for employment.
- Reintegration support should address the health issues of returnee migrants. Health check-ups upon return can be a base data-gathering point, and the return data kept by the Government should also include health indicators.
- The soft loan process should be easy and simple. Returnee migrant workers should be supported in developing business plans.
- Activities supporting the reintegration should be aligned more closely to the needs and preferences of returnees, and to local contexts, needs and priorities.
- The Government can make a returnee migrant worker's vulnerability assessment, background information collection, needs and skills assessment, counselling, referrals and follow-ups mandatory.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT

Nepal has a long history of international migration for employment. The recruitment of Nepalese youths in the British Army in the year 1816 can be considered the starting point of formal foreign employment in Nepal. The Foreign Employment Act of 1985¹ allowed the workforce of Nepal to officially join the foreign labour market. The emergence of globalization in the 1990s further facilitated the trend of Nepalese youths going abroad for foreign employment, particularly to countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Malaysia. The political transition for over a decade in Nepal and opportunities abroad triggered the volume of youth migrating for employment in the subsequent years. The introduction of the Foreign Employment Act of 2007² established foreign employment as an industry. The Department of Foreign Employment issued over 4 million labour permits between fiscal years 2008/2009 and 2018/2019 (MoLESS, 2020). Despite the mobility restrictions that ensued from COVID-19, a total of 368,344 and 166,698 people took labour permits in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, respectively.³ However, this number does not include migrant workers going to India for work. In addition, there were those who migrated via irregular routes without acquiring labour permits. It is estimated that 3,210,848 Nepalese reside in destination countries (NPC, 2020b). The major countries of destination for Nepalese migrant workers include Qatar (31.8%), United Arab Emirates (26.5%), Saudi Arabia (19.5%) and Kuwait (6.8%) (MoLESS, 2020). The Government of Nepal issues institutional labour permits for foreign employment in 110 destination countries.

The country received a total of NPR 879 billion in FY 2018/2019 and NPR 875 billion in 2019/2020 and NPR 961 billion in 2020/2021 as remittance (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021).⁴ The contribution of remittances to the national economy weighs around a quarter of the national GDP, with the remittance ratio in 2020 equal to 24 per cent of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2021). Remittance-receiving households account for 55.8 per cent of the total households in Nepal (MoLESS, 2020), that is, more than half of Nepalese households rely on remittances sent back home from Nepalese working abroad.

Nepal is a party to various international legal conventions and processes and has expressed its commitment in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 8 (*promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*) looks at technical enhancement in its target 2; enterprise development and promotion, access to finance, and small and medium enterprises in its target 3; employment creation by promoting sustainable tourism in target 9; and capacity development of local financial institutions in target 10, with Nepal having agreed to achieve them by introducing related structural and normative frameworks (UNDP, 2016). Similarly, Nepal as a signatory and Champion country⁵ of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration has committed to facilitate migrant workers in dignified return, repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Objective 21.⁶ As a state party, Nepal has shown its commitment by providing returnee migrants equal access to social protection and services, justice, psychosocial assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services, in order to fully build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development in the country of origin upon return. The document adopted by a clear majority of the United Nations General Assembly has agreed on the formation of required policy and laws that facilitates the economic, social and psychological reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

The Constitution of Nepal envisions to utilize the capital, skills and experiences gained abroad by Nepalese migrants in the productive sector in the country. Similarly, the Foreign Employment Policy of 2012 aims to mobilize their skills and technical know-how, and developing social and economic reintegration packages.⁷ The 15th Plan emphasizes the need to provide migrant returnees with incentives to channel social remittances towards socioeconomic development (NPC, 2019). The Local Governance Operation Act of 2017⁸ has given local governments the responsibility of social reunification of returnee migrant workers and mobilization of the knowledge and skills gained during foreign employment. Calling for an integrated approach

1 Available at www.ceslam.org/uploads/backup/foreign%20employment%20first%20amendment%20act2049%201992.pdf.

2 Available at www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=78258.

3 These figures are the number of foreigners in the new and re-entry categories, respectively. (Database of Department of Foreign Employment. Available at <https://dofe.gov.np/yearly.aspx> (accessed 16 March, 2021 and 10 August 2021)).

4 The conversion rate was USD 1= NPR 118.52 on 10 August 2021. (Nepal Rastra Bank, Current Macroeconomic and Financial Situation – Tables (annual data for 2020/2021). Available at www.nrb.org.np/category/current-macroeconomic-situation/?department=red&fy=2077-78&subcategory=annual).

5 See <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/champion-countries>.

6 See https://refugeemigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180711_final_draft_0.pdf.

7 See <https://dofe.gov.np/Policy.aspx>.

8 Available at www.mofaga.gov.np/news-notice/1697.

to reintegration that attempts to address economic, social and psychosocial needs of returnee migrants and which can help them make migration decision as a choice, IOM (2019, p. 11) defines sustainable reintegration as follows:

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

Migrant workers bring back social and cultural capital, in addition to financial and human capital, with them. The capital brought back by migrant workers, utilized adequately, can contribute to a sustainable economy. Migrant workers, upon return after a period of employment abroad, need special attention and support to break the migration cycle and a conducive environment for sustainable reintegration. The IOM definition of sustainable reintegration (which includes economic, social and psychosocial reintegration) has been adopted for the purpose of this mapping exercise.

Reintegration has commonly been understood as an economic phenomenon, looked at through the lens of skills and capital contributing to labour market needs. The IOM definition equally focuses on the social and psychological dimensions of reintegration. Returnee migrant workers are often confused on how to get reintegrated due to the lack of information related to reintegration. Information on technical and financial assistance and other services available to them are either limited or inaccessible. The Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/2018 reports that only 42.8 per cent of returnee migrant workers are employed, while 13.4 per cent are unemployed. The report does not clarify on the remaining 43.8 per cent of the returnees not entering the labour force. It can be speculated that this number corresponds to those who waited for their next term in the foreign employment (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The current COVID-19 situation has heightened the issue of reintegration, with millions of Nepalese migrants returning to the country, drawing the attention of stakeholders to focus on reintegration policies and programmes. More than 600,000 migrants were expected to return to Nepal within one year due to the pandemic and a total of 528,540 Nepalese have been rescued by 21 August 2021 (NPC, 2020b; COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre, 2021). It has put additional pressure on the labour market of Nepal, which is already struggling to create work opportunities for around 500,000 Nepalese that enter the labour market every year. Majority of returnee migrants plan to engage in agriculture (33%), followed by service sector (31%), as their priority (IOM, 2020a). In the agriculture sector, a large chunk of returnees (41%) want to continue their practice of traditional farming, which they had done before going abroad, followed by goat farming (18%), poultry farming (14%) and fruit farming (9%); whereas in the service sector,

most of the returnees (67%) want to join restaurants, catering, fast-food shops and travel agencies (ibid.). The same study found that majority of returnee migrants expect financial support (such as soft loans, seed money and other types of grants), followed by conducive environment (such as appropriate laws, policies and procedures) and network development.

The global pandemic has been a wake-up call for Nepal to prioritize the preparation for the reintegration of migrant workers. Migrant workers abroad, at some point, would aspire to return home and re-establish themselves in the local economy. Without adequate reintegration policies and programmes in place, the vicious cycle of migration continues as returnee migrant workers do not find refuge (National Human Rights Commission, 2020).

In this context, IOM initiated this study to map the existing services that contribute to the sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers and their families in Nepal. The mapping focused on different aspects of reintegration services and policies available at the federal, provincial and local levels across the country.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The major objective of the study was to map existing services and policies contributing directly and indirectly to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers and their family members. The mapping looked at the normative and institutional frameworks available for the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The specific objectives of the service-mapping were as follows:

- Map the existing schemes, skills training opportunities, financial supports, information and other services that contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers;
- Explore the existing policies, laws and relevant instruments that provide for and facilitate the reintegration of returnee migrant workers;
- Identify existing institutions that facilitate the reintegration of returnee migrant workers;
- Explore gaps and challenges in the access to and scope of the reintegration services available to returning migrant workers.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The service-mapping was based on a review of the literature, key informant interviews and multi-stakeholder consultation. The literature included research reports, and other publications. Additionally, the official websites of all 7 provincial and 746 local governments were consulted to collect information on existing policies, programmes, services and mechanisms. The information from the remaining seven local levels were gathered through phone calls. Civil society organizations, international organizations

(CSOs), and international development agencies provided information about their programmes that would directly or indirectly support the reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The information collected from the literature were quantified and categorized under themes such as information, skills, schemes, laws and policies, target groups, resource allocation, and so on. Key informants from the relevant government, intergovernmental, non-governmental and private sector were interviewed to supplement the information (Annex 1). Additionally, a multi-stakeholder consultation was held to receive feedback and verify information on the report (Annex 2). The feedback from the consultation was incorporated with due respect. Qualitative information was analysed under the themes mentioned above; whereas the quantitative data were processed through statistical softwares, such as Stata and SPSS. The methodology adopted for the service-mapping is summarized as follows:

- The annual policies and programmes of municipalities were scanned to explore available services contributing to the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers.
- The national, provincial and local policies, laws and programmes were reviewed, with a focus on reintegration. The first periodic plans of all the provinces, except Sudurpashchim Province (which had yet to develop one), were reviewed.
- CSOs and private sector actors working for migrant welfare provided information regarding their reintegration initiatives and good practices they had observed.
- Key stakeholders were interviewed using semi-structured interview prompts to extract the

information on the available reintegration programmes and policies at different levels of governance.

- The data and information thus obtained were analysed for the purpose of preparing the report with recommendations made.

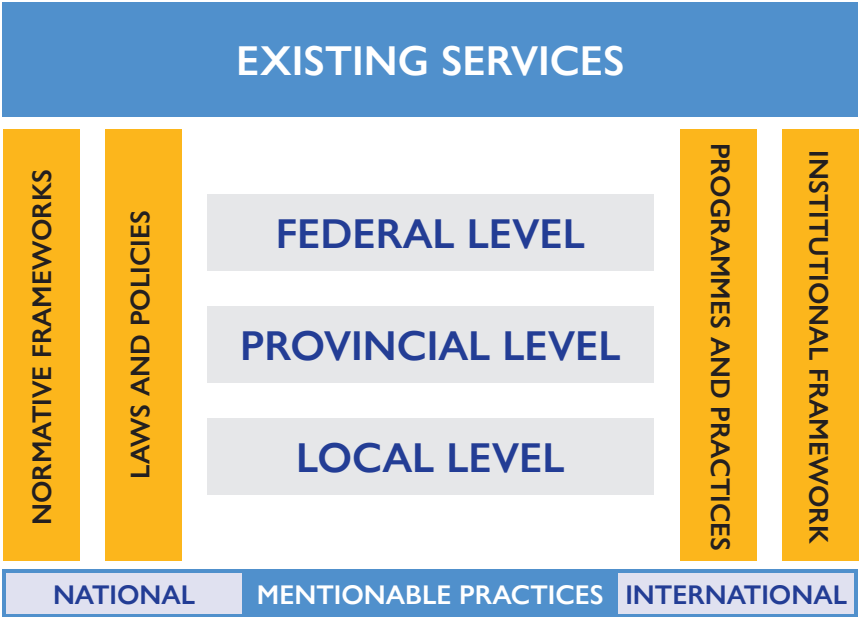
1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE SERVICE-MAPPING

The study tried to map the reintegration services available to migrant workers returning from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, Malaysia and India. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the information on reintegration services targeting returnee migrants was collected primarily by visiting their official websites. The researchers had to rely on the information that local, provincial and national governments had uploaded and updated on their websites. The information was verified through key informant interviews. The mapping attempted to explore direct and indirect normative and institutional frameworks that directly or indirectly support reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The mapping explored available services related to skills training, financial assistance and subsidies, information related to employment, schemes promoting local enterprises and self-employment, and some explicitly mentioned services. It focused on the policies, laws, programmes and projects that contribute to and facilitate the reintegration of returnees.

1.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study used a multidimensional approach to mapping reintegration services levels of governance, normative framework, institutional framework, national and international practices, mentionable practices, laws and policies, programmes and practices.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the reintegration service-mapping activity



Source: The figure was created by the mapping team.

2. NORMATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

2.1.1. Federal level

2.1.1.1. Laws and policies

Constitution of Nepal:

Part 4 Directive Principles, Policies and Obligations of the State Article 51. Policies of the State:

Policies relating to labour and employment:

1. Creating a condition to ensure employment for all and employment opportunities in the country itself by making the labour power, which is the main social and economic force, competent and professional.
2. Guaranteeing social security by ensuring the basic rights of all labourers in accordance with the concept of dignity of labour.
3. Ending child labour and all forms of labour exploitation.
4. Encouraging the participation of labourers in the management by creating good industrial relationship between employers and employees.
5. To regulate and manage the sector to make foreign employment free from exploitation, safe and systematic and to guarantee employment and rights of the labourers,
6. To encourage to mobilize the capital, skills, technology and experience gained from foreign employment in productive sectors in the country.

The Constitution of Nepal has envisioned safe and systematic foreign employment while guaranteeing the rights to employment. The Constitution also envisions the utilization of the capital, skill, technology and experience of foreign employment in productive sectors in the country. However, the Constitution aims at creating a good industrial environment between employers and employees from which returnee migrants can also benefit.

15th Periodic Plan (2019/2020 to 2023/2024)

The 15th periodic plan has set “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalese” as the national vision, with prosperity, development and full utilization of human capital potential, high and sustainable production and productivity, happiness, and well-being and decent life as its long-term national goals. Some national targets and indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 National goals, targets and indicators of prosperity

No.	National goals, targets and indicators	Unit	Status in fiscal year 2018/2019	Target for the fiscal year 2023/2024
1	Economic growth rate (at the basic price)	Percentage	6.8	10.3
2	Per capita gross national income	USD	1 047	1 595
3	Population under the poverty line (absolute poverty)	Percentage	18.7	9.5
4	Population of working age groups with trainings in technical and professional areas	Percentage	31	50
5	Labour force participation rate (above 15 years)	Percentage	38.5	49
6	Share of formal sector in employment	Percentage	36.5	50
7	Social security and protection			
8	Population covered by basic social security	Percentage	17	60
9	Social security expenditure in the national budget	Percentage	11.7	13.7

Source: National Planning Commission, 2019.

National Objectives

- To build the basis of prosperity by constructing universally accessible, quality, and modern infrastructure, increasing productive and decent employment, achieving high, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth and poverty alleviation
- To give citizens the feeling of well-being and decent livelihood by strengthening the federal governance system through quality health and education, a healthy and balanced environment, social justice, and accountable public service
- To protect national interest, self-respect, and independence of the country through socioeconomic transformation and building an independent national economy.

National Strategies

- Agricultural research and technology development, concessional agriculture loan, agricultural insurance, agricultural extension services, a guarantee of the availability of fertilizers and seeds, promotion of agriculture at the province and local level, investment, and market management will be undertaken.
- Manufacturing industries including agriculture and forestry, construction, medicine, handicrafts, and readymade garments with high internal demands and comparative advantages will be developed, reestablished, and expanded and connectivity will be maintained in the regional and global value chain.
- Strategic interventions will be carried out for the modernization, development, and expansion of service sectors including transportation, business, and financial services.

Sectors' Roles in Development

Public sector

The public sector will play the leading role in achieving the development goals with the national vision of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalese”. This sector will have an important role in building a socialism-oriented economy by achieving rapid, sustainable, and employment-oriented economic growth. This sector will motivate private, cooperative, and community and the non-governmental sector for investment and participation in the overall development efforts. The public sector will formulate, implement, monitor, and regulate the necessary policies, plans, strategies, and standards to build the socialism-oriented economy.

Federal Level: The federal government will cooperate, coordinate, and partner with provinces and local levels to implement the national vision, goals, objectives, and priorities. The federal level will formulate central plans, policies, coordinate, regulate, set standards, and implement large projects and programmes with massive impact. In addition, the federal level will emphasize strategic development, production, a guarantee of service, and research and development. The federal level will provide the necessary assistance to build a strong basis for the provincial and local economies.

Provincial Level: The provinces will carry out construction activities and implement policies and programmes by coordinating, cooperating, and playing a supportive role in achieving national vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of development. Province level resources and means will be mobilized sustainably and encouraged for maximum utilization. Capacity development activities will be conducted in plan formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation from the province level.

Local level: This level formulates and implements policies, plans, and programmes corresponding to the plans and policies of the federal and provincial levels. This level will have prime roles in guaranteeing public services or facilities including education, health, electricity, drinking water, and sanitation by establishing itself as the epicentre for an effective flow of service delivery and development management. For this, the local level will coordinate and cooperate with private, cooperative, non-governmental, and community sectors. The local level will have a supportive role in employment creation and the capacity development of human resources.

Private sector

The private sector will play a vital role in the overall development process. The private sector will assist in the production of quality goods and services, easy and accessible supply management, construction of quality infrastructures, import management, export promotion, and productive and decent employment generation. This sector will help in maintaining stability and good governance in the financial sector. It will assist in facing challenges and realizing opportunities in accordance with bilateral and multilateral commitments and agreements by increasing foreign and domestic investments.

Cooperative sector

This sector will assist in increasing employment and income and alleviating poverty by extensively mobilizing local resources, labour, skills, and capital maintaining good governance in the cooperative institutions. In addition, this sector will produce, process, and market the goods and services of human needs to assist in achieving socioeconomic and cultural transformation and inclusive economic growth.

Non-governmental organization, civil society and community sectors

These sectors will assist in poverty alleviation, capacity enhancement, civic awareness, and also in inculcating a sense of duty and empowerment among the citizens by conducting programmes in the areas corresponding to the development goals and priorities of the government and by mobilizing the social power.

The 15th periodic plan has set “a prosperous, independent, and socialism-oriented economy with a happy, healthy, and educated citizens enjoying equality of opportunities, dignity, and high standards of living” as a long-term vision of the country. The plan has envisioned employment creation, skills development, increasing access to financial products and services, identifying the specific roles of different sectors in contributing to the national development by the cooperation and collaboration strategy. The 15th plan specifically takes the aim of expanding productive and dignified employment opportunities across the country, developing good industrial relations, ending all forms of labour exploitation including child labour and making foreign employment safe, dignified, and systematic. The 15th plan has also defined the specific roles for all the sectors including the government and non-government sectors in contributing to the plan. The 15th periodic plan recognizes social capital such as skills, technological knowledge and experiences in the definition of remittances and to provide migrant returnees with incentives to channel social remittances towards socioeconomic development. The plan also emphasizes the responsibilities of the public, private, cooperative and civil society sectors, which can be implemented in providing reintegration services.

Foreign Employment Policy of 2012

The policy has included provisions related to reintegration as follows:

Reintegration Phase

- Foreign employment shall be developed as tool for transfer new skill and technology. Further foreign employment returnees shall be recognized as development partners for national development and poverty reduction by utilization of their skill and savings.
- Effective social and economic reintegration package shall be introduced for foreign employment returnees.
- Returnees of foreign employment shall be utilized as trainers for orientations and skill trainings. database of Nepalese workers going abroad for work and returnees shall be developed. This data recording process shall be started from the immigration section which is initial point of foreign employment.
- Psychosocial counselling centres and rehabilitation centres shall be established under Foreign Employment Welfare Fund.
- Returnees of foreign employment shall be encouraged to incorporate agencies that provide trainings and develop entrepreneurship, capital formation and investment, etc.
- For the productive investment and maximizing benefit of remittance received from foreign employment, shall be encouraged to incorporate industries or investment based public private partnership.
- National bank or financial institution and financial agencies of destination countries shall be encouraged to establish relationship to channelize remittance through formal modes and introduce special programmes to invest remittance on productive sector.
- Family support system shall be developed to support education, health, community development and welfare related activities to families of foreign employees. Further programmes related to welfare of children of foreign employees shall be developed in collaboration with local agencies, child welfare committees and non-governmental organizations and also implemented.

Foreign Employment Policy 2012 envisions the strategy to reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The policy emphasizes on mobilizing the skills and technical knowledge of returnee migrants, and developing social and economic reintegration packages. It has the strategy to utilize the earnings of the foreign employment in the development of the country while introducing the welfare scheme for the family of migrant workers. The policy envisions the collaboration with other stakeholders in ensuring the welfare of the dependent children of migrant workers. The policy also envisions the establishment of the psychosocial counselling and rehabilitation centres under the Foreign Employment Fund while encouraging the entrepreneurship development and productive investment and benefit maximizing based on the public private partnership.

Agriculture Policy of 2004

The Agriculture Policy of 2004 has several policy points and provisions that directly or indirectly benefit returnee migrant workers for their reintegration.

Policies

- Agricultural production and productivity shall be increased by utilizing the local potentialities, comparative advantages and special opportunities, and ensuring the development, extension and utilization of appropriate agricultural technologies. Besides, additional opportunities of income and employment shall be created by laying emphasis on the commercialization and diversification of agriculture.
- The flow of agricultural credit needed for the promotion of agricultural production and enterprises shall be guaranteed by linking the same with the returns of production and enterprises.
- Special emphasis shall be laid on the farmer's training programmes in order to improve the efficiency of farmers at the local level.
- A land bank shall be established and arrangements shall be made with the participation of the local bodies to provide information services relating to the availability of agricultural lands to those who wish to buy/sell such lands for agricultural operations, as well as to provide credit facilities to the needy ones. Special credit facilities shall be provided through this bank at concessional rates to the target groups in order to enable them to purchase lands for agricultural production.
- A double track management system shall be adopted in governmental farms/centres with a view to ensuring the maximum possible utilization of resources available with them by launching commercial programmes also without affecting their prescribed objectives.
- Arrangements shall be made to train educated but unemployed youths in the establishment and operation of agricultural enterprises to attract them to agricultural occupations.
- Priority shall be given to the promotion of cooperative-based agricultural industries and enterprises.
- Commodity and subject specific policies equipped with incentives shall be developed in order to attract the cooperative and private sectors to make investments in commercial production, processing and marketing of agricultural products.
- Groups of potential farmers and entrepreneurs shall be gradually developed along the line of cooperatives in order to ensure an institutional development of cooperatives by mobilizing and promoting local small capital and other resources. Besides, such cooperative societies in rural areas shall be developed as local delivery points to provide production inputs and services to farmers' groups and send their productions to the market system.

Agriculture Policy 2004 has adopted the policies that can contribute directly to the social and economic reintegration of the returning migrant workers. The policy envisions the commercialization and diversification of the agriculture sector for the employment generation. It further envisions to maximizing the productivity and linking the agriculture products to the market. The policy provisions the management of cultivable lands and promoting organic farming. It also aims to encourage the cooperatives and private sectors in the investment and market creation. The policy focuses on attracting unemployed educated youths in the sector by providing training and financial supports and developing special agriculture zones. The policy adopts a multidimensional approach in holistic development of the agriculture sector like establishment of the land bank and partnering with the private sector. Returnee migrant workers can directly benefit from the provisions of the policy in their reintegration process.

Industrial Policy of 2011

Policies

- The no pay for no work principle shall be followed as provided by the labour law with the objective of creating cordial relationship between employers and employees and to create additional employment opportunities and certainty by making the labour policy flexible with a view to enhance productivity having accepted the strengthened industrial relationship as a strong basis of industrial development.
- Special emphasis shall be given to promote the industries that use local resources, raw materials, skills, labour and technology.
- The industrial base shall be made strong and sustainable having identified and utilized the areas of competitive benefits and comparative advantage.
- Technical and financial assistance shall be made available to the industries that use environment-friendly and energy saving technology on their own costs.
- In order to attract creative youth talents in industrial enterprises to create opportunities of self-employment, capacity enhancement activities for development of industrial skills and entrepreneurship and sound industrial management shall be launched as a campaign.
- The Investment Promotion Fund; Technology Development Fund; Micro, Cottage and Small Industries Development Fund and Sick Industries Revival Fund shall be established and operated in collaboration with private and cooperative sectors and Industrial Investment Protection Fund shall be established and operated for compensation of non-business and non-commercial risks.

Industrial Policy 2011 has adopted the policies that contribute directly to the economical reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The policy aims at increasing the national income, employment and export. It envisions the promotion of the industries established in rural areas that have utilized locally available resources and raw materials. The policy further focuses on providing technical and financial supports to the industries that are environment friendly and saving the energy. The policy envisions to encourage self-employment through management capacity-building of young entrepreneurs, creating a fund that supports weak industries and compensating non-commercial risks. It aims at strengthening partnerships between various stakeholders and protecting intellectual property rights.

National Youth Policy of 2015

Objective: To assist the youth who are in the process of gaining education and in the sensitive state of establishing their identity in the society in personal and social development including their education, employment, profession, etc.

Employment related strategy and action policy

1. In order to increase employment for the youth, entrepreneurship and skill-oriented and vocational trainings shall be provided.
2. By creating employment opportunities within the country, emphasis shall be laid on agriculture, agro-industries, tourism, energy and development of infrastructure.
3. In order to create opportunities for employment and self-employment, the youth shall be encouraged to establish cooperatives in the villages and the cities.
4. Financial institutions shall be established and developed in accordance with the need of developing professionalism and entrepreneurship among the youth and creating employments. In order to promote entrepreneurship among the youth having technical know-how, skills programmes shall be conducted for providing youth friendly loans and seed money on the basis of certificates.
5. Business incubation programmes shall be conducted to promote entrepreneurship among the youth.
6. Reducing the incompatibility between the labour market and the labour force, emphasis shall be laid on preparing the youth human resources in accordance with the needs of the labour market.

7. Opportunities of full employment for the semi-employed youth shall be created through modernization and professionalization of the agricultural sector.
8. Besides modernizing the traditional professions and making arrangements for easy access to the market, arrangements shall be also made for providing encouragement, respect, skills and training to the youth involved in that sector.
9. Programmes relating to self-employment and entrepreneurship for the youth who have returned from foreign employment shall be introduced.
10. Proper arrangements for respectable employments and security shall be made for the women going out for foreign employment.
11. Prior to going out for foreign employment, the programme of sending the youth for foreign employment only after giving them formal and technical trainings as per the demand shall be gradually made compulsory.
12. Proper initiatives shall be taken to provide compensation to the youth who, in course of foreign employment, lost their lives or became physically handicapped or suffered from physical and mental exploitation or discrimination, and a programme of rehabilitating them in Nepal following their rescue shall be introduced.
13. Initiatives shall be taken to protect the labour rights of the youth who, in course of foreign employment, had suffered from injustice, had been detained, imprisoned, expelled from employment or deprived of services and facilities by providing them with legal service through Nepalese Embassies.
14. State security shall be guaranteed by establishing a Foreign Labor Security and Investment Fund wherein a fixed per centage of amount from earnings of the youth who go out for foreign employment shall be deposited, and a provision shall be made for issuing shares in the name of the workers by making investment in the productive sectors such as energy, tourism, infrastructure, agriculture, etc.
15. The amount deposited in the Foreign Employment Board shall be invested for the youth who have returned from foreign employment and wish to start some enterprising work inside the country.
16. Proper environment shall be created to utilize the skills, competence and capital of the non-resident Nepalese youth.

The youth policy has envisioned the empowerment of Nepalese youths through advance education, skills training and enterprise support. The policy has emphasized on self-employment of youth, special protection and other relevant supports to realize youth as the agent of national development. The capacity-building and facilitating the youth in the sectors like education, employment, health and social security are the priorities of the policy. It envisions the compensation to the ones who have lost lives, become disabled during foreign employment and introduced rehabilitation schemes upon their return. The policy can directly contribute to the social and economic reintegration of the returnee migrant workers through capacity-building and start up support for the enterprise development. The policy envisions to utilize the Foreign Employment Fund for returnee migrants to set up enterprises. It also provisions to use the skills, competence and capital of the non-resident Nepalese youth.

Similarly, the Local Government Operation Act 2017 has made the local government responsible for the social reintegration of returnee migrant workers and utilization of knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship gained in the foreign employment. The local level is also mandated for the data collection and management of the migrant workers.

Policy and Programmes of the Government of Nepal for fiscal year 2020/2021

1. The fundamental labour policy of this government will be labour management that includes skilled workers, dignity of job, self-employment, fair wages and social protection. Healthy citizen, technology-based quality education, production-friendly fiscal system and entrepreneurial environment are the cornerstones of employment. The government will create massive employment opportunities through the development and utilization of these foundations.
2. At a time when the domestic employment opportunities are scant, the global pandemic of COVID-19 is increasing the number of unemployment in the country due to the contraction of employment opportunities at home and the possibility of the return of Nepalese migrant workers from abroad. The unemployed youths will be mobilized in agriculture, large physical infrastructures, local infrastructures, small and medium enterprises, manufacturing industries, construction and services.

3. The programmes of the Council for the Technical Education and Vocational Training as well as those of all agencies related to labour and skill development will be implemented in an integrated manner to address the shortage of skilled and qualified workers. Short-term mobile trainings will be conducted in all local levels as necessary.
4. Start-up funds will be provided to the innovative youths and other entrepreneurs including the experienced and skilled enterprising youths who have returned from foreign employment to start their own businesses. Entrepreneurial activities will be tied to capacity development, technology transfer, financial access and marketization programmes. For this, the ongoing programmes will be restructured to expand them to all provinces.
5. Educated unemployed youths will be encouraged to start businesses in their areas of studies wherever possible by providing project-based start-up funds even on the basis of their educational certificates and also by supporting in the project formulation.
6. The Prime Minister Employment Programme will be implemented as a targeted campaign for the unemployed youths to create genuinely gainful employment while integrating it to the employment sectors, development of skilled and qualified manpower and employment related other programmes.
7. Employment Service Centres have been established and Employment Management Information System has been operationalized in all local levels. By further developing this system, labour information bank containing the individual profile of workers will be established to enable the use of their skill and capacity. Local Employment Service Centre will assist in securing jobs by connecting the employers to the jobseekers.
8. Good labour relations will be developed between the employers and the workers' organizations. Labour audit will be further streamlined through labour inspection system. Exploitation of labour in all forms will be eliminated.
9. Social security and protection programmes run by different agencies and levels of the government will be executed in an integrated manner to make secured, dignified and high quality life for all Nepalese people.
10. Social security will be made sustainable by strengthening the contribution-based social security system. The workers including those working in informal sectors, self-employed and foreign migrant workers will be included in the contribution-based social security system.
11. Provision of social protection will be made by identifying the needy, physically incapacitated and destitute, persons with disability, women, children and people on the verge of extinction.
12. By measuring the incidence of poverty in the country, the government will launch targeted programmes of employment creation and income generation for eradicating the poverty. Henceforth, "No one goes hungry, no one dies of hunger" in Nepal. This is the commitment of the government.
13. The capital fund made available to community-level groups through different programmes and projects and the record of savings made by such groups will be updated by the local level. Such funds will be mobilized for employment creation, income generation and production-oriented activities.

The policy and programmes of the Government of Nepal for FY 2020/2021 focuses on the COVID-19 response, employment creation, skilling and social security coverage. The policy and programme has stated that the fundamental labour policy of this government is labour management that includes skilled workers, dignity of job, self-employment, fair wages and social protection. Considering labour market strain created by the migrants returned due to COVID-19, the policy and programme aims to mobilize the youth in agriculture, large physical infrastructures, local infrastructures, small and medium enterprises, manufacturing industries, construction and services. It specifically aims at promoting start-up funds, employment resource centre and Prime Minister Employment Programme (PMEP) in creating employment opportunities, retaining the human capital in the country. The policy and programme envisions increasing employment opportunities within the country and contributing to the government's long-term policy to end foreign employment as a compulsion. Although the policy and programme has not expressed the issue of reintegration explicitly, returnee migrants can benefit from the policies that are open for all.

National Budget for fiscal year 2021/2022

1. The ceiling and scope of the subsidized loan provided to the micro, small and medium industries, commercial farming, youth enterprises, women enterprises and returnees from foreign employment will be expanded. A total of 13 billion rupees has been allocated to provide 5 per cent interest for this purpose.

2. The seed capital loan up to 2.5 million rupees will be provided to youth entrepreneurs with project plans as a collateral to encourage them in start-up businesses. Registration, renewal and other services for the start-ups has been managed through the one door system for free. To bring in the foreign investment in the start-ups, there will be facilitation through the policy. A challenge fund of 1 billion rupees has been established for this purpose.
3. Prime Minister Employment Programme will be restructured to ensure one hundred days employment to unemployed individuals. The provision will be made to make the procurement agreement to employ the unemployed individuals enlisted at the Employment Service Centre for the federal, provincial and local level projects and programmes including road, irrigation, building, bridges, river control, afforestation, and so on conducted at the local levels.
4. A total of NPR 400 million has been allocated to provide skills development training to 100,000 youths in plumbing, electrical maintenance, electronics, cookery, crafts (including handicrafts), carpentry, masonry, tailoring, beauty services (e.g. haircutting), and automotive repair and maintenance, to develop the skills and build the capacity of the youth entering the labour market, returnees from foreign employment and from workers who have lost employment in the country.
5. Subsidized loan of up to NPR 2.5 million for a maximum of annual 5 per cent interest rate will be provided to the youth with academic qualification of bachelor's or above against their academic credentials as collaterals.
6. Nepalese missions abroad will be made more active with the defined responsibilities for the international trade, safe foreign employment, foreign investment and tourism promotion.
7. Missions abroad will be mobilized to continue the protection of the rights, safety from the infection risk and dignified employment of Nepalese residing abroad. The preparations will begin to ensure the voting rights of Nepalese residing abroad. The electronic passport will be issued from the next fiscal year to make the passport service safe and reliable.
8. The NRN Fund, established to utilize the knowledge, capital and technology of the non-resident Nepalese contributed by Nepal Government as well, will be utilized in the infrastructure development. A Non-resident Nepali Association Smart Card will be issued to give a separate identity to non-resident Nepalese. The Brain Gain Centre will be made active and the knowledge of Nepalese acquiring specialization and expertise abroad will be utilized in nation-building.
9. The remittances will be encouraged through the banking system and investment in the productive sector. The provisions will be made to transfer the earnings from the foreign employment to the country through the mobile wallet easily. The remittances sent through the banking system and deposited in the fixed deposit account of the bank and financial institution will be awarded additional 1 per cent interest.
10. The start-up businesses are completely exempted of the income tax for the first five years from the date of commencement. The private sector industry companies providing the seed capital to the maximum of 5 start-up business will be allowed to deduct the amount from the taxable income.

The budget has primarily focused on the healthcare and infrastructure development and has highlighted the social security and welfare. The Budget of FY 2021/2022 aims at ensuring work and employment to the individuals entering the labour market and those who have lost employment (Ministry of Finance, 2021). The budget emphasizes on employment generation, promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers and co-operation collaboration between different actors. The financial support through the subsidized loan, encouraging remittance investment in the enterprise development and skill training are the highlights of the FY 2021/2022 budget.

2.1.1.2. Programmes and practices

Prime Minister Employment Programme

PMEP provides guaranteed employment opportunities to the unemployed youths not exceeding the period of 100 days with some conditions. It is implemented through the local level government in collaboration with the non-government and private partners at the local level. The PMEP aims at addressing the unemployment issues in the country through the employment opportunities at the local level contributing to the national development initiatives. The most vulnerable returnee migrants and their families can benefit from the PMEP with their engagement in the activities. In the FY 2021/22, the government has allocated NPR 12 billion to this programme.

Microenterprise Development Programme

The Government of Nepal, with the financial and technical support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched the Microenterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) in 10 districts in 1998 as a pilot phase with the objective of creating employment opportunities at the local level through mobilization of local resources for rural communities. The MEDEP was implemented in the second phase from 2004 to 2008 in 25 districts. The second phase was supported by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID), the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (Aus-AID).

The third phase of the programme ran from 2008 to 2013 under the technical support of UNDP along with the financial support of the Australian Government's International Development Agency (Aus-AID) and the Government of Canada's International Development Agency (CIDA). During this period, the programme expanded to 13 more districts and reached 38 districts. The Government of Nepal implemented MEDEP from its own resources as the Microenterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation (MEDPA) through the then Ministry of Industry since 2010.

The Government approved a five-year strategic plan for MEDPA in 2070 BS (2070/71 - 2074/75) for its implementation. "Directives on the operation of Microenterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation, 2070" was issued. After the Government of Nepal internalized the MED Model as MEDPA, the MEDEP's fourth phase was implemented from 2013 to July 2018. After the departure of MEDEP in July 2018, the Government of Nepal has given continuity to the MEDPA programme and has implemented in all 753 local levels. The government allocated a budget of NPR 2.24 billion to MEDPA in the FY 2020/21 for implementation in all 753 local levels as a conditional grant.

The MEDPA has been implemented in all 77 districts of Nepal with coverage of all 753 municipalities. The programme, in collaboration and cooperation with various development partners and implementing agencies, has worked on creating entrepreneurs in a microenterprise development model that provides business services through phased and integrated services.

Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project

The project focuses on modernization of the agriculture sector through the management of necessary technology and production equipment, machinery in the production, infrastructure development for the processing and marketing, and consequently increasing the production. Small commercial agriculture production centre (pocket), commercial agricultural production centre (block), commercial agriculture production and processing centre (zone) and greater commercial agriculture production and industrial centre (super zone) are being developed under the programme. The programme aims to create 21 super zones, 300 zones, 1,500 blocks and 10,000 pockets by the end of the programme in FY 2083/84. The programme directly contributes to the social and economic initiatives of returnee migrant workers. Returnee migrant workers' increasing interest in the agriculture sector can be catered through the programme.

Subsidized Loans

Government of Nepal has provisioned the subsidized loan up to 200,000 for small enterprises with priority to underprivileged youths. The capital necessary for the start-up of the enterprises can be complemented through the Foreign Employment Fund. Returnee migrant workers with limited financial capitals can benefit from the fund in starting up their own enterprises. Nepal Rastra Bank has introduced the compulsory provision of 10 types of subsidized loans to be provided through commercial banks and 5 out of the 10 from the development banks as mandated by the government. A total of 95,806 individuals have benefited from the subsidized loans until mid-May 2021 out of which 43,997 loans were for agriculture amounting more than NPR 118 billion and 49,449 individuals benefited from women enterprises loan amounting more than NPR 50 billion. The two types of loans weighs more than 90 per cent of the total beneficiaries.

Table 2: Major subsidized grant loans distributed until mid-May 2021

Type of loan	Number of loans	Loan amount (in NPR thousands)
Commercial agriculture and livestock loans	43 997	118 118 184
Educated youth self-employment loans	142	76 003
Project loans for youths returning from foreign employment	782	652 435
Women's enterprise loans	49 450	50 430 093
Youth self-employment loans	3	1 300

Source: Nepal Rastra Bank.

Similarly, the government announced the provision of subsidized project loan of maximum NPR 1,000,000 specifically for the youths returning from foreign employment. Around 20,000 returnee migrants applied for the loan, but only 782 applications have been approved until mid-May 2021. The Foreign Employment Board (FEB) facilitated the loan application process. The number of applicants was overwhelming but the confusion over the criterion for the loan eligibility has been cited as the reason for such a huge refusal of the application. The access and utilization of different types of the loan has not been proportional, with the largest amount of the subsidized loan being utilized in the agriculture and livestock sector followed by the women enterprise loan while the other subsidized loans are not as popular.

National Youth Council's Youth-Oriented Programmes

The Council has conducted a 390-hour training on pig farming, poultry farming, mushroom farming and vegetable farming that benefited 87 youths all of whom have become entrepreneurs.⁹ The beneficiaries would get supports only if they started enterprises. The Council also imparted a one-day business counselling to 1,000 youths in Changuarayan Municipality. It has also facilitated in constructing a cold storage in Nawalpur of Province 4. Moreover, the Council has also produced 70 trainers on various income generating skills. It has followed a 'learning with earning' model. The good practice is that the Council has been working on the above projects through returnee migrants where returnees can take maximum benefits.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM Nepal has been significantly contributing to the government of Nepal's efforts to manage migration more effectively through a wide range of programmes such as Migration and Development, Strengthening Migration Governance, Migrant Assistance and Protection, Labour Migration Management, Refugee Resettlement, Migration and Health, Emergency Response; Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience; Land, Property and Reparation; Migration, Environment and Climate Change. IOM Nepal also supports the Government in its participation and representation to regional consultative processes, regional and global forums on migration including with necessary technical expertise, policy guidance, research to generate evidence base for policymaking, capacity-building and targeted project initiatives.

IOM has been supporting civil society partners in implementation of various programmes that facilitate sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers. IOM has supported the programmes covering various aspects of migration and development ranging from general awareness, financial literacy, rescue and repatriation to the sustainable reintegration to migrants and their family members. IOM continues to contribute to the Government's efforts to protect vulnerable returnee and internal migrant workers and their families affected by COVID-19 by providing immediate economic reintegration support and livelihood development assistance. Some of the recent programmes on reintegration are:

1. Immediate UN Response for Coherent Safeguarding the Livelihoods of People Made Most Vulnerable by COVID-19 in Nepal: The overall objective of this project was to provide immediate cash support to most vulnerable migrants returned due to COVID-19 and recovery support to COVID-19 affected vulnerable migrant households in Province 1. The most vulnerable groups included those who have returned from India and other countries, internal migrants and particularly women migrant workers, women-headed households, households with elderly and new-born babies.

The selected beneficiaries of the project were provided with training on financial literacy and the basics of self-employment. Under the programme, banking and financial institutions were included to support the beneficiaries through financial literacy training to enrich their understanding on saving, loan management, banking and budgeting throughout the project period. The programme encouraged the beneficiaries in self-employment. Similarly, to promote better labour market integration of the returnee migrant workers, employers mapping was done in Province 1. The project was concluded on December 2020.

2. Mapping of the Migrant Vulnerabilities and Support Services in Nepal: The objective of this project supported by IOM Development Fund is to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Nepal to better manage cross-border mobility and apply evidence-based policy to better protect vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking. The project will support in mapping reintegration services in Nepal and provide reintegration support to the victims of trafficking. The project will also map the Nepal–India migration and cross-border movements and provide capacity-building support to the stakeholders including the government concerned agencies.

⁹ The information mentioned here was provided by a National Youth Council representative in a programme organized by National Network for Safe Migration at Alfa House, New Baneshwar, on 30 July, 2021.

3. Nepal Migration Profile: Promoting Strategic and Evidence-Based Policymaking: The objective of the project is to contribute to promoting evidence-based policymaking and mainstreaming of migration into the policy planning process. Through this project, IOM developed a first ever migration profile of Nepal that provides a comprehensive picture of the migration trend and situation in Nepal. The project commissioned a study on the status of Nepalese migrant workers in COVID-19 in coordination with the National Planning Commission. The project, supported by IOM Development Fund, is also supporting the government in mapping the skills of Nepalese migrant workers for better labour market integration.

4. Global Programme on Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development: The overall objective of this global programme supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is to harness the development benefits and reduce the negative effects of migration for host and home communities, migrants and members of their families. The programme has a strong sectoral focus on employment and sustainable reintegration, health, education and social security. In order to ensure successful implementation at the local level, governments at local and national levels will be supported to set up horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms. Moreover, the programme ensures the strategic inclusion of diaspora and migrant associations as well as the private sector in the development and implementation of the action plans for enhanced effectiveness and development impacts.

5. Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Assistance to Stranded Nepalese migrants: IOM has continuously provided emergency humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Nepalese migrants in need since 2008. IOM provides voluntary return and reintegration assistance to the vulnerable, stranded and exploited Nepalese migrants including victims of trafficking in various countries of destinations. Adopting migrant-sensitive and rights based approaches that ensure migrants' willingness to return, while offering humanitarian assistance, reception and other supports such as fulfillment of basic needs and access to livelihood opportunities that will encourage sustainable reintegration in Nepal, IOM continues to provide voluntary return and reintegration assistance to migrant workers in the following situations:

- Victim of abuse, exploitation, trafficking, or being stranded at the destination;
- No possibility to regularize their status in the country where they reside;
- Unable to have access to assistance in the destination;
- Without enough money to pay their way home; documentation needed to move to another country.

The reintegration assistance has further helped the beneficiaries to sustainably reintegrate back into their local communities as majority of the returnee beneficiaries have utilized their reintegration support for setting up agro-based/livestock farming business, setting up small grocery shops, tea shops and tailoring shops.

The projects are implemented in close coordination with the line Ministries including Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), provincial and local government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in supporting the migrants and their families.

SaMi Project

The Safer Migration Project (SaMi) in its current third phase (2018–2022), is working in 39 districts with high rates of labour migration, including Kathmandu. The overall goal of the project is that migrants and their families are better protected by concerned Nepalese institutions and benefit from decent work conditions abroad. Phase III of SaMi takes place in the context of the state's federalization process, which gives important competencies to the local governments (Palikas), including on Foreign Employment.

Psychosocial counselling, skill training, legal support, information and awareness on the safe foreign employment are the core components of the SaMi. It has been implemented at the municipal level and national level through its national and local partners. The project has benefited thousands of individuals and families at all stages of the foreign employment. It provides information and counselling to returnee migrant workers as part of reintegration.

Dakchyata

Dakchyata's vision for the future of Nepal's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system sees young people with greater access to training and meaningful livelihood options which open doors to employment opportunities. Employers are better able to plan for business growth with increased access to information on labour supply and demand, and can hire staff with the knowledge and skills.

Dakchyata has adopted the public–private partnership model and aims to promote shared responsibility between employers, education and training institutions and the government to develop high-quality skills training to bridge gaps between supply and demand in the labour market. Returnee migrant workers can take benefits from the skill development programmes that are run in collaboration with the government and public and private sector partners, including Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), chambers of commerce, small businesses, technical training providers and local municipalities.

Winrock International/Hamro Samman

Hamro Samman is a five-year project with the goal to reduce the prevalence of trafficking in persons (TIP) in Nepal by bringing together implementing partners and various stakeholders including government agencies, CSOs and private sector actors. The project is being implemented in 10 selected districts of Nepal. In regard to reintegration of returnee migrants (at risk and TIP), Hamro Samman has partnership with national level NGO's for shelter support targeted to trafficking survivors and evidence-based advocacy for prevention of trafficking in persons.

Korea International Cooperation Agency

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in Nepal supported the project, "Labour Market Information and Employment Services (LiFE)". Similarly, KOICA is planning to implement a project for 2022 "Strengthening Stage-Wise Support System for The Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants in Nepal".

Rural Enterprise and Remittances Project:

The Rural Enterprise and Remittances Project (RERP) or (SAMRIDDHI) is a seven-year project jointly initiated by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project aims to provide sustainable sources of income to poor households, migrant families and returnees by supporting range of credible economic opportunities that includes decent employment, local microenterprises promotion and microenterprises linked to high value farm and off-farm supply chains having good growth potential following corridor approach. The project covers 16 districts namely–Morang, Sunsari, Saptari, Siraha, Bhojpur, Dhankuta, Khotang, Terhathum, Udayapur, Bara, Dhanusa, Mahotari, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Okhaldhunga and Sindhuli of the Provinces 1, 2 and Bagmati. In addition, it enables those beneficiaries still choose to migrate or who are returning to be better able to gain the full benefits of migration as a transformative step in their families' economic livelihoods.¹⁰

The Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP) focuses on the households of migrant families and the returnees from the selected districts of the 3 provinces in supporting the rural micro, small and medium enterprise for the poverty reduction. The project has three components of Job creation, promoting decent work and institutional support. The project has aimed to create RMSE and job opportunities in the agriculture and non-agriculture clusters. The project also provides the technical and vocational education and training, job placement and apprenticeship opportunities. In addition, RERP conducted a survey among returnee migrants in RERP functioning districts which reflected the needs of returnees' desired enterprises and required supports.¹¹ The study found that most of the returnees showed desires for agriculture (59%), followed by decent jobs (28%) and others (12%). Similarly, skills (32%), grants (28%) and soft loans (21%) were the top three supports that they needed. The RERP also held a seminar with the title "Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers" on 25 May, 2020.¹² RERP has been informing both aspirant and returnee migrants through the Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Information Desk (MRC/MID) in its project locations. The project has used Provincial FM radios to play radio jingles to provide contact details of the counsellors and MRC/MID have been counselling from home to migrant workers, including returnees, and their families via phone and the Facebook page.¹³ MRC/MID collected the data of returnees from their respective municipalities, local wards and approached them to gather further details and expectations of the returnees.

2.1.2. Provincial level

2.1.2.1. Laws and policies

Provincial plans

The First Periodic Plan of Province 1 has acknowledged that 25.51 per cent of the total migrant workers for foreign employment belongs to Province 1 and the province has three districts – Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari – among the top 10 districts that send the highest number of migrant workers for foreign employment.¹⁴ The plan has realized that providing entrepreneurship and employment opportunities to returnee migrants and ending the forced migration is a challenge of the province. The plan has

¹⁰ See <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/pages/aboutus>.

¹¹ Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (Samriddhi): Report on Returnee Migrant Survey 2020 (Itahari, 2020).

¹² Webinar 4: The Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers. Available at http://rerp.moi.gov.np/storage/download_file/pb4wZ36elhrpDfBRIk1sCuLwCCD7oLHYqd5RUK3.pdf.

¹³ Visit the RERP website at <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/news/mrcmid-services-amidst-pandemic-#>.

¹⁴ Province 1 First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Biratnagar, Nepal, 2021).

taken providing returnee migrants with entrepreneurship training to engage them in employment, and creating employment by properly utilizing the remittances as opportunities to ensure increased benefits from foreign employment. It has planned to disseminate information on foreign employment through strengthening the labour and employment information centre, and certify the skills of returnee migrants to facilitate their re-entry into the labour market. Providing soft loans to returnee migrants for entrepreneurship, conducting remittance-financial literacy as a campaign, working in collaboration with the private sector for the use of remittances in the productive sector and facilitating local levels to implement special programmes to attract returnee migrants to entrepreneurship are some other activities.

The First Periodic Plan (2020/21–2024/25) of Province 2¹⁵ has acknowledged that foreign employment has become an option due to lack of employment opportunities in the country. It has a strategy to provide skill certificates to returnee migrants for self-employment, and support them with soft loans. Creating of skilled human resources and employment opportunities in the internal market, orienting youths to self-employment and promoting labour market are its major objectives. As an expected outcome, it has a plan to enhance the capacity of 50 local levels on managing foreign employment.

The First Periodic Plan (2020/21–2024/25) of Bagmati Province¹⁶ has admitted that identifying international labour markets, signing bilateral labour agreement with destination countries and mobilizing the remittances in capital formation as a challenge. One of its objectives is to sign bilateral agreements with destination countries to make foreign employment more productive, safe and orderly. The plan has set the use of at least 10 per cent of the remittances in the productive sector as its expected outcome.

Similarly, the First Periodic Plan (2020/21–2024/25) of Gandaki Province¹⁷ has envisioned to properly utilized the skill, capital, technology and experiences gained by migrant workers abroad in the country. Acknowledging the lack of safe, regular and orderly migration as one of the key challenges, the province has set the goal to make the foreign employment systematic. It aims to keep the record of foreign migrant workers to establish a required coordination to make labour migration safe, managed and dignified. The province has plans to encourage the use of the knowledge, skills, experience and capital received from foreign employment in the production sector.

Lumbini Province, in its First Periodic Plan (2020/21–2024/25), has planned to assist returnee migrant workers by providing concessional loans and skill certification upon their return for their self-employment.¹⁸

Karnali Province's First Periodic Plan (2020/21–2024/25)¹⁹ has acknowledged that the province has the prevalence of seasonal migrant workers to India and admitted that the province has been unable to create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities to properly utilize the skills and capital gained in foreign employment. The province has planned the better management in foreign employment to make it safe, orderly, decent and beneficial. In its strategies, the plan envisions to keep the record of migrant workers going to India and other countries, establish a complain hearing mechanism to reduce deception and human trafficking in foreign employment and make arrangements for legal action. It has a strategy to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in foreign employment. For this, a plan has been set to keep the record of returnee migrants, including their skills and competencies, and run the programmes ensuring financial access. It has explicitly mentioned to run rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to the victims of migrant workers who have become the victims of exploitation in foreign employment.

Annual policies and programmes

The government's annual policies and plans attempt to address the concern of employment that can contribute to the reintegration of the returnee migrant workers. However, the provinces have not prepared the policies and laws specific to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Except Sudurpashchim Province other provinces are working towards forming policies and laws that governs the different aspects of the labour migration. Province 1's budget for FY 2020/21 gave emphasis on technical and skill -based education to increase people's income, create employment and develop self-reliance and its interdependence with agriculture, tourism and industry as the sectorial priority.

Province 2 has started the discussion on formulating a province law that will govern the reintegration of returnee migrant workers and the policy that governs the foreign labour migration through different government bodies such as Office of the Chief Attorney, Policy Commission and Ministry of Law and Internal Affairs. In response to the situation affected by the pandemic in the last fiscal year all the province governments have emphasized on the employment and entrepreneurship development in agriculture, tourism and industry sectors for FY 2021/22. The governments have worked on the employment programmes linked with the skills development, financial support and market linkage.

15 Province 2 First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Janakpurdham, Nepal, 2021).

16 Bagmati Province First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Hetauda, Nepal, 2021). Available at <http://pppc.bagmati.gov.np/sites/ppc/files/2020-03/Final%20file%20aabadika%20yोजना%202076.pdf>.

17 Gandaki Province First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Pokhara, Nepal, 2021).

18 Lumbini Province First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Deukhuri, Nepal, 2021).

19 Gandaki Province First Periodic Plan (2020/2021–2024/2025) (Provincial Policy and Planning Commission, Birendranagar, Nepal, 2021).

Province 1: Highlights on policy and programme for Fiscal Year 2020/21

Health and agriculture are the first priorities while development of industries and physical infrastructures for the productive employment management for the tens of thousands of youths returning home losing their employment abroad is in the high priority (Province 1 Government, 2020). The Province 1 government has planned to create a database of the returnees or those willing to return.

With the policy of optimum utilization of human, social and economic capital acquired abroad by the youth, the Province 1 Government has introduced *Pradesh Pramukh Nawaprawartak Krishi Karyakram* [Province Chief Innovation Agriculture Programme] with the slogan *Mero Krishi, Mero Paurakh* [My Agriculture, My Attainment] in collaboration with local levels and district cooperative organizations. Under the programme, working procedure will be prepared and interest free agriculture enterprise loan will be provided upon the recommendation of the concerned municipality for the enterprises based on the commercial plan along with the promotional packages including training. It is believed that the programme will provide the great opportunity towards the employment, entrepreneurship and collective agriculture business. The Province 1 government has also planned to establish a “One District, One Product” programme, considering the high volume of migrant workers returning due to COVID-19, and to create more employment opportunities. Plans have been formulated to promote the enterprises based on local resources, tools and skills to create employment opportunities for the human resources hit hard by COVID-19 in cooperation with the private sector. The province has aimed at promoting productive and quick return enterprises that create more employment opportunities at the local level, creating space for economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers.

Province 2: Policy and programme for Fiscal Year 2020/21 highlights

The province has planned to continue relief supports, including the food and free meals, for unemployed daily wage workers, farm-based workers, workers returning without money from India and third countries and their dependents along with poor people. The province has also extended the support to the local governments to identify the additional population pushed to poverty due to COVID-19. The plan is to provide identity cards to the poor families living in the province or those returned from abroad (Province 2 Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers, 2021). Reliefs and employment are planned to be provided to the families through integrated, collaborative and effective implementation of relief and employment programmes provided by all three levels of governments. The province has planned to create additional employment opportunities through special revival grants to small, medium and traditional enterprises.

The province has plans to implement *Nawaprawartan Krishi Rojgar Tatha Byawasaya Prawardhan Karyakram* [Innovative Agriculture Employment and Occupation Promotion Programme]. Farmers cards will be distributed under this programme. It aims to promote entrepreneurship of the youth returned from foreign employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic or those who wish to set up enterprises. Similarly, the Province 2 government has plans to create self-employment opportunities to make youths self-dependent and to utilize the knowledge, skills, capacities and capital of the returnee migrants. The government has planned to implement youth self-employment and enterprise development programme for the youths who lost their employment due to COVID-19.

Bagmati Province: Highlights of the policy and programme for Fiscal Year 2021/22

The policy and programme has stated that establishment of the Province Industrial Zone has started in Hariharpur of Sindhuli District and Manohari of Makawanpur District for the development and promotion of the industrial sector to increase products and employment. Under the ‘Entrepreneur’s Hand, Province Government’s Support’ has been introduced for employment generation and transfer of technology, skills and entrepreneurship development and the subsidized loan to increase the productivity focused on unemployed youths and human resources returning from abroad.²⁰

The province has introduced the ‘Infrastructure Development and Employment: Basis of Province Prosperity’ programme to create a socialism-oriented society respecting creativity and work. For the implementation of the vision of “Youth Activeness for the Prosperity, Skills in Hand and Entrepreneurship in Mind” programme, youth empowerment like leadership development, vocational skill enhancement, employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship promotion are given priority.

Gandaki Province: Highlights of the policy and programme for Fiscal Year 2020/21

Gandaki Province has planned to introduce special programmes to protect the interests of daily wage workers, women, Dalits, poor and marginalized, physically challenged individuals and senior citizens affected by the pandemic. The province has plans for entrepreneurship development, self-employment, employment promotion programme through technical and vocational education and training, technology and seed capital to those who have lost their employment, restricted to travel abroad and those returned from abroad, on the basis of their work, capital, skills and interest in the sectors like tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and construction as necessary.²¹ The plan has committed to formulate a province level labour

²⁰ See <http://ocmcm.bagmati.gov.np/sites/ocmcm/files/2021-01/New%20Final%20Bagmati%20Province%20Policy%20and%20programmes%202076077.pdf>.

²¹ See http://ocmcm.gandaki.gov.np/list/policy_programme/policy-and-programs-of-gandaki-province-fy-207879.

and employment policy and to create employment opportunities, identifying the employment sectors in collaboration with the employment information centres. The province has envisioned to encourage the returnee migrants and the ones who have lost their employment due to COVID-19 in herbal farming and training.

An Enterprise Survival Fund is planned to be established to continue to operationalize the sectors, including tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and so forth. Special sectorial programmes will be implemented from the fund in the sectors like entrepreneurship development, capacity-building, self-employment and employment growth.

Lumbini Province: Highlights of policy and programmes for Fiscal Year 2020/21

The Lumbini Province government has initiated the Special COVID Agriculture Programme to prevent the food crisis likely to be created by COVID-19. The province plans to implement the promotion of the production of vegetables, seeds, milk and meat products, aiming at increasing the production by utilizing the barren lands, focusing on the returnee migrants.²²

The financial policy of the province is focusing on reducing the negative effects in the province caused by COVID-19. The province plans to implement special programmes to revive the economy to increase employment opportunities in industry, agriculture and construction sectors to reintegrate the returnees and the ones who have lost employment in the internal market. The provincial government has, considering the possibility of the increase in the number of returnee migrants due to the job loss caused by COVID-19, planned to increase the productions within the province to minimize the potential negative effect of the pandemic, thereby creating utilizing the skills, technological know-how and knowledge of the youth with an aim to making the province a self-reliant one. The province has planned to invest in small and cottage industries and agricultural agriculture sector.

The Enterprise Development Fund will be mobilized to create self-employment opportunities through cottage and small industries that can use the locally available raw materials and local workforce. To provide employment to the workers returning from foreign employment through those industries, rosters will be prepared and simple loans and grants will be provided individually or collectively. Social Development Ministry official informed that the province has planned to map the skills of returnee migrants in the province with a view to create a base for self-employment programmes.

Karnali Province: Highlights of policy and programme for Fiscal Year 2020/21

Karnali Province has planned to revise the Chief Minister Employment Programme to continue to create employment opportunities to migrant workers who lost their employment due to COVID-19.²³ It has also planned to launch a labour campaign, targeting to the citizens who have lost employment due to COVID-19. Labour cooperatives, labour task force and labour volunteers will be mobilized to operate the development work. The province has planned to promote traditional indigenous skills, knowledge, handicrafts and technology in partnership with the local levels to increase employment opportunities. Returnee migrants or their families can also benefit from the labour-based employment special programmes for food security planned by the province.

Sudurpashchim Province: Policy and programme Fiscal Year 2021/22 highlights

Like other provinces, Sudurpashchim Province's major focus is on health followed by employment for those who have lost their employment due to COVID-19 home and abroad. On the economic front, all the programmes are targeted towards the development of the products, productivity, employment and self-dependence.²⁴ The programmes have focused on utilizing the knowledge, skills and capacities of the citizens returned from India and the third countries in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors. They will be provided with collateral free loans through the self-employment development fund. The province has focused on skill training and formalization of informal labour, thereby the registration of labour. Agriculture is regarded as the priority sector generating youth employment opportunities. Seed resource centres to preserve seeds, cold stores and commercial agriculture based on value chain in each local level for employment creation are the province plans.

Provincial laws, policies and directives that govern reintegration

Although no specific reintegration policies and laws, the provincial governments have introduced laws, rules, procedures and directives that govern different aspects of social and economic reintegration of migrant workers and their family members. However, Sudurpashchim Province lacks policy documents that directly govern reintegration of migrant workers although it has run programmes.

²² See https://ocmcm.lumbini.gov.np/media/publications/cm_Policy_and_Program_Final_Draft__1590236946_rMLYTrN.pdf

²³ See <http://ocmcm.karnali.gov.np/node/559>.

²⁴ See <http://ocmcm.sudurpashchim.gov.np/ne/node/685>.

Table 3 Provincial legal framework governing different aspects of reintegration

Province 1	Province 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Housing Programme Implementation Procedure 2075 Improved Seed Production Equipment Support Programme Implementation Procedure 2075 Commercial Agriculture Development Programme Operated through Commercial Agriculture Alliance Implementation Procedure 2075 Winter Maize Farming Based on Cash Promotion Scope Expansion Programme Implementation Procedure 2075 Riverbank Farming Programme Implementation Procedure 2075 Agro-Mart Establishment Programme Implementation Directive 2075 Agro-Tourism Promotion Programme Implementation Directive 2075 Tea Farming Promotion and Modernization Programme Implementation Directive 2075 Cold Store Construction Programme Implementation Directive 2075 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Province Industry Management Act 2077 Province 2 Crisis Management Act 2075 Vocational and Skill Development Training Based on the Cost Sharing of Federal, Provincial and Local Level (Management and Operation) Working Procedure 2077 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Province Youth Council Act 2020 Province Industrial Management Act 2076 Province Trade and Business-Related Act 2076 Agriculture Business Promotion Act 2076 Province Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council Act 2019 Province Youth Council Rules 2020 One Educational Institution One Entrepreneurship Programme Implementation Working Procedure 2020 Vocational and Skill Development Training Based on the Cost Sharing of Federal, Provincial and Local Level (Management and Operation) Working Procedure 2020 Annual Programmes Related to Education, Youth and Sports, Vocational and Skill development Training under the Ministry of Social Development Implementation Guideline 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Constituency Infrastructure Development Programme (Operation Procedure) Rules 2076 Enterprise Survival Fund (Operation) Working Procedure 2077 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Minister Rural Development and Employment Programme Operation Procedure 2075 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant Management Procedure Rules Technical Human Resource Service Contract Selection Procedure Chief Minister Employment Programme Operation and Management Procedure 2077 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yet to formulate.²⁰ However, it has annual policies and programmes, and has conducted various activities which can benefit returnee migrants.

Source: The table was created by the mapping team.

²⁰ Until the end of May 2021, the website (<http://mosd.sudurpashchim.gov.np/index.php/ne/node/260>) of the Labour and Employment Unit of the Administration and Planning Division under the Sudurpashchim Province Ministry Social Development did not contain any information on plans and programmes related to reintegration, nor are there any policies and laws that can contribute to reintegration on the main website (<http://mosd.sudurpashchim.gov.np/ne>). Moreover, due to the “transfer” of the responsible staff members, information could not be gathered.

2.1.2.2. Programmes and practices

Province Planning Commission of Province 1 has aimed at increasing the workforce participation rate from 37.80 in FY 2018/2019 to 47.60 per cent by FY 2023/2024.²⁶ Similarly, the planning commission has aimed to reduce the unemployment 10.2 to 5.4 per cent in the same duration. The province has identified agriculture, industry and tourism as the major sector of economic growth. Recently, IOM and Ministry of Social Development of Province 1 have jointly established a Coordination Center for Migration and Development at the Ministry to bring all the stakeholders together on the thematic areas of migration and development.

Province 2 UK Aid Skill for Employment Project

Aims to support generation of the new employment working closely with the government, employers in the private sectors, training and education institutions, and youth to carry out innovative employment interventions, including skills training and job placement which provides higher wages for the individuals and increases the productivity of the firms in growth sector. It focuses on ICT, tourism, commercial agriculture, construction (hydropower), light manufacturing sectors through market-led interventions that enable job creation, increase in incomes and migration optimizations. The programme aims to harness the benefits of migration for Nepal's workforce and economic development by demonstrating several cost-effective models to increase migrant's skills, lower financing and other costs of travelling abroad, and increase savings and investments of remittances.

The programme aims at facilitating the migrants and their families in the sustainable enterprise development at all stages of the migration cycle. The programme is implemented in collaboration and cooperation with the concerned stakeholders including the private sectors.

Similarly, all the province governments have introduced the programmes on agriculture employment and enterprise promotion, Chief Minister Agriculture Development Programme, Chief Minister Employment Programme and others focused on returnee migrant workers and some programmes even targeted the migrants returning due to COVID-19.

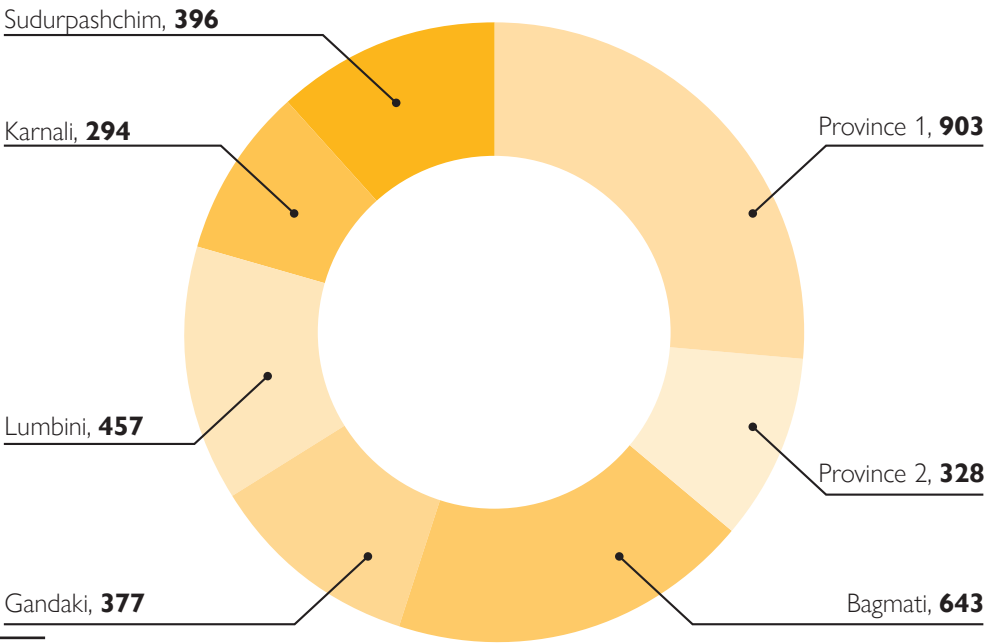
2.1.3. Local level

2.1.3.1. Laws and policies

The local level governments have not introduced any policies and laws that specifically governs the reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The local governments, however, have the mandate to form their own policies, laws and procedures necessary for implementing the programmes and activities within the framework of the existing national and provincial policies and laws. Some of the local governments have prepared the strategic plans that contributes to the different aspects of the social and economic life of its population.

In addition, the policies and programmes introduced by the local governments as its annual plan can also directly contribute to the social and economic reintegration of the returnee migrant workers.

Figure 2. Number of programmes, schemes and grants supported by annual policies



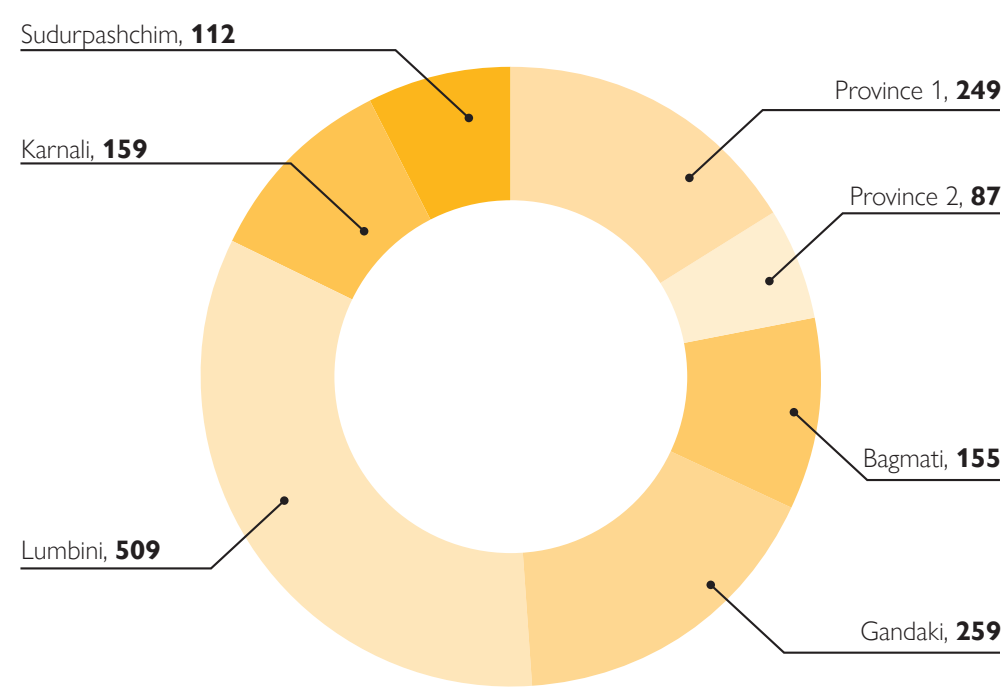
²⁶See <http://ppc.p1.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Infographic.pdf>.

The majority of the local governments have announced the annual policies and programmes as a framework for their annual plans. Altogether 3,398 programmes/schemes/grants launched at the local levels for the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers were regulated and supported by annual policies. The highest number of programmes (903) at Province 1 was directly regulated and supported by the annual policy which is followed by Bagmati Province (643) and Lumbini Province (457); whereas, the lowest was observed in Karnali Province (294) (Figure 2). These programmes which are launched with the support of annual policies can contribute to the reintegration initiatives.

2.1.3.2. Programmes and practices

The local governments, in close collaboration and cooperation with various agencies and programmes have introduced the initiatives that contribute to the reintegration of the migrant workers mainly focused on the information and awareness on different aspects of employment, skills development, financing services and schemes that facilitate enterprises at the local level. For example, RERP's Samriddhi Project is working on various local levels of 16 districts in Province 1, 2 and Bagmati for income generation for poor households, migrant families and returnees through local microenterprises promotion and microenterprises linked to high value farm and off farm supply chains (See details in 2.1.1.2).²⁷ SaMi at the municipal level has been providing the legal support and psychosocial counselling among other services that facilitate the reintegration of migrant workers. Similarly, Swiss Contact's skill development training for the returnee and spouses of the migrant workers have also contributed largely in the implementing municipalities in the reintegration initiatives. Likewise, returnee migrant workers have attempted to support each other's initiatives by providing the peer support in social and financial reintegration.

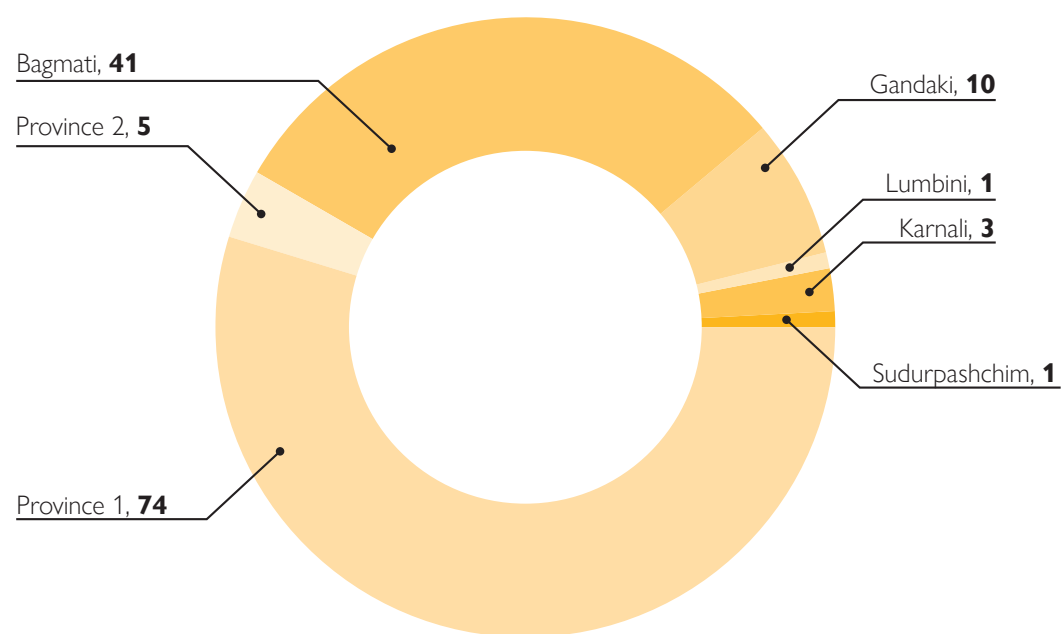
Figure 3. Number of related programmes launched at the local level, by province



There are very few programmes in the local levels that directly contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The programmes at local level contributing to the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers is significant for improving their livelihood. Lumbini Province has the highest number of programmes (509) that indirectly support reintegration, which is followed by Province 1 (249); whereas, the lowest number is observed in Province 2 (87) that indirectly contribute to the social and economic reintegration of migrant workers.

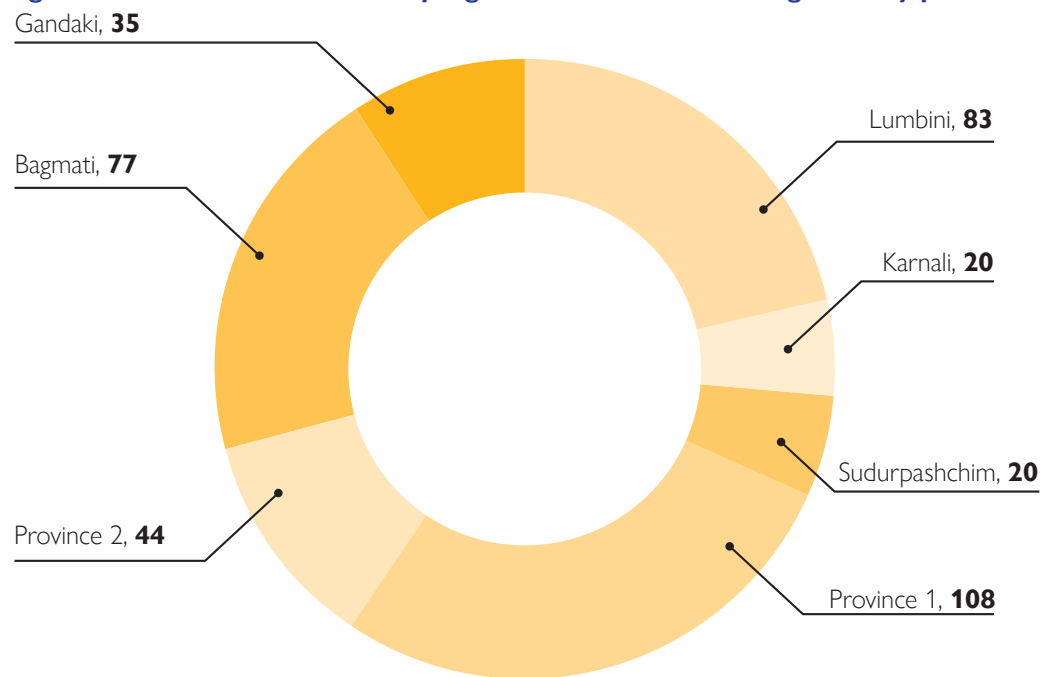
²⁷ See <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/pages/aboutus>.

Figure 4. Number of local-level programmes for aspiring migrants, by province



The programmes and services available at the local levels are not enough to cater to the specific needs of aspirant migrant workers. A total of 135 programmes at the local level were specifically targeting aspirant migrant workers, with Province 1 has the highest number of programmes (74) and Lumbini Province and Sudurpashchim Province each has the lowest number of programme (1).

Figure 5. Number of local-level programmes for returnee migrants, by province



The total number of programmes and services available at the local level directly supporting returnee migrant workers is 387. Province 1 has the highest number of programmes (108) for returnee migrant workers that contribute to their social and economic reintegration. Bagmati Province follows Province 1 in targeting its programmes (77) for returnee migrant workers, while Sudurpashchim and Karnali Province each has the lowest number of programmes (20).

The figure also suggests that the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers returning from India remain unaddressed, Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces are the largest sources of India-bound migrant workers.²⁸ India migration has been the least discussed topic as it is not regarded as foreign employment. However, India has been the largest employment destination in the history of employment of Nepalese youths.²⁹

28 IOM, *Migration in Nepal: A Country Profile 2019* (Kathmandu, 2019).

29 Response received from a participant in a key informant interview.

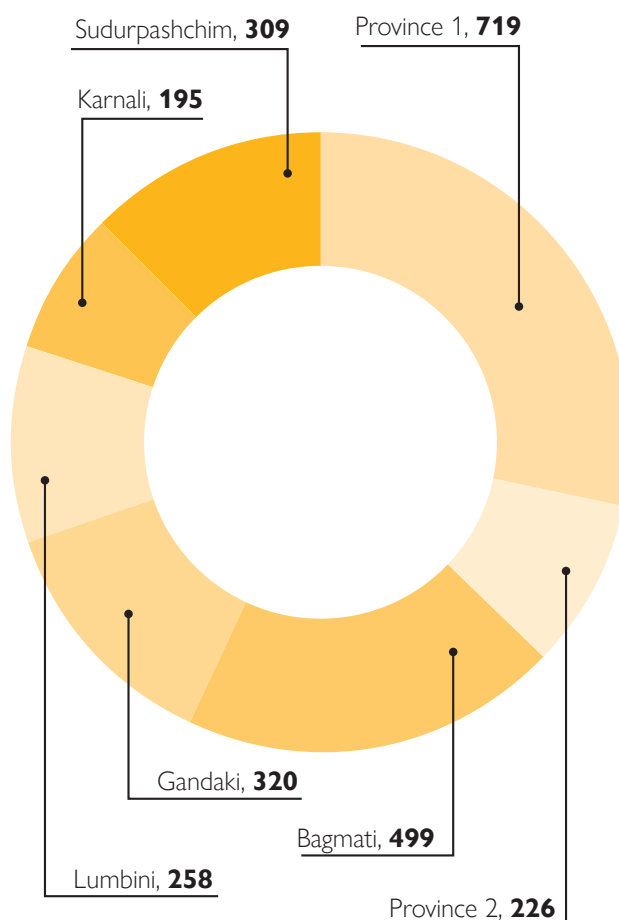
Table 4. Percentage (and actual count) of beneficiaries of local-level programmes that target special groups, by province

Targeted group	Province 1	Province 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Total
18–59 age group	3.54 (25)	4.26 (8)	0.78 (2)	5.65 (17)	1.49 (10)	1.65 (4)	2.69 (5)	2.79 (71)
Adivasi Janajati/Dalit/ Madhesi/Disabled	7.07 (50)	2.66 (5)	2.75 (7)	1.99 (6)	5.23 (35)	1.65 (4)	1.08 (2)	4.28 (109)
Youth	5.23 (37)	14.89 (28)	13.73 (35)	10.63 (32)	5.98 (40)	11.98 (29)	16.67 (31)	9.11 (232)
Returnees/aspiring migrants	2.83 (20)	5.85 (11)	5.10 (13)	4.65 (14)	2.69 (18)	2.07 (5)	4.30 (8)	3.49 (89)
Unemployed youth	12.02 (85)	20.21 (38)	20.39 (52)	10.63 (32)	12.11 (81)	14.46 (35)	6.99 (13)	13.19 (336)
Dalit	1.56 (11)	1.60 (3)	2.75 (7)	0.66 (2)	2.69 (18)	2.07 (5)	2.15 (4)	1.96 (50)
Women	7.21 (51)	21.81 (41)	23.14 (59)	8.31 (25)	11.21 (75)	9.92 (24)	3.23 (6)	11.03 (281)
Farmer/farmers' groups	48.51 (343)	21.28 (40)	21.96 (56)	49.17 (148)	51.57 (345)	46.69 (113)	59.68 (111)	45.37 (1 156)
Poor/vulnerable	2.40 (17)	5.32 (10)	3.53 (9)	1.00 (3)	2.99 (20)	3.31 (8)	1.61 (3)	2.75 (70)
Cooperative/group	4.67 (33)	0.00 (0)	1.18 (3)	2.99 (9)	0.90 (6)	2.07 (5)	0.54 (1)	2.24 (57)
COVID-19 affected	0.00 (0)	1.60 (3)	0.78 (2)	1.00 (3)	1.05 (7)	0.83 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.67 (17)
Other	4.95 (35)	0.53 (1)	3.92 (10)	3.32 (10)	2.09 (14)	3.31 (8)	1.08 (2)	3.14 (80)
Total	100.00 (707)	100.00 (188)	100.00 (255)	100.00 (301)	100.00 (669)	100.00 (242)	100.00 (186)	100.00 (2 548)

Note: The figure in parenthesis refers to the number.

The local level programmes and services are largely focusing on farmers, which account for 45.37 per cent of the total programmes. The local level programmes focusing on the people affected by COVID-19 are the lowest in proportion. The programmes focusing on unemployed youths stand second with 13.19 per cent. The number of programmes available in the local levels particularly focusing on returnee and aspirant migrant workers is comparatively less with 3.49 per cent. However, the aspirant and returnee migrant workers can also benefit from the programmes focused on other groups.

Figure 6. Number of local-level programmes open to all, by province

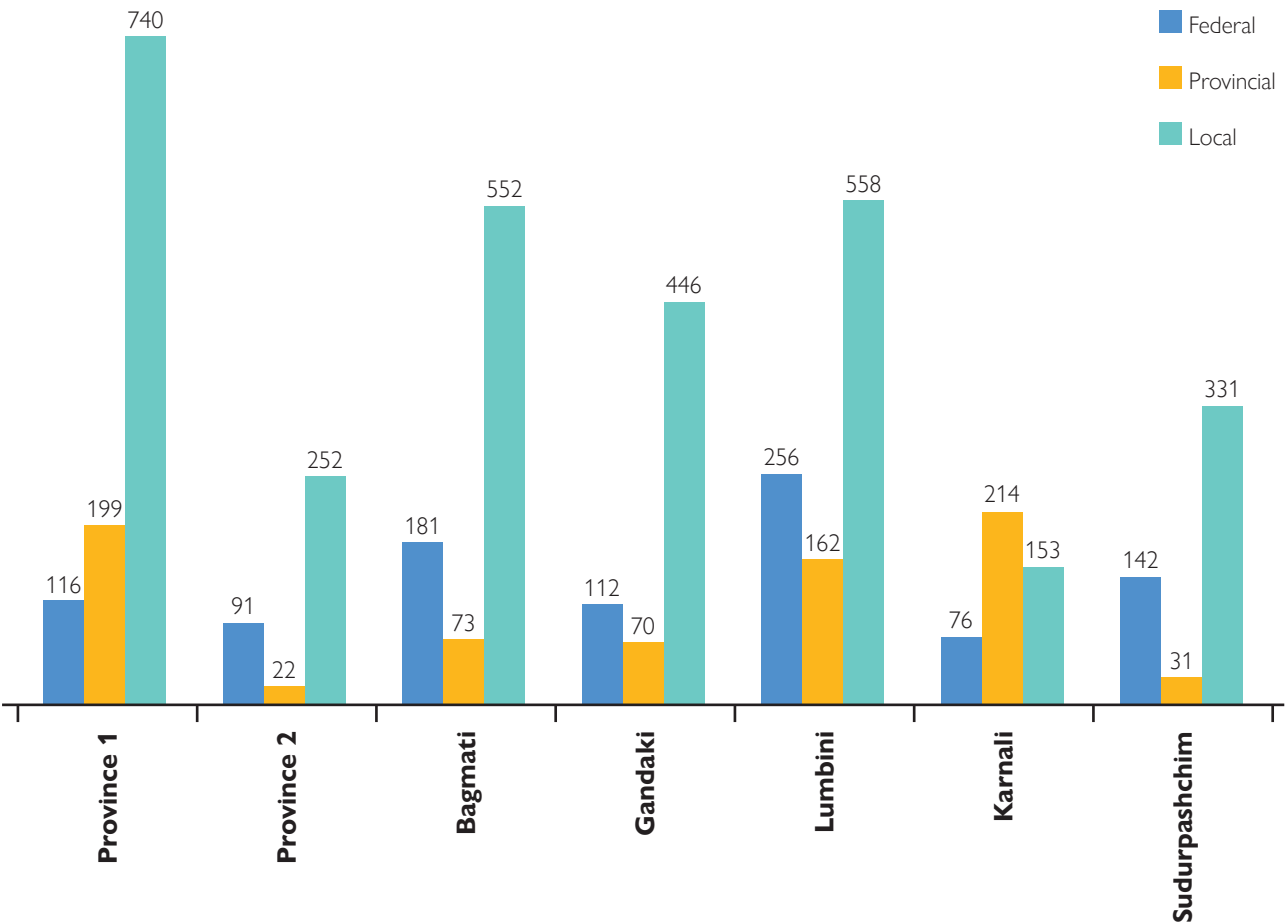


The programmes and services open for all in local levels bear equal importance for improving the living standard of both returnee migrants and their family members. The programmes open for all can be equally beneficial to migrant workers and their families, including reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Figure 6 shows that Province 1 has the highest number of programmes and services open for all (719), followed by Bagmati Province (499); whereas the lowest number is observed in Karnali Province (195).

2.1.3.2.a Services

The local level governments have offered various services that complement the reintegration of migrant workers. The services are either directly supporting returnee migrant workers and their family members or are open to all or specific groups which can indirectly support reintegration of returnee migrant workers. The services are broadly related to information, skills, finance and facilitating schemes.

Figure 7. Number of programmes and their budget sources



The effective implementation of the programmes/activities/schemes depends on the availability of resources. Most of the resources were allocated by the annual budgets of the local governments, followed by that of the federal and provincial governments. The highest number of programmes/activities/schemes receiving resources from the local government was in Province 1 (740), which is followed by Lumbini Province (558); whereas, the lowest number was observed in Karnali Province (153). Lumbini Province had the highest number of programmes (256) receiving resources from the federal government. Karnali Province has the highest number of programmes/activities/schemes (214) supported by the provincial annual budgets for their implementation, followed by Province 1 (199) and Lumbini Province (162).

Information related services

The information related to the risks and opportunities at domestic and foreign employment is provided to migrant workers from Migrant Resource Centers and Employment Information Centers. As an example, the Migrant Resource Centres and Migrant Information Desks have provided migration related information, including their return and part of reintegration at RERP locations. They have used provincial FM radio stations, mobile phone, Facebook and other electronic means to provide information and counselling from home to migrant workers, including returnees and their families.³⁰ However, the programmes are not solely dedicated to reintegration. There is also provision of mandatory predeparture orientation programme offered

30 For more information, visit the RERP website at <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/news/mrcmid-services-amidst-pandemic-#>.

by foreign employment orientation training centers enlisted at the FEB and mostly operated in Kathmandu Valley. These orientation centres offer the session based on the pre departure orientation training prepared by FEB that does not include the information related to reintegration.

Skill-related services

Local level governments are offering the skill related services aimed at building the capacity of the youths through the technical and management trainings. The nature of the skills trainings offered can be roughly categorized into skilling, reskilling and upskilling trainings. The skill trainings are mainly offered in the areas of agriculture, mechanical, construction, etc. Most of the trainings offered are based on and affiliated to the CTEVT curriculum.

Figure 8. Number of skill-related services available at the local level, by type



The skills training offered in the local level are mostly conducted under the approved curriculum of CTEVT. A total of 361 skill training programmes offered at the local levels are related to general skills enlisted in the CTEVT curriculum. The specific training programmes offered in the local levels are rather conventional with 124 skill programmes related to stitching, knitting and tailoring. Other skill training activities offered are related to agriculture (94), micro enterprises (81) and other contemporary skills as per the market needs.

Table 5: Types of services related to skills available at local levels, in per cent, by province

Types of Skills available	Province 1	Province 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Total
CTEVT skills	38.37 (99)	28.29 (43)	29.77 (89)	25.71 (36)	31.84 (71)	26.67 (8)	26.79 (15)	31.17 (361)
Tailoring/sewing/boutique	7.36 (19)	18.42 (28)	7.69 (23)	11.43 (16)	14.35 (32)	10.00 (3)	5.36 (3)	10.71 (124)
Agro-training	5.81 (15)	2.63 (4)	11.71 (35)	12.86 (18)	6.28 (14)	13.33 (4)	7.14 (4)	8.12 (94)
Micro/women enterprise	6.98 (18)	3.29 (5)	14.05 (42)	6.43 (9)	2.69 (6)	0.00 (0)	1.79 (1)	6.99 (81)
ICT/electrician/computer/plumbing	3.10 (8)	11.18 (17)	3.68 (11)	12.14 (17)	7.17 (16)	13.33 (4)	5.36 (3)	6.56 (76)
Skill training	5.43 (14)	12.50 (19)	3.68 (11)	4.29 (6)	4.48 (10)	16.67 (5)	16.07 (9)	6.39 (74)
Livestock	4.65 (12)	3.29 (5)	4.01 (12)	6.43 (9)	8.97 (20)	10.00 (3)	3.57 (2)	5.44 (63)
Beauty parlour/hair cutting	2.33 (6)	1.32 (2)	4.01 (12)	4.29 (6)	4.93 (11)	0.00 (0)	1.79 (1)	3.28 (38)
Youth/skill training	2.71 7()	2.63 (4)	3.34 (10)	5.00 (7)	0.90 (2)	3.33 (1)	5.36 (3)	2.94 (34)
Foreign/self-employment	4.26 (11)	1.32 (2)	3.68 (11)	4.29 (6)	1.35 (3)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	2.85 (33)
Driving/motorcycle repairing	2.33 (6)	2.63 (4)	3.01 (9)	0.71 (1)	4.04 (9)	0.00 (0)	7.14 (4)	2.85 (33)
Vegetable/fruit farming	0.78 (2)	3.29 (5)	3.01 (9)	0.71 (1)	4.48 (10)	3.33 (1)	5.36 (3)	2.68 (31)
Vocational training	2.33 (6)	5.26 (8)	3.01 (9)	0.00 (0)	0.90 (2)	3.33 (1)	5.36 (3)	2.50 (29)
Carpentry/masonry	2.33 (6)	1.97 (3)	1.34 (4)	0.71 (1)	2.24 (5)	0.00 (0)	3.57 (2)	1.81 (21)
Bee/fish/mushroom farming	1.16 (3)	0.00 (0)	3.01 (9)	1.43 (2)	2.24 (5)	0.00 (0)	1.79 (1)	1.73 (20)
Hotel/hospitality/tourism	1.94 (5)	0.66 (1)	1.00 (3)	2.86 (4)	0.45 (1)	0.00 (0)	3.57 (2)	1.38 (16)
Other	8.14 (21)	1.32 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.71 (1)	2.69 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	2.59 (30)
Total	100 (258)	100 (152)	100 (299)	100 (140)	100 (223)	100 (30)	100 (56)	100 (1 158)

Note: The figure in parenthesis refer to the number.

Province 1 has mostly focused on women, with 7.36 per cent of the skill training programmes related to stitching, knitting and tailoring, followed by 6.98 per cent training related to micro enterprises. Similarly, Province 2 has focused on the training related to technical skills like electrician, plumbing, ICT and computer repairing and maintenance. Nearly 15 per cent of the training programmes offered by the local governments in Bagmati Province are related to women and micro enterprises. Similarly, local governments in Gandaki Province have focused on agriculture related training with 12.86 per cent. Local governments in Lumbini Province have focused on traditional skills for women with 14.35 per cent training related to stitching, knitting and tailoring. Local governments in Karnali Province have offered 16.67 per cent of the training in contemporary skills as per the market need followed by 13.33 per cent each of technical training and agriculture related training. Similarly, local governments in Sudurpashchim Province have offered 16.07 per cent of the training programmes related to contemporary skills.

Financial services

The provisions of the soft loans, grants, loan facilitations, group loans and other financial products have been made available for the start-up and expansion of the enterprises. Some of the loans and grants have been made available to specific target population while some are available for all. The financial products that can contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers are available through different financial institutions, cooperatives and micro financial institutions. The government at the local level facilitates the loan and grant directly or indirectly through the official recommendation.

Figure 9. Number of of financial services at local levels, by province

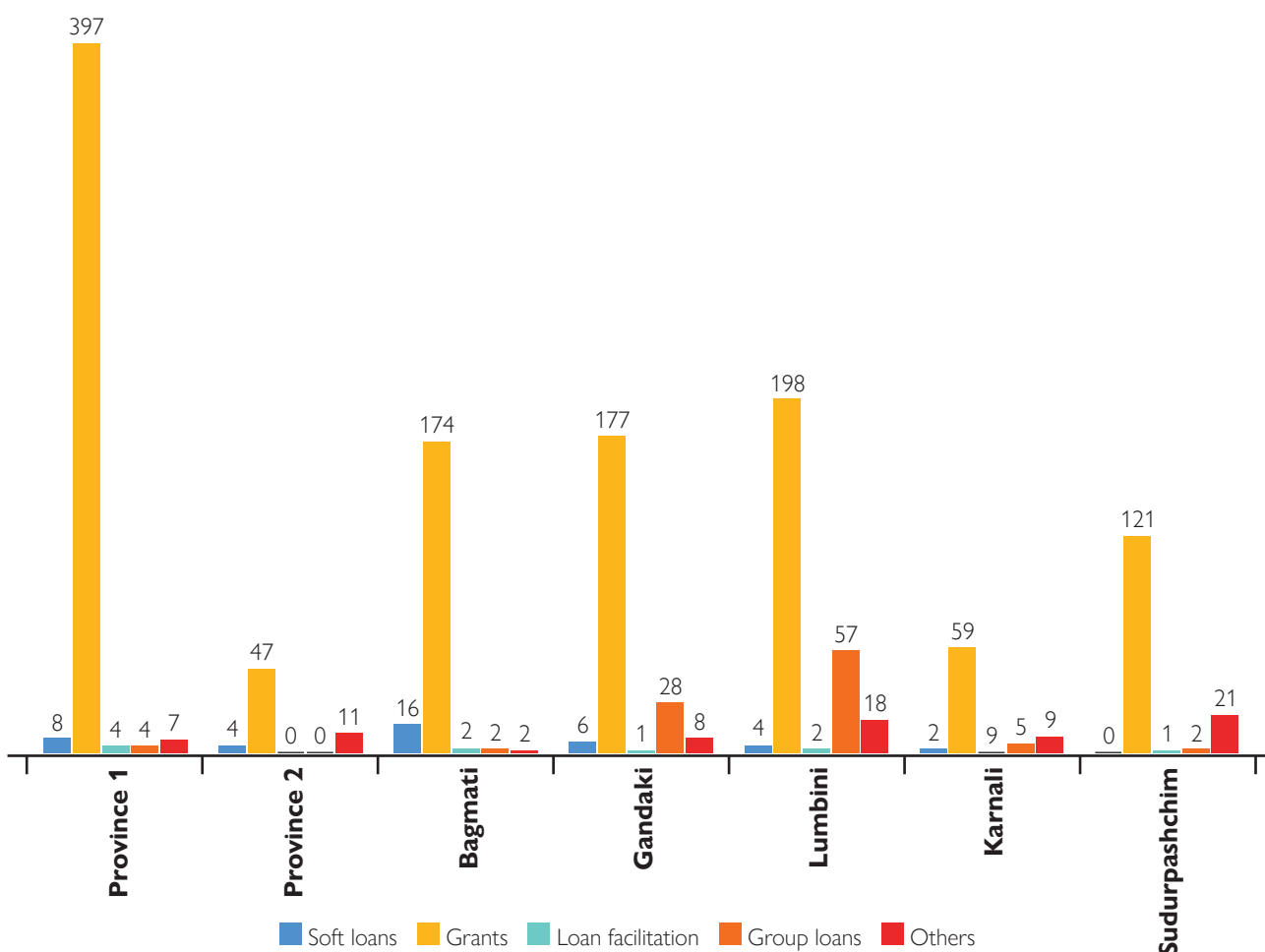
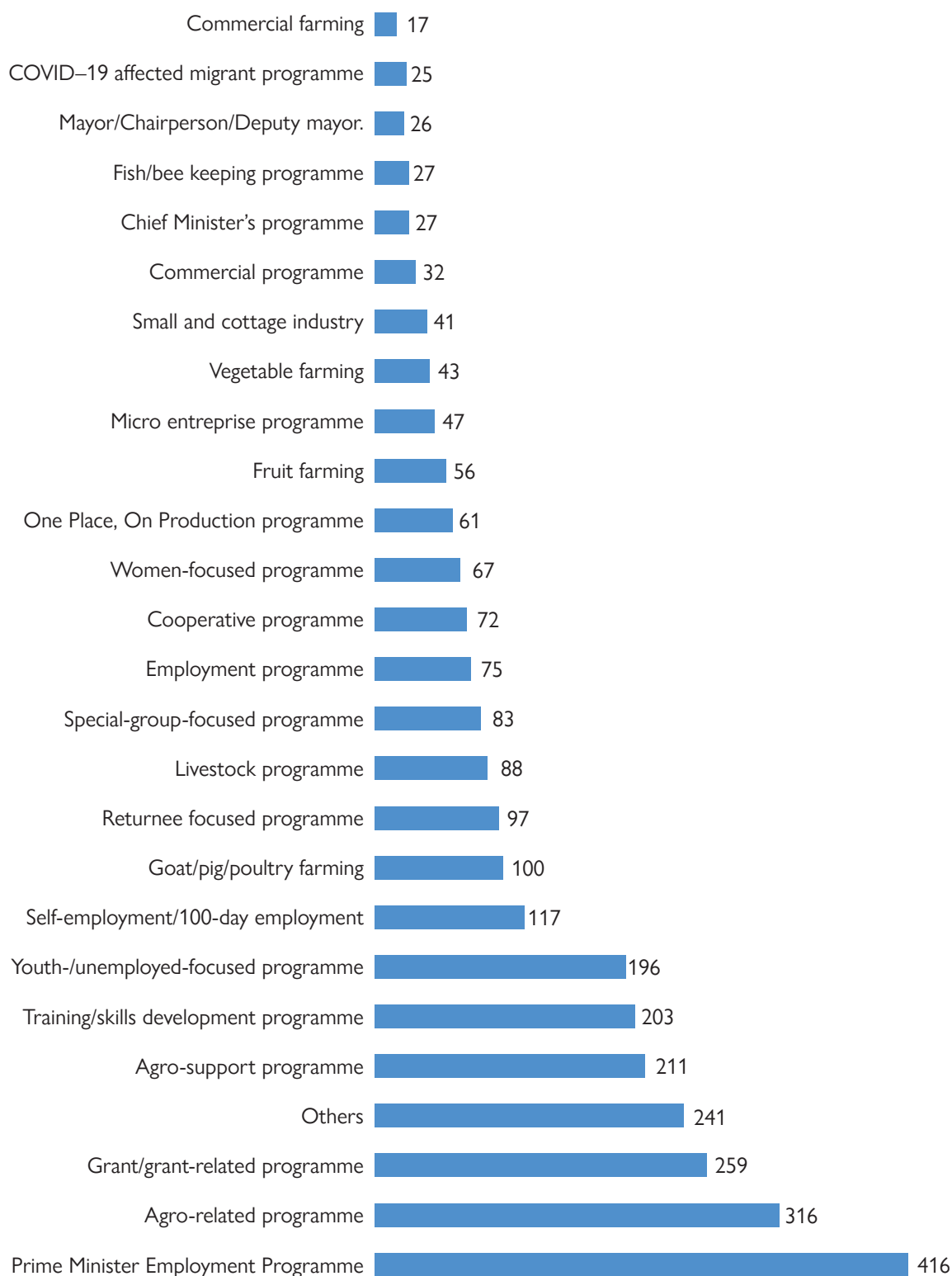


Figure 9 shows that the largest share of the financial services that can directly or indirectly contribute to reintegration of returnee migrant workers by local governments are occupied by grants. In province 1, 397 different reintegration programmes and schemes are supported with grants, followed by Lumbini Province (198); whereas, the lowest number of financial services is observed in Province 2 (47). Similarly, 57 programmes in Lumbini Province are offered group loans which is followed by Gandaki Province (28). The provision of soft loan is observed granted to 16 programmes in Bagmati Province, followed by Province 1 (8). There are no loan facilitation provisions in Karnali Province, and no soft loan provisions in Sudurpashchim Province.

2.1.3.2.b. Schemes

Various schemes related to employment and enterprise development have been introduced by the local governments that can directly contribute to the social and economic reintegration of returnee migrant workers. Most of the schemes promote the agriculture sector.

Figure 10. Number of schemes launched at the local level



The Prime Minister Employment Programme is the largest scheme (416) available out of 2,943 schemes in the local levels. The schemes are mostly agro-related (316), agriculture support (211), specific agriculture sectors like goat farming, pig farming and poultry farming (100), livestock focused (88), vegetable farming (43), fruit farming (56), fish or bee keeping (27) and commercial farming (17). Consequently, the agriculture sector occupies the highest number of schemes (858), followed by skill development programmes (203) and unemployed youth focused programmes (193) (Figure 10).

Table 6: Schemes launched by local levels, in per cent, by province

Programme/Activities	Province 1	Province 2	Bagmati	Gandaki	Lumbini	Karnali	Sudurpashchim	Total
Prime Minister Employment Programme	10.99 (99)	20.30 (54)	11.18 (58)	11.53 (37)	20.35 (81)	15.47 (41)	16.85 (46)	14.14 (416)
Agro-related programme	8.88 (80)	10.15 (27)	10.60 (55)	12.77 (41)	6.78 (27)	15.47 (41)	16.48 (45)	10.74 (316)
Grant/grant-related	13.87 (125)	6.02 (16)	2.12 (11)	18.38 (59)	6.03 (24)	1.51 (4)	7.33 (20)	8.80 (259)
Agro-support	8.77 (79)	6.39 (17)	6.94 (36)	7.79 (25)	4.77 (19)	5.66 (15)	7.33 (20)	7.17 (211)
Training/skills development	3.44 (31)	7.52 (20)	5.97 (31)	4.67 (15)	12.06 (48)	12.83 (34)	8.79 (24)	6.90 (203)
Youth-/unemployed-focused	4.99 (45)	4.89 (13)	12.72 (66)	5.61 (18)	6.28 (25)	6.04 (16)	4.76 (13)	6.66 (196)
Self-employment/100-day employment	3.66 (33)	4.51 (12)	3.66 (19)	3.12 (10)	4.52 (18)	7.92 (21)	1.47 (4)	3.98 (117)
Goat/pig/poultry farming	4.33 (39)	3.01 (8)	3.08 (16)	4.05 (13)	3.27 (13)	1.13 (3)	2.93 (8)	3.40 (100)
Returnee-focused	2.22 (20)	4.51 (12)	5.78 (30)	3.43 (11)	4.02 (16)	0.38 (1)	2.56 (7)	3.30 (97)
Livestock	4.44 (40)	3.76 (10)	2.50 (13)	2.18 (7)	2.26 (9)	0.38 (1)	2.93 (8)	2.99 (88)
Special group	4.77 (43)	2.26 (6)	0.96 (5)	1.25 (4)	3.77 (15)	1.89 (5)	1.83 (5)	2.82 (83)
Employment programme	2.55 (23)	2.26 (6)	3.28 (17)	1.56 (5)	2.01 (8)	4.91 (13)	1.10 (3)	2.55 (75)
Cooperative	3.88 (35)	3.01 (8)	1.35 (7)	3.12 (10)	0.75 (3)	1.89 (5)	1.47 (4)	2.45 (72)
Women-focused	1.66 (15)	3.01 (8)	3.47 (18)	2.18 (7)	1.01 (4)	5.66 (15)	0.00 (0)	2.28 (67)
One Place, One Production	0.44 (4)	1.13 (3)	3.47 (18)	1.87 (6)	3.02 (12)	4.15 (11)	2.56 (7)	2.07 (61)
Fruit farming	2.55 (23)	0.75 (2)	3.08 (16)	0.93 (3)	0.75 (3)	1.13 (3)	2.20 (6)	1.90 (56)
Microenterprises	1.33 (12)	2.63 (7)	2.12 (11)	0.31 (1)	2.26 (9)	1.13 (3)	1.47 (4)	1.60 (47)
Vegetable farming	1.66 (15)	1.88 (5)	1.54 (8)	1.87 (6)	1.01 (4)	0.38 (1)	1.47 (4)	1.46 (43)
Small and cottage industries	1.55 (14)	1.13 (3)	0.96 (5)	0.62 (2)	1.51 (6)	1.13 (3)	2.93 (8)	1.39 (41)
Commercial programme	1.11 (10)	0.00 (0)	2.12 (11)	0.62 (2)	0.25 (1)	0.75 (2)	2.20 (6)	1.09 (32)
Chief Minister's programme	0.00 (0)	0.75 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	4.77 (19)	2.26 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.92 (27)
Fish/bee keeping	0.67 (6)	0.75 (2)	1.73 (9)	1.87 (6)	0.25 (1)	0.00 (0)	1.10 (3)	0.92 (27)
Mayor's/Chairperson's/Deputy Mayor's programme	0.67 (6)	1.13 (3)	0.39 (2)	1.25 (4)	1.26 (5)	2.26 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.88 (26)
COVID-19 affected migrant	0.78 (7)	1.13 (3)	1.16 (6)	2.18 (7)	0.25 (1)	0.38 (1)	0.00 (0)	0.85 (25)
Commercial farming	0.11 (1)	0.75 (2)	0.19 (1)	0.31 (1)	0.75 (3)	0.38 (1)	2.93 (8)	0.58 (17)
Others	10.65 (96)	6.39 (17)	9.63 (50)	6.54 (21)	6.03 (24)	4.91 (13)	7.33 (20)	8.19 (241)
Total	100.00 (901)	100.00 (266)	100.00 (519)	100.00 (321)	100.00 (398)	100.00 (265)	100.00 (273)	100.00 (2 943)

Note: The figure in parenthesis refers to the number.

Prime Minister Employment Programme is the largest scheme in all provinces. Other large schemes are mostly related to agriculture. Grant scheme has the largest scheme in Province 1 with the 13.87 per cent share. In Province 2, agriculture related programmes have a share of 10.15 per cent of the total schemes available. Unemployed youth focused programmes hold a 12.72 per cent share. In Gandaki Province, 18.38 per cent share is related to grants. Skill development programmes hold the second largest share with 12.06 per cent in Lumbini Province. With 15.47 per cent share, agriculture related scheme is equal to the share of PM Employment Programme in Karnali Province. Sudurpashchim Province has the largest share, with 16.48 per cent schemes, related to agriculture.

2.2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

2.2.1. Federal level

2.2.1.1. Government Sector

Nepal Government (Work Division) Rules 2018; Annex 2 (Related to Rule 5) has the following institutional work division:

Table 7. Ministries directly or indirectly related to reintegration

Institution	Responsibility
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Representation of Nepal abroad Consular practice and services Record of the Nepalese citizens abroad and rescue and protection of their rights
Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens	prevention of the violence against women, human trafficking and transportation Policy, law and standards related to children, child welfare, rescue, rehabilitation and old age care home
Ministry of Youths and Sports	Youth self-employment fund
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security	Policy, law, standards, management and regulation related to foreign employment Policy, law, standards and regulation related to labour and social security Statistics, study and research related to the employment Monitoring of the labour and occupational health and safety and Commission related to labour relations Policy on employment-oriented skill and vocational training Policy, law and standards related to occupational health and safety Integrated data management, study and research related to unemployment

Source: The mapping team.

Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is the concerned ministry to look at the issues of reintegration of returning migrant workers is. However, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, and Ministry of Youth and Sports have the responsibilities that contribute directly to the reintegration. And, other ministries contribute within their own jurisdictions.

Foreign Employment Board, formed under the Foreign Employment Act 2007, is the responsible authority for the welfare and skill training for returnees and families of migrants. The Board functions under the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, the highest regulatory authority responsible for the governance of the labour, employment and social security sector in the country. The Board is also responsible for the awareness and information dissemination related to foreign employment.

Table 8. Welfare activities of the Foreign Employment Board, 2020/2021

No.	Welfare activities	Number	Mobilized funds (NPR)
1	Financial assistance to families of deceased migrant workers	1 243	737 715 000
2	Financial assistance to migrant workers who have returned due to injuries and serious sickness	143	73 302 200
3	Rescue and repatriation of migrant workers in destination countries	413	26 672 800
4	Scholarship to children of migrant workers	2 209	20 882 000
5	Financial assistance for medication to families of migrant workers	4	200 000
6	Coordination and collaboration for retrieving dead bodies	122	9 067 810
7	Sending the dead bodies of the deceased migrant workers to their home	770	1 794 976
8	Refunding the orientation training cost to female migrant workers	21	14 700
9	Relief support	92	4 600 000

Source: FEB.³¹

31

Nepal Rastra Bank: Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) is the responsible institution to formulate and manage the national monetary and foreign exchange policies. It is also responsible for the increase in the access of the financial service. In addition, NRB has also been supporting the implementation of the national programmes and various projects related to the financial sector development and governance. It formulates policies loans, interest, remittances and others.

National Skill Testing Board: It is responsible for the recognition and certification of the skills acquired traditionally or through work experience.

Council of Technical Education and Vocational Training: CTEVT is responsible for the development of the curriculum and providing training through training institutions. It is also responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the training providers and trainees. The Council conducts skill tests periodically and awards certificate upon passing.

Office of the Company Registrar: It is responsible for the registration of companies. The office issues the license and regulates operation of the company. Returnee migrants can register their companies here as enterprises for authenticity.

2.2.1.2. Non-government sector

Various organizations under NNSM and the Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal (AATWIN), like different non-government organizations including the returnee migrants' organizations like, and others have been providing wide range of services including the reintegration support through their representations at the province and local level.

United Nations agencies like IOM, United Nations Development Programme, development partners like, USAID, UK Aid, SDC and others also provide different supports for the reintegration of returnee migrant workers through their partnership with CSOs. The International Organization (ILO) had carried out programmes for returnees in collaboration with KOICA.

2.2.1.3. Private sector

Different banks and financial institutions have developed financial products, including soft loans under the policy of Nepal Rastra Bank, that contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers and other youth entrepreneurs. The remittance companies are channeling the capital into the country while the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other entities facilitate in addressing the issues in the sector through the formation of Foreign Employment Forum.

2.2.2. Provincial level

2.2.2.1. Government sector

Ministry of Social Development is the concerned ministry for the management and regulation of the labour and employment sector at the province level. The ministry works for the implementation of the policy and laws related to the employment and social development.

2.2.2.2. Non-government sector

Different national-level CSOs provide the services through their offices at the province level. For example, IOM supported reintegration programme was implemented at Province 1 through NGOs.

2.2.2.3. Private Sector

The national level private institutions have been providing services through their branches at the province level. For example, SBI Bank and Prabhu Bank has been providing subsidized loans and grants to the returning migrant workers, migrant workers' family members and aspiring migrant workers to start up and upscale small and medium enterprises in partnership with the Skills for Employment Programme (SEP) supported by UK Aid in Province 2.

2.2.3. Local level

2.2.3.1. Government Sector

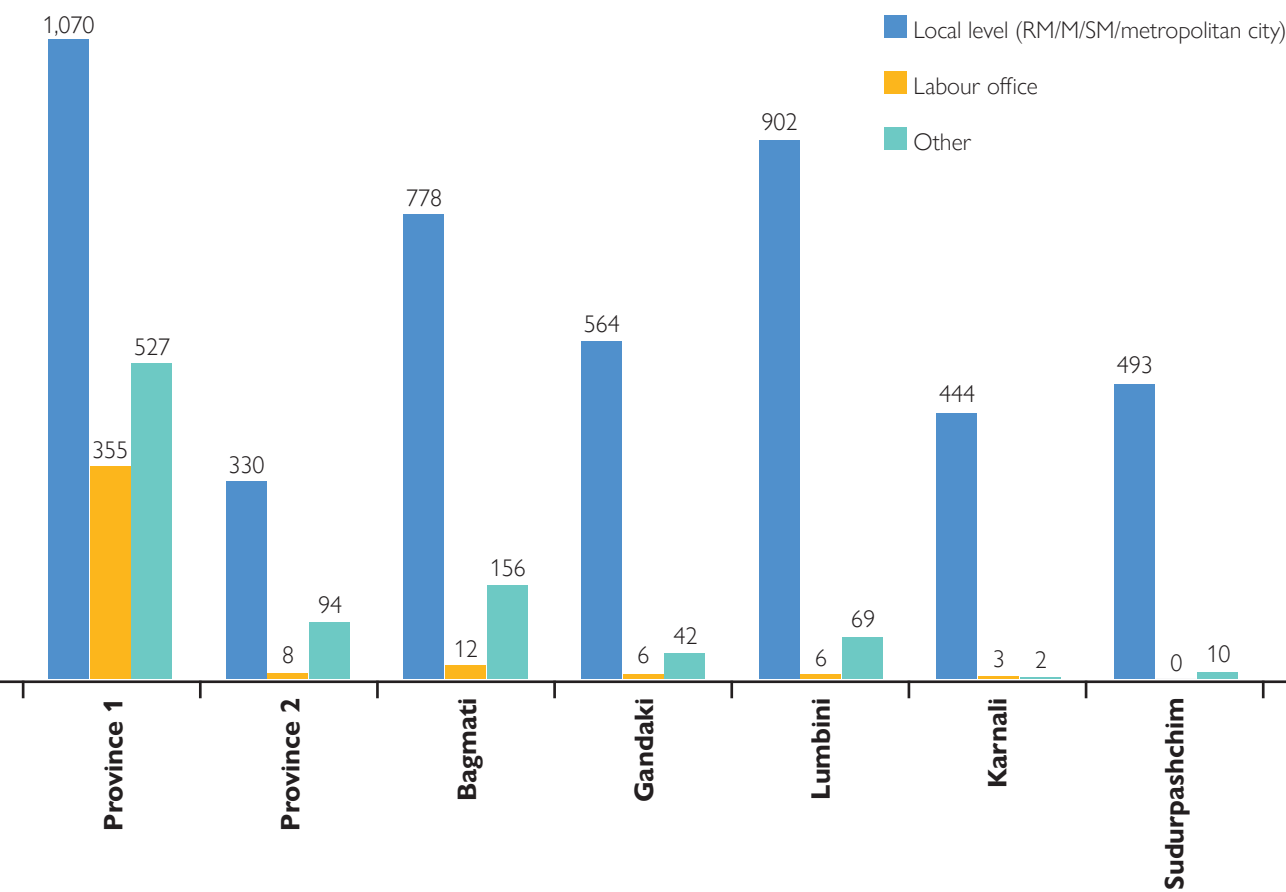
District Administration Office: The authority of administration at the district level is responsible for the peace, security and conflict resolution. The Office oversee the operation of the different programmes and activities at the district level. The Office administers all the social initiatives and coordinates the other concerned agencies.

Municipality: Local Government Operation Act 2017 has the following provisions in relation to employment related work of a municipality as an institution: data collection, processing and information system establishment for employed and unemployed labour force; records collection and information management of domestic and foreign labourers at the local level; data collection and management about competent human resources in different sectors and subjects; safe foreign employment; information and data collection and management of labour force who are in foreign employment; management

and operation of employment information centres; financial literacy and skills training for the labour force going in foreign employment; social reunification of returnee migrant workers; use of knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship gained during foreign employment; and, other works related to data collection of unemployment.

The Local Government Operation Act 2017 has clearly mandated the local government to work on the social reintegration of the returnee migrant workers while utilizing the knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship acquired from the foreign employment. The local government has a mandate to prepare its own plans and policies and work on the social and economic reintegration of the returnee migrant workers.

Figure 11. Number of services and responsible institutions, by province



Almost all the services available at the local level are implemented by municipalities³² and the labour offices. Altogether, 4,581 services at all local levels are rendered through municipal offices and their subsidiary ward offices, while 390 services, specifically related to skill and enterprise training services, are rendered through labour offices and 900 services are offered through other offices that include civil society organizations and private initiatives.

2.2.3.2. Non-government sector

Local level civil society organizations have been supporting the returnee migrant workers along with the other community members in different social and economic spheres. The community level institutions like cooperatives and community forest are providing the financial services and support in start-up of the enterprise at the local level.

2.2.3.3. Private sector

Skill training centres operated at the local level are providing the skills training in affiliation with CTEVT. Similarly, financial institutions are providing regular and subsidized loans for enterprise set-up and upscaling under the Nepal Rastra Bank’s policy, including soft loans.

32 For the purpose of this study, *municipalities* collectively refer to urban/rural municipalities, sub-metropolitan cities, metropolitan cities and their ward offices.

3. MENTIONABLE PRACTICES, GAPS AND CHALLENGES

3.1. MENTIONABLE PRACTICES

3.1.1. Federal Level:

FEB has taken some exemplary initiatives. According to a key informant from the FEB Secretariat, it has prepared a reintegration package and has been waiting for its approval. The package includes psychosocial counselling, free skill trainings, financial facilitation and so on. The FEB has also provided the free skill testing of returnees in collaboration with National Skill Testing Board. The FEB has, as per the key informant, revised and implemented the curriculum prescribed by CTEVT.

IOM's approach of multi-stakeholder engagement has been successful for sustainable reintegration. Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) project implemented at Tanahun, Kaski, Surkhet and Banke districts provided start-up support along with the skills and financial support for individual and community enterprises.

Nepal Rastra Bank has introduced a refinancing facility for commercial banks and development banks against the collateral, of loans provided to *Dalits*, women, indigenous people, Madhesis, minorities and people of geographically backward areas for foreign employment at a refinance rate of 1.5 per cent. For this banks and financial institutions were not allowed to charge more than 4.5 per cent in the FY 2007/2008. Similarly, in FY 2012/2013, refinance facility was announced for the loans provided to enterprises operated by youths who returned from foreign employment or returned after completing higher education from foreign countries.³³ The central bank had also issued the Foreign Employment Saving Bond for the first time in the FY 2009/10 worth NPR 1 billion, and has been reissuing the bond ever since. The outstanding Foreign Employment Saving Bond in mid-July 2018 was NPR 0.53 billion, out of which NPR 0.08 billion was redeemed during 2018/2019 and NPR 0.45 billion remained outstanding as of mid-July 2019.³⁴

3.1.2. Province level:

In Province 2, UK Aid's Skill for employment project has subsidized a loan and grant scheme for the reintegration of returnee migrant workers and family members of migrants. The RERP has conducted sustainable income generating activities to returnee migrants through a range of supports for decent employment, local microenterprises promotion and microenterprises linked to high value farm and off farm supply chains. The project covers 16 districts of Province 1, 2 and Bagmati Province.³⁵ The project focuses on rural micro, small and medium enterprises in the agriculture and non-agriculture clusters. The project also provides the technical and vocational education and training, job placement and apprenticeship opportunities. It has also conducted a survey among returnee migrants in RERP functioning districts. It organized a webinar "Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers" on 25 May 2020.³⁶ The project has used Provincial FM radios, Facebook page and phones to counsel returnee migrants by MRC/MID.³⁷

3.1.3. Local level:

Table 9 shows some examples of the local levels and their initiatives for reintegration and supporting returnee migrants and their families.

³³ See www.nrb.org.np/contents/uploads/2020/11/Special_Publications-Sixty_Years_Of_Nepal_Rastra_Bank-new.pdf (p. 251).

³⁴ See www.nrb.org.np/contents/uploads/2020/09/Annual-Report-2018.19.pdf (p. 71).

³⁵ See <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/pages/aboutus>.

³⁶ Webinar 4: The Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers. Available at http://rerp.moi.gov.np/storage/download_file/pb4wZ36elhrpDfBRIk1sCuLwCCD7oLHYqud5RUK3.pdf.

³⁷ Visit the RERP website at <https://rerp.moics.gov.np/en/news/mrcmid-services-amidst-pandemic-#>.

Table 9. Local levels and their mentionable practices

Local level	Mentionable practice
Phedikhola Rural Municipality	Keeping records of migrant workers and their families; bringing returnee migrant workers in its own vehicle from the municipality border and holding them in a quarantine for two weeks during COVID-19.
Malangawa Municipality	Prepared a Migration Profile containing the general demographic information and the specific information related to migrant workers and returnees, including their skills, knowledge and other capitals.
Bagmati Municipality	Financial and skill development support to migrants and their family members. The municipality provided the skill development trainings to the migrants and their families and also facilitated the start up by recommending for the financial support to the concerned agencies.
Dakshinkali Municipality and Tokha Municipality	Enterprise support for returnee women migrant workers. The municipality allocated the public space for the collection and sell of the agriculture product and provided capacity-building opportunities.
Changunarayan Municipality	Collateral free loans to support microenterprises. The municipality has facilitated the collateral free loan for the microenterprise development.
Damak Municipality	Training the returnees for the COVID-19 response. The municipality organized the training sessions for returnee migrants on how to stay safe during the pandemic.
Nilkantha Municipality	Maintaining data of returnee migrants, <i>MERO UDHYAMSHIL KARYAKRAM</i> [My Entrepreneurship Programme] that provides 2 weeks training with certification, MoU with Nepal bank for collateral free loan up to NPR 200,000 and municipality provides guarantee for the loan for more than NPR 200 thousand and up to NPR 1.5 million on the basis of property paper (<i>Lalpurja</i>).

3.2 GAPS AND CHALLENGES

The federal, provincial and local level governments and stakeholders have been knowingly or unknowingly conducting activities that are directly or indirectly supporting the sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers. However, through key informant interviews, some gaps and challenges have been identified in their efforts which are discussed below.

Structural level

The sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers has received little attention of all the three levels of governments. Budgets, annual plans and programmes of the governments reflect that the reintegration issue has inadequately been discussed as a government agenda.

Very few programmes and activities are directly supporting migrant workers' sustainable reintegration. They are targeted to other groups of people. However, returnee migrant workers are also taking benefit from them. Increasing the number of programmes and activities that directly support the sustainable reintegration of migrant workers is a challenge for all the stakeholders.

Although annual plans and policies have included the schemes, plans and programmes that can contribute to the reintegration of returnee migrants, reintegration-specific policies and laws are not in place. In the absence of the reintegration-specific policies and laws, the federal, provincial and local level governments and other actors have implemented the programmes contributing to reintegration of returnee migrants on an ad hoc basis.

The programmes and initiatives contributing directly or indirectly to the sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers are scattered and have been implemented independently in an individual organization level, reflecting the absence of collaboration and coordination. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS) has been working on preparing the national reintegration guideline that provides the avenues for effective and sustainable reintegration initiatives. There are many opportunities to amplify the outcome of the resources available in contributing to the reintegration initiatives and services by creating the sharing and referral mechanism that can increase the access of such services to the reach of the returnee migrant workers. Nearly four years have passed since the Local Government Operation Act 2017 has mandated the local level for the management of reintegration of returnee migrant workers, but the local governments have been working little towards implementing the mandate. Limited capacity and lack of adequate awareness on this issue are cited as the reasons.

Community level

Sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers has widely been understood as the participation of migrant workers in social and economic activities after return. It is generally believed that returnee migrant workers bring back capital and continue to contribute to the economy through enterprises, with little attention on social and psychological aspects of reintegration. Reintegration is a multidimensional process where migrant workers' direct participation in economic and social activities upon return is a continuation to the contribution made through the remittances sent home while working abroad.

Available plans and programmes that have directly or indirectly supported the sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers at the community level are less meant for supporting collective groups of returnees. Instead, the returnees have been engaged in new community-based programmes or are integrated into the existing programmes. Consequently, there is a risk of limited impact on returnees who have limited involvement in or limited access to the programmes.

There is a lack of information and awareness on the reintegration services available in the communities. For example, the interview respondents shared that most of the returnee migrant workers are unaware of the soft loan facility.

Beneficiaries, including returnee migrant workers, have experienced complexities in receiving services available in their communities. The complexities are mainly on getting reliable information and the documentation process.

Individual level

The data of returnees are not readily available although the Department of Foreign Employment has started keeping the records. In addition, there are no data of the migrants returned from India. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, local levels had kept the records of the returned migrants. However, the effort did not continue, with the decreasing number of coronavirus positive cases. Since there is not a standard framework of keeping the records of the returnees, the data recorded by the local levels are inconsistent.

As an individual, a returnee migrant worker's vulnerability assessment, background information collection, needs and skills assessment, counselling, referrals, follow-up and so on are hardly available, except some organizations' projects that have worked on psychosocial counselling.

Income generation activities in agriculture sector have received most attention in terms of supports in the local levels, while social and psychological supports are almost rare. At a time when traditional agricultural and livestock farming has not helped people generate income enough to sustain and support the families, the reintegration supports mostly concentrated on the traditional agricultural and livestock farming may not prevent the returnee migrants from remigrating.

Thousands of migrant workers have returned with injuries and illness until now. In the FY 2020/21, the FEB has provided financial assistance of NPR 73 million to 143 migrant workers who returned due to injuries or ill conditions.³⁸ However, it is a financial assistance, not a reintegration support. Moreover, the Board's assistance has not covered many others who have returned with different health problems, including mental health.

At present, the reintegration services available are inadequate and limited in scope and access. The reintegration services are looked at through the frame of start-up financial supports and skill development initiatives. While the sustainability of the reintegration largely depends on the long-term support and facilitation in creating the conducive environment of the returnee migrant workers by providing related information, infrastructural support, market linkage, forming the affirmative social perception.

There is a lack of data of the returnees who have received services that directly or indirectly support their reintegration. In addition, there is a big challenge of finding details of programmes in the documents.

³⁸ FEB, "Major Welfare Activities Completed in Fiscal Year 2020/2021", report (Kathmandu, 2021). Available at www.feb.gov.np/pratibedhantype.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings derived from the data collected from federal, provincial and local levels, the following recommendations are offered for better reintegration of returnee migrants:

Structural level

- A policy which is specific to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers should be introduced with urgency at all levels of the government, and corresponding laws should be formulated in line with the policy to ensure effective implementation of the programmes and projects related to reintegration.
- In line with the mandate given to the local level by the Local Government Operation Act 2017, the involvement of the local government should be increased in the reintegration initiatives from planning to implementation phases. Ensuring the participation of returnee migrants during the planning can yield better results.
- Capacity of the local governments should be strengthened to enable them to effectively manage reintegration activities. The local governments should run activities to encourage returnee migrants and the families of migrants to utilize their remittances in productive sectors.
- With a view to translating the spirit of the Constitution of Nepal and the 15th Periodic Plan into action, the skills, technological know-how and experiences of returnee migrant workers should be recognized and mobilized as a social capital.
- Adequate budget should be allocated for reintegration programmes, recognizing the significant contribution of migrant workers in the national economy.
- More programmes and activities addressing social, economic and psychosocial dimension of reintegration should be introduced that have migrant workers as their target group for their sustainable reintegration.
- There should be a coordination among the three levels of the government for sustainable reintegration of returnee migrants to create a synergy effect. The federal government should formulate a national policy and a guideline; the local government should work towards effective implementation; the provincial government should play a coordinating and monitoring role.
- The federal government should develop a standard template for the local levels to keep the disaggregated data of returnees, which will ensure consistency in the data as the consistent and reliable data create a base for planning and implementation of reintegration initiatives. The data of India returnees should also be kept by the local levels in the template.
- The government should consider including the provisions of reintegration of migrant workers in bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with destination countries.
- Special needs of women, particularly returnee women migrant workers employed in domestic sector of work, and other vulnerable people should be considered while framing the law and policy and their participation should be ensured in the planning of the programmes and drafting of the policies.

Community level

- While the existing support is more concentrated on the economic dimension of reintegration, the activities related to social and psychological dimensions should also be given priority to ensure sustainable reintegration.
- As most of the support is provided on traditional agriculture and livestock farming, the scope of support should be widened to encourage returnee migrants for modernizing of farming techniques and introduce innovation.
- There should be a wider information dissemination to address the lack of information and awareness on the services that support reintegration, including soft loans. There should be support in developing business plans. The soft loan process should be easy and simple.

- Reintegration actors should be encouraged to design and implement community level reintegration programmes that support collective groups of returnees in order to avoid the risk of limited impact on returnees who have limited involvement in or limited access to reintegration programmes.
- Returnee migrants should be provided with the updated and reliable information of and awareness on the reintegration services available in their locality.
- The process to receive the services contributing to the reintegration of returnee migrant workers should be easy and simple. It is advisable that the official websites are up to date.
- Migrant resource centres and the employment information centres should expedite the work to provide returnee migrants with the basic information regarding reintegration schemes and programmes. The centres should be in the capacity to link the returnees with available reintegration initiatives and services.

Individual level

- In order to fulfill the commitment of Nepal as a signatory of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, returnee migrants should be provided with access to social protection and services, and increased access to justice, psychosocial assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad and financial services to build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development.
- The migrant workers should receive information on reintegration services in the pre-departure phase of migration so that they can plan their reintegration well before going abroad for employment.
- Reintegration support should address the health issues of returnee migrants. Health check-up upon return can create a base, and the return data kept by the government should also include health indicators.
- Reintegration programmes should help returnees to formalize their income generating activities to contribute to tax revenue.
- Activities supporting the reintegration should be aligned more closely to the needs and preferences of returnees, local contexts, and local needs and priorities, thereby involving local authorities and promoting locally led solutions.
- The government can make a returnee migrant worker's vulnerability assessment, background information collection, needs and skills assessment, counselling, referrals and follow-up mandatory.

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