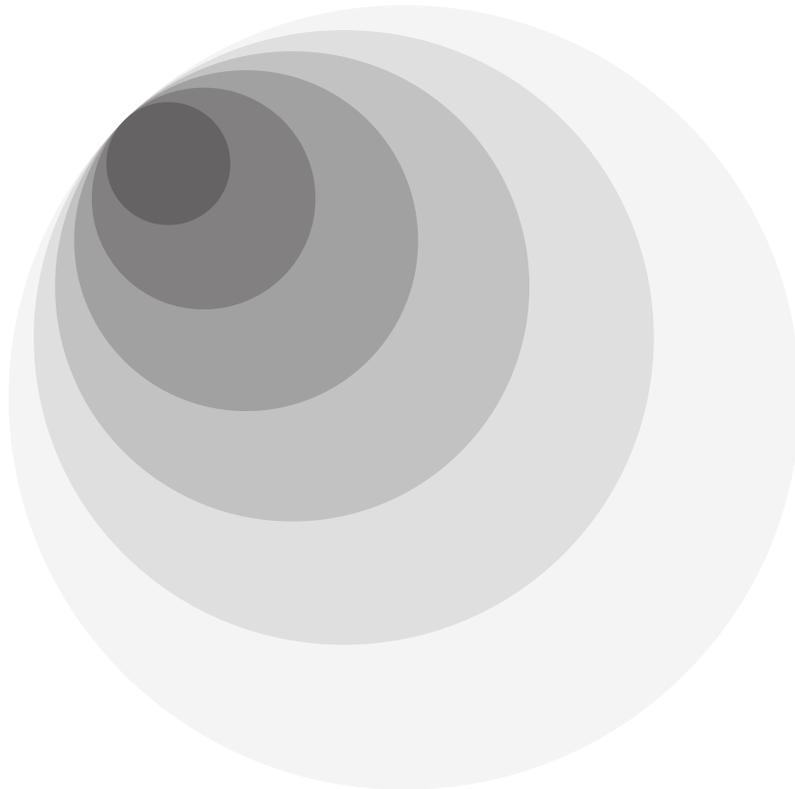


# MONITORING REINTEGRATION

Manual for Civil Society  
Organizations

September 2025



# MONITORING REINTEGRATION MANUAL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

September 2025

The return of Syrian refugees could become the largest repatriation operation in decades, with over six million Syrian refugees abroad and seven million displaced within Syria. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have already returned to their homeland, driven by their desire to check on the property they left, escape poverty and persecution in host countries and reunite with family.

The case of Turkey demonstrates that what is needed is a multi-actor, collaborative approach to returns that complies with internationally agreed principles. "The new situation simultaneously presents potential opportunities for return while exacerbating risks of new displacement. Undoubtedly, there has been an increase in Syrian refugees expressing a desire to return home.

Turkish civil society has been a cornerstone of humanitarian efforts throughout the Syrian conflict. Monitoring effort of NGOs will ensure sustainable recovery, foster resilience, and empower Syrian refugees. A locally led response is both the ethical approach and the most effective way to ensure a sustainable reintegration process. For reintegration processes to proceed in line with national and international human rights principles, there is a need for civil society to closely monitor and report on these processes. In this regard, MEDNR plans to develop the migration monitoring capacities of critically important NGOs in Turkey and open space for them to share experiences.

Returns to Syria are organized under voluntary repatriation and Syrians under temporary protection currently have access to basic public services in Turkey (and similarly in Jordan and Lebanon). It is certain that returns will affect various social segments very differently. Syrians currently in Turkey under temporary protection have different concerns, needs and expectations in the new context that has developed after the regime change in Syria. In order to meet the needs and protection that have emerged in the new context in a manner befitting human dignity and to prevent possible violations, it is of great importance to develop monitoring and reporting and experience sharing mechanisms to be carried out by rights-based civil society organizations. Ensuring that the most vulnerable refugee groups have access to protection mechanisms based on international human rights principles in the new context is possible through civil society participation.

For CSOs in Türkiye, monitoring is a vital tool of empowerment and protection. It transforms them from service providers into essential guardians of rights, catalysts for effective aid, and powerful advocates for sustainable, dignified solutions for all Syrians, regardless of the painful choice between return and stay. In a context marked by political complexity and human suffering, this independent, evidence-based monitoring is more than just good practice—it is a moral and professional imperative.

Prepared by Agora Association as a practical guide, this Handbook outlines how to monitor reintegration assistance for returnees. Reintegration is a process relevant to diverse return circumstances, including spontaneous, forced, and assisted voluntary returns. This guide provides CSOs in Türkiye with a clear framework to monitor the critical early stages of the reintegration process for Syrian returnees. Effective monitoring during these phases is essential to ensure voluntariness, preparedness, and safe arrival, laying the groundwork for sustainable reintegration.

Designed as a practical tool, the Handbook targets the diverse stakeholders involved in providing reintegration support. This includes civil society organizations, municipalities, state bodies, policymakers, and other practitioners operating at various levels and stages of the process. The Handbook operates on the principle that the objective of reintegration assistance is to achieve sustainable outcomes for returnees. It asserts that reaching this goal demands a whole-of-government approach, characterized by coordinated measures, policies, and practices among relevant stakeholders at the international, regional, national, and local levels.

## **Why Civil Society Organizations in Türkiye Must Monitor the Return and Stay of Syrians**

For Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Türkiye, monitoring the situation of Syrians—whether they are deciding to return to Syria or to stay in Türkiye—is not a peripheral activity but a core component of their mission. This systematic monitoring serves critical functions across four key areas: protection, accountability, programming, and advocacy.

### **1. To Ensure Protection and Uphold Rights**

- **Safeguarding Voluntariness:** The principle of non-refoulement (not forcing people back to danger) is a cornerstone of international law. CSOs are very important independent actors who can verify that return decisions are truly voluntary, informed, and not the result of mounting pressure, deteriorating conditions, or coercion. For those staying, monitoring documents the pressures they face, such as discrimination, exploitation, or threats, which is essential for their ongoing protection.
- **Identifying Vulnerabilities:** Monitoring allows CSOs to identify the most vulnerable individuals —such as unaccompanied minors, survivors of torture, single-headed households, or LGBTI+ individuals etc.— and ensure their specific risks are considered in any decision. It provides an early warning system for protection crises, both for returnees and for those staying in a potentially hostile environment.

## 2. To Ensure Accountability and "Do No Harm"

- **Holding Actors Accountable:** CSOs monitor the actions of all stakeholders, including the Turkish government, international organizations, and other aid providers. They can assess whether assistance and policies are actually benefiting the intended beneficiaries or are inadvertently creating push factors for return. This ensures that the humanitarian and development ecosystem remains accountable to the people it serves.
- **Preventing Harmful Outcomes:** By tracking the outcomes of both return and stay decisions, CSOs can identify and report on programs or policies that are causing harm. For example, if returnees face immediate danger or if those staying are pushed into deeper poverty, CSOs can sound the alarm and demand course corrections.

## 3. To Enable Evidence-Based Programming and Adaptation

- **Informing Program Design:** Data gathered through monitoring provides an evidence base for designing effective assistance. Understanding *why* people choose to return (e.g., family reunification, loss of hope) or stay (e.g., children in school, fear of conscription) allows CSOs to tailor their support. This makes programs more relevant, efficient, and impactful.
- **Adapting to Changing Needs:** The situation is dynamic. Continuous monitoring allows CSOs to track evolving vulnerabilities, shifting intentions, and new challenges (e.g., economic crises, policy changes). This enables them to adapt their programs in real-time, pivoting resources to where they are most needed.

## 4. To Advocate for Informed Policies and Resources

- **Giving Voice to Individuals/Communities:** CSOs amplify the voices and lived experiences of Syrians themselves. By systematically collecting their stories, concerns, and intentions, CSOs can move beyond anecdotes to powerful, data-driven advocacy.
- **Shaping Local and International Policy:** Robust monitoring data is indispensable for advocacy. It allows CSOs to:
  - **Advocate for Durable Solutions in Türkiye:** Data on the challenges faced by those staying (e.g., access to education, employment, integration) is crucial for advocating for improved social cohesion policies and continued international support.
  - **Advocate for Safe Return Conditions:** Data on the realities of return—both positive and negative—provides critical evidence to inform the international debate on the safety and sustainability of return to specific areas of Syria. It challenges or confirms official narratives.

The potential return of Syrian refugees from Türkiye presents one of the most pressing and complex reintegration challenges today. With millions of Syrians having found refuge in Türkiye for over a decade, the decision to return is rarely straightforward. Returnees are not a homogeneous group; they include those who are eager to return and rebuild their lives, those who are unable to remain due to legal or economic pressures, and those who are unwilling to return, fearing persecution or a lack of prospects. An integrated approach is not merely beneficial in this context—it is essential to ensure that any return is safe, dignified, and sustainable, and to mitigate the risks of secondary displacement or new cycles of vulnerability.

## **An Integrated Approach to Sustainable Reintegration**

Traditionally, reintegration assistance has often been fragmented, provided by different actors in isolation—humanitarian aid, livelihood support, psychosocial counseling, and government services operating in parallel but seldom in concert. An integrated approach to reintegration fundamentally challenges this siloed mentality. It posits that sustainable reintegration is not merely the sum of its parts but a holistic process that requires the deliberate and coordinated collaboration of all relevant stakeholders.

### **Core Principles of an Integrated Approach**

1. **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** This is the cornerstone of integration. It involves structured cooperation between:
  - **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** Providing community-based assistance, including case management, legal aid, and immediate support.
  - **Government Bodies (Local, National):** Ensuring access to public services (health, education), upholding rights, and creating a conducive policy environment.
  - **International Organizations:** Offering technical expertise, funding, and facilitating cross-border dialogue.
  - **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):** Facilitating social acceptance and bridging the gap between returnees and their communities.
2. **"Whole-of-Journey" Support:** Integration means linking pre-return, immediate post-arrival, and long-term reintegration phases. Assistance should be continuous and adaptive, from pre-departure counseling and needs assessment in the host country to long-term follow-up in the country of origin. Return areas often face destroyed infrastructure, limited public services, unresolved security issues, and fragile local economies. Success depends on simultaneously addressing the returnee's needs and supporting the recovery of the community. An integrated approach must prioritize psychosocial support and safety nets to prevent a deterioration of their well-being.
3. **Needs-Based and Personalized:** A reintegration system should be flexible enough to account for the diverse profiles of returnees (e.g., women, LGBTI+s, unaccompanied minors, skilled professionals, families, ethnic and religious minorities, disabled people, etc.). Support is tailored to individual circumstances rather than being a one-size-fits-all package. This approach recognizes that a returnee's successful reintegration—achieving a state of economic self-sufficiency, social stability, and psychosocial well-being—depends on a seamless support system that addresses their multifaceted needs simultaneously.

Civil Society Organizations in Türkiye are uniquely positioned to monitor the reintegration of Syrian returnees. Their proximity to communities, operational flexibility, and established trust allow them to gather nuanced data that other actors might miss. Effective monitoring by CSOs serves two critical purposes:

**1) Accountability:** Ensuring that reintegration assistance is effective, ethical, and reaches its intended goals.

**2) Learning:** Providing real-time feedback to adapt programs and advocate for evidence-based policies. This framework outlines a practical approach for CSOs to conduct this vital monitoring.

### **Phase 1: Pre-Departure (In Türkiye)**

The goal of this phase is to ensure that the decision to return is voluntary, informed, and that returnees are as prepared as possible for the challenges ahead. Effective monitoring during the pre-departure phase is a critical safeguard to ensure that the principle of voluntary return is upheld and that returnees are equipped for the challenges ahead. The following objectives guide Civil Society Organizations in collecting essential data before a returnee departs from Türkiye.

#### **Key Monitoring Objectives**

##### **1. To verify the voluntariness of the return decision.**

Document the reasons for return (e.g., voluntary decision, economic pressure, legal status, family reunification). Use informed consent protocols to ensure the decision is voluntary and based on accurate information.

This primary objective is fundamental to ethical practice and international protection standards. Monitoring voluntariness does not go beyond a simple "yes" or "no" question. It aims to cover the nuanced factors influencing the decision, ensuring it is made free from direct or indirect coercion. This involves assessing whether the decision is a positive choice to build a new life elsewhere, rather than a desperate escape from untenable conditions in Türkiye, such as expired legal status, destitution, or social pressure. CSOs must discern if the returnee feels they have a genuine and informed alternative to returning at the present time. By systematically verifying voluntariness, CSOs can identify cases of *refoulement* (forced return), provide accurate information on alternatives where they exist, and ensure that assistance programs do not inadvertently incentivize premature or unsafe returns.

##### **2. To assess the returnee's level of information and preparedness.**

Assess levels of information about conditions in the return location, possession of essential documentation, specific skills, and vulnerability factors (e.g., health conditions, single-headed households).

A voluntary decision is not sufficient if it is based on inaccurate or incomplete information. This objective focuses on evaluating whether the returnee has a realistic understanding of conditions in their specific area of return in Syria. Key areas of assessment include the security situation, availability of basic services (healthcare, education), housing conditions, and economic opportunities. Furthermore, monitoring preparedness involves checking practical readiness, such as the possession of crucial personal documentation (both from Türkiye and Syria), the existence of a concrete initial plan for shelter and livelihood, and the financial means to manage the first weeks. A returnee who is poorly informed or unprepared is at a significantly higher risk of failed reintegration, secondary displacement, or exploitation. This assessment allows CSOs to target their pre-departure counseling to fill critical information gaps and provide tailored support to enhance preparedness.

### 3. To Evaluate the Effectiveness of Pre-Departure Assistance

Monitor the quality and relevance of any counseling, legal aid, or cash assistance provided before departure.

This objective ensures accountability and continuous improvement of CSO programs. It moves from assessing the returnee to assessing the quality of the support provided. The goal is to determine whether the assistance—which may include counseling, legal aid, cash grants, or vocational training—was appropriate, timely, and perceived as useful by the returnee. Evaluation involves gathering feedback on the relevance of the information provided, the usefulness of any material support, and the overall satisfaction with the assistance received. By systematically evaluating their support, CSOs can identify what works, what does not, and adapt their programs to better meet the evolving needs of the population they serve. This data is vital for justifying funding, improving service delivery, and ultimately increasing the impact of reintegration assistance.

These three objectives are interconnected. A voluntary decision must be an informed decision, and the quality of the information and preparation is directly influenced by the effectiveness of the assistance provided. Monitoring all three in tandem provides a holistic picture of the pre-departure context, enabling CSOs to protect rights, save lives, and improve their interventions.

<b>Monitoring Aspect</b>	<b>Key Questions to Answer</b>	<b>Suggested Methods</b>	<b>Example Indicators</b>
<b>1. Decision-Making &amp; Voluntariness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why is the individual/family returning?</li> <li>- Are they feeling pressured? By whom?</li> <li>- Do they feel they have a real choice?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Structured Interviews</b> using open-ended questions.</li> <li>- <b>Informed Consent Checklists</b> (documenting options).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % of returnees who can articulate a clear, personal reason for return.</li> <li>- % of cases where informed consent for return and monitoring was obtained.</li> <li>- Qualitative records of pressures cited (e.g., economic, legal, social).</li> </ul>
<b>2. Information &amp; Preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What information do they have about their area of return? (safety, services, housing).</li> <li>- Do they have critical documents? (Turkish &amp; Syrian IDs, birth certificates, property deeds).</li> <li>- Do they have a concrete plan for shelter and initial livelihood?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Pre-Departure Checklist</b> review.</li> <li>- <b>Surveys</b> or semi-structured interviews.</li> <li>- <b>Focus Group Discussions</b> on information sources and gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % of returnees with a confirmed source of shelter upon return.</li> <li>- % of returnees in possession of key personal documentation.</li> <li>- % of returnees who received pre-departure counseling.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3.Pre-Departure Assistance</b></p>	<p>- Was the assistance provided (cash, counseling, legal aid) relevant and timely? - Did it address their most urgent needs?</p>	<p>- <b>Feedback Forms</b> (simple and anonymous). - <b>Exit Interviews.</b> - <b>Follow-up calls</b> with returnees who have recently received assistance.</p>	<p>- <b>Satisfaction score</b> (e.g., on a 1-5 scale) with pre-departure support. - % of returnees reporting that assistance increased their preparedness.</p>
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**Phase 2: Immediate post-return (0-6 Months)**

The goal of this phase is to track the safe arrival of returnees and identify the most urgent challenges they face in the initial period, enabling rapid response and program adaptation. Monitoring in the immediate aftermath of return (0-6 months) is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of returnees and for identifying critical needs that, if unaddressed, could lead to failed reintegration or secondary displacement. The following objectives guide Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in gathering vital information during this precarious period.

**1. Safe Arrival & Initial Reception:**

Track whether returnees arrived safely and the conditions they encountered upon arrival (e.g., reception facilities, immediate security concerns).

The primary objective upon return is to verify the safety and whereabouts of the individuals or families. This initial check serves as a fundamental duty of care. "Safe arrival" means confirming that the returnees have reached their intended destination without experiencing harm, exploitation, or security incidents during their journey. Beyond mere arrival, it is essential to assess the initial reception conditions. This involves understanding the immediate environment they encounter: Is there a family or community network to receive them? Is the shelter habitable and secure? What is the prevailing security atmosphere in the area? A negative reception—such as hostility from local communities, immediate threats of eviction, or finding their property destroyed or occupied—can severely jeopardize the entire reintegration process from the very start. Monitoring this objective provides the first real-world data point on the returnee's situation and can trigger urgent protective interventions if needed.

**2. Access to Basic Services:**

Monitor immediate access to shelter, food, water, and healthcare

This objective focuses on proactively scanning for threats to the returnees' physical safety, rights, and dignity in the early stages. The return environment, particularly in fragile contexts like Syria, is often fraught with protection risks that may not have been fully apparent before departure. Key concerns include Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) disputes, which are among the most common and destabilizing challenges, potentially leading to homelessness or conflict. Other critical risks involve family tensions, community harassment, discrimination, gender-based violence, child protection issues, and general lawlessness. By systematically identifying these immediate protection concerns, CSOs can document violations, facilitate access to legal aid or mediation services, and

provide targeted support to mitigate the most dangerous threats, thereby preventing a rapid deterioration of the returnee's situation.

### 3. Evaluate Access to Basic Services and Emerging Challenges

Document the most pressing problems faced in the first weeks, such as issues with Housing, Land, and Property (HLP), documentation, or social tensions.

Sustainable reintegration is built on the foundation of meeting basic human needs. This objective involves a swift assessment of the returnee's access to essential services, which is a key indicator of their ability to stabilize. Monitoring focuses on practical, tangible access to shelter, food, water, healthcare, and education for children. Challenges in these areas often emerge quickly. For instance, a returnee family might have shelter but lack access to a functional healthcare facility or find that the local school is destroyed or overcrowded. Similarly, the lack of livelihood opportunities can immediately threaten a family's ability to afford food and other necessities. Evaluating these factors helps move beyond initial safety to assess the feasibility of staying in the location. The "emerging challenges" identified here—such as the lack of income, inadequate services, or unexpected social tensions—provide critical, real-time feedback. This information is invaluable for CSOs to adapt their support programs, advocate for specific service provision from other actors, and accurately report on the ground-level conditions facing returnees.

These three post-return objectives form a logical sequence of care: first ensuring basic safety upon arrival, then conducting a protection risk assessment to prevent harm, and finally evaluating access to essential services to support initial stability. Together, they provide a comprehensive early warning system that enables CSOs to respond effectively to the most pressing needs, advocate for returnees' rights, and gather crucial evidence on the realities of return, which is essential for informing policy and improving future assistance.

Monitoring Aspect	Key Questions to Answer	Suggested Methods	Example Indicators
<b>1. Safe Arrival &amp; Initial Reception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did the individual/family arrive safely at the intended destination?</li> <li>- What were the conditions upon arrival?</li> <li>- Was there any security incident during travel or upon arrival?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>"Safe Arrival" Check-in:</b> A pre-agreed, simple signal (e.g., a secure phone call or message) upon arrival.</li> <li>- <b>Short structured interviews</b> via phone/secure messaging app in the first 48-72 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % of returnees confirming safe arrival within the first week.</li> <li>- % of returnees reporting safe and secure transit.</li> <li>- Qualitative description of reception conditions.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Access to Basic Needs &amp; Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do they have adequate shelter?</li> <li>- Do they have access to food, water, and healthcare?</li> <li>- Are children able to access education?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Remote Brief Surveys</b> conducted at 2 weeks, 1 month, and 3 months post-return.</li> <li>- <b>Key Informant Interviews</b> with local community leaders (where safe and possible).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % of returnees reporting stable and adequate shelter one month post-return.</li> <li>- % of households with access to a primary healthcare facility within a reasonable distance.</li> <li>- % of school-aged children enrolled in education within 3 months.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Immediate Protection Risks &amp; Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the most pressing problems? (e.g., HLP disputes, lack of documentation, family tension, security threats).</li> <li>- Are there signs of secondary displacement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Protection Monitoring Forms</b> (focused on key risks like HLP, gender-based violence, child protection).</li> <li>- <b>Case Studies</b> of specific, critical incidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10/type of major protection incidents reported (e.g., eviction threats, discrimination).</li> <li>- % of returnees facing Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues.</li> <li>- % of returnees considering moving again due to safety or lack of services.</li> </ul>

**Summary: Actionable Steps for CSOs**

1. **Develop Tools:** Create simple, standardized forms for Phase 1 (Pre-Departure Checklist, Interview Questionnaire) and Phase 2 (Safe Arrival Check, Short Remote Survey).
2. **Train Staff:** Ensure all staff understand the monitoring objectives, ethical guidelines, and how to use the tools consistently.
3. **Establish a Communication Protocol:** Plan how you will safely maintain contact with returnees after they leave Türkiye (e.g., which secure messaging apps, frequency of contact).
4. **Analyze Data Frequently:** Regularly review the data to spot trends (e.g., a sudden increase in HLP issues). Use these insights to adapt your pre-departure counseling and to advocate for targeted support.
5. **Report Anonymously:** Aggregate and anonymize findings in reports to donors and policymakers to inform broader programming and policy without compromising individual safety.

By systematically monitoring Phases 1 and 2, CSOs can play a critical role in safeguarding the dignity and safety of returnees and generating invaluable data to improve the entire reintegration process.

## Methodologies for Data Collection

CSOs should employ a mixed-methods approach:

- **Baseline & Endline Surveys:** Conducted at departure and at regular intervals (e.g., 6, 12, 24 months) to measure change.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** With community leaders, local authorities, and service providers to understand the contextual challenges.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** With groups of returnees to gather qualitative data on social cohesion and community perceptions.
- **Case Studies & In-Depth Interviews:** To capture individual stories and the "why" behind the quantitative data.
- **Participatory Methods:** Involving returnees in assessing their own progress empowers them and provides deeper insights.

For CSOs in Türkiye, monitoring is not an end. The goal is to use the findings to:

- **Adapt Programs:** Improve the design of pre-departure counseling and post-return support.
- **Advocate:** Provide evidence to Turkish and international policymakers on the real conditions facing returnees, highlighting gaps in assistance and advocating for policies that support sustainable reintegration.
- **Give Voice:** Amplify the experiences and needs of returnees to ensure they are not forgotten.

By implementing a robust, ethical, and phased monitoring framework, CSOs can play an indispensable role in promoting the safe, dignified, and sustainable reintegration of Syrian returnees.

## A Gender-Inclusive Approach to Monitoring Returns to Syria:

For CSOs monitoring the return of Syrians, a gender-sensitive approach is essential to uncover the full picture of reintegration challenges and ensure assistance is equitable and effective. It involves understanding and addressing the distinct experiences, needs, risks, and capacities of women, girls, men, and boys, LGBTI+s throughout the process. This requires understanding the distinct experiences, needs, and risks of women, girls, men, boys, and LGBTI+s who face particular threats in both the host and return contexts.

### I. Essential Measures for Gender Equality: What CSOs Must Do

#### 1. Institutional Preparedness:

- **Train Staff:** Ensure all staff and enumerators are trained on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) principles including SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) and the specific vulnerabilities of LGBTI+s, safe and ethical data collection on sensitive issues, and recognizing gender-specific vulnerabilities. Training must emphasize safety, confidentiality, and non-discrimination.
- **Develop Gender-Inclusive Tools:** Adapt all monitoring tools (checklists, surveys, interview questions) to be gender-inclusive. This means using disaggregated data (collecting and analyzing data by sex, age, and other relevant factors) and asking questions that reveal gender-specific realities. Use gender-neutral language where appropriate and ensure data

collection can capture diverse identities safely (e.g., allowing for self-identification without forcing a label).

- **Ensure Diverse Teams and Safe Access:** Whenever safe and culturally appropriate, employ female monitors to speak directly with LGBTI+s, women and girls in private settings. This often yields more accurate and detailed information. Recognize that LGBTI+s individuals may only disclose their identity or specific risks to a trusted monitor in a highly confidential setting.

## 2. Programmatic Adjustments:

- **Safe Spaces & Confidentiality:** Guarantee that interviews and focus group discussions are conducted in private, safe, and confidential settings, separate from family members if requested, especially when discussing sensitive topics. Create specific, secure, and confidential channels for LGBTI+s individuals to report protection concerns without fear of exposure. This is a matter of life and death.
- **Referral Pathways:** Establish and disseminate clear, safe, and functional referral pathways for survivors of GBV, for everyone. Establish and disseminate referral pathways to organizations that are known to be safe and affirming for LGBTI+s, both in Türkiye and, where they exist, inside Syria. CSOs in the area must know which local organizations can provide specialized psychosocial, medical, and legal support.
- **Targeted Assistance:** Use monitoring data to design targeted support. For example, livelihood programs for female-headed households might require childcare support, while men might need support coping with lost breadwinner status. Never disclose a person's LGBTI+ status to family, community, or authorities without their explicit, informed consent, as this could lead to extreme violence, honor killings, or execution.

### How to Conduct Gender-Inclusive Monitoring:

Monitoring must be tailored to identify the unique challenges faced by different groups.

#### A. Pre-Departure Monitoring (in Türkiye):

- **Focus on Decision-Making:**
  - **Monitor:** *Who* makes the decision to return? Is it a male head of household, or is it a collective family decision? Are women and girls consulted? Are they returning because of intense social pressure, discrimination, or violence in Türkiye? Are they being returned by families against their will for "corrective" purposes or to control their sexuality/gender identity?
  - **Ask (Privately & Confidentially):** "What is your personal opinion about this return?" (asked privately to different family members or individuals). This can reveal if women are being returned against their will, for instance, for forced marriage or due to family pressure.
- **Assess Gender-Specific Risks**
- **Inform:** Provide confidential information about the latest legal and social situation in Syria.

#### B. Immediate Post-Return Monitoring (0-6 Months):

This phase is critical for identifying protection threats that have a gendered dimension.

<b>Monitoring Area</b>	
<b>1. Safety &amp; Protection</b>	<p data-bbox="596 230 1007 271"><b>Key Questions &amp; Data Points</b></p> <p data-bbox="596 297 986 331"><b>For Women/Girls, LGBTIs:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="596 338 1409 891" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="596 338 1235 371">• Are there safe and separate sanitation facilities?</li> <li data-bbox="596 378 1342 450">• Are there reports of sexual exploitation and abuse when accessing aid or moving in public?</li> <li data-bbox="596 456 1409 528">• Has there been an increase in domestic violence due to stress and trauma?</li> <li data-bbox="596 535 1358 607">• Are they facing restrictions on movement without a male guardian?</li> <li data-bbox="596 613 1318 685">• Are they at risk of extreme violence, including "honor killings," from their own family or community?</li> <li data-bbox="596 692 1377 808">• What is the risk of arbitrary arrest, torture, or execution by state or non-state actors due to their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity?</li> <li data-bbox="596 815 1377 887">• What are the risks associated with using public services or presenting identity documents?</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="596 936 810 969"><b>For Men/Boys:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="596 976 1406 1126" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="596 976 1377 1048">• What are the specific risks of arbitrary arrest, detention, or forced recruitment by armed groups?</li> <li data-bbox="596 1055 1406 1126">• Are they facing violence or threats due to perceived political affiliation?</li> </ul>
<b>2. Access to Basic Services &amp; Livelihoods</b>	<p data-bbox="596 1153 1003 1187"><b>For Women/Girls, LGBTI+s:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="596 1193 1425 1563" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="596 1193 1425 1265">• Can they access healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services?</li> <li data-bbox="596 1272 1246 1305">• Are girls able to enroll and safely attend school?</li> <li data-bbox="596 1312 1406 1429">• What are their specific income-generating opportunities, and what barriers do they face (e.g., social norms, lack of childcare)?</li> <li data-bbox="596 1435 1406 1563">• Shelter: Are they safe in their living situation? Are they dependent on family who may be a source of threat? Is there a risk of being homeless due to rejection?</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="596 1612 810 1646"><b>For Men/Boys:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="596 1653 1425 1803" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="596 1653 1425 1724">• Are they able to take on traditional livelihood roles, and if not, what is the psychological impact?</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="596 1731 1406 1803">Are boys pressured to drop out of school to support the family economically?</p>

<p><b>3. Housing, Land &amp; Property (HLP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can women claim property or inheritance in their own name, especially if they are widowed or divorced?</li> <li>• Are they facing legal or societal barriers to securing tenure?</li> <li>• <b>Monitor:</b> Ownership and registration of any allocated shelter or returned property, disaggregated by sex of the head of household.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Social Integration &amp; Psychosocial Well-being</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge different coping mechanisms. Men may be more reluctant to report trauma due to social stigma.</li> <li>• Monitor stress related to shifts in gender roles (e.g., men unable to provide, women becoming sole breadwinners).</li> <li>• Monitor for extreme social isolation, as they cannot safely engage with the community or often even their own family.</li> <li>• Assess severe psychological distress resulting from the need to constantly conceal their identity, live in fear, and the trauma of persecution. The risk of suicide is high.</li> <li>• How are they managing stress? Do they have any safe, confidential social support, even if only online?</li> </ul>

**C. Methodological Imperatives for Inclusive Data Collection:**

- **Disaggregate All Data:** Always collect and analyze data by sex, age, disability, and displacement status (e.g., returnee vs. stayee). Any data collected on this population must be anonymized and stored with the highest level of security.
- **Conduct Separate Interviews:** Hold confidential, separate discussions with women, men, girls, and boys, LGBTI+s. A woman may not report domestic violence or food insecurity in a group setting with her husband present.
- **Trusted Intermediaries:** Work with trusted, specialized LGBTI+ organizations in Türkiye who may have established, safe contact with individuals and can facilitate monitoring.
- **Use Participatory Methods:** Use methods like community mapping or seasonal calendars with separate groups (if possible) to understand how they differently use and perceive spaces, resources, and risks.
- **Indicators:** Develop specific gender-inclusive indicators.
- **Safe Identification:** Do not force individuals to identify as LGBTI+. Create an environment where they feel safe to disclose their specific risks without using a label. Use risk-based questioning instead of identity-based questioning.

By systematically integrating these measures and questions into their monitoring framework, CSOs can move beyond a generic view of "returnees" to understand the nuanced and often hidden realities of different groups. This is not just about counting people, but about ensuring that the path to reintegration is safe and sustainable for all. By taking these specific measures, CSOs can better

understand the full spectrum of risks, provide life-saving referrals and support where possible, and, crucially, advocate for protection solutions that do not force LGBTI+s back into situations of extreme danger. This is a fundamental aspect of "Do No Harm" and ethical humanitarian action.

## **Monitoring Public Institutions: A Dual Focus on Returnees and Those Staying in Türkiye**

For Civil Society Organizations in Türkiye, monitoring the actions of municipalities and public institutions is a critical function to protect rights, ensure accountability, and shape effective policies. This monitoring must be strategically focused on the two distinct populations: Syrians returning to Syria and those remaining in Türkiye.

The line between voluntary and forced return can be blurry. CSOs are often the only actors who can independently verify that a decision is not made under duress. This "duress" can be indirect, such as a municipality systematically denying renewal of residence permits, police harassment, or the creation of an environment so hostile that return becomes the only perceived option. Monitoring acts as a crucial check on state power, ensuring compliance with international and national law.

The administrative process for formal return is often unclear. CSOs need to monitor which institutions are involved (e.g., the Directorate General of Migration Management- DGMM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), what information is provided to returnees about conditions in Syria, and what legal safeguards are in place. The lack of transparency can hide malpractice, such as misinformation or coercion. Monitoring ensures that the process is not only legal but also ethical and dignified.

Integration happens in communities, primarily shaped by municipal actions. CSOs need to monitor whether municipalities are proactively fostering social cohesion through public communication, inclusive urban planning, and community dialogue platforms. The absence of such initiatives can lead to ghettoization and tension. Monitoring allows CSOs to identify and champion good practices while holding lagging municipalities accountable.

By documenting the interactions between Syrians and public institutions *before* return, CSOs can build a robust evidence base of the systemic factors driving return decisions. This moves the analysis from individual stories to identifiable patterns of institutional behavior that may be making life in Türkiye untenable for some.

### **Why CSOs Must Monitor Public Institutions**

#### **A. For Syrians Returning to Syria:**

1. **To Safeguard the Principle of Voluntariness:** CSOs must monitor public institutions to ensure that return decisions are not the result of direct or indirect pressure from authorities. This includes monitoring for practices that might create a "hostile environment" or any involvement of public institutions in facilitating returns that are not fully voluntary, informed, and safe, thereby upholding the principle of *non-refoulement*.
2. **To Ensure Transparency in the Return Process:** The procedures for formal return are often complex and opaque. Monitoring helps clarify the roles of different public bodies, the criteria for return, and the information provided to returnees, ensuring it is accurate and complete regarding conditions in Syria.

## B. For Syrians Staying in Türkiye:

1. **To Guarantee Access to Rights and Services:** Under the Temporary Protection regime, Syrians have rights to education, healthcare, and social services. CSOs must monitor whether municipalities and relevant ministries are effectively delivering these services and whether there are discriminatory practices or bureaucratic barriers preventing access.
2. **To Foster Sustainable Integration and Social Cohesion:** Municipalities are at the forefront of integration. Monitoring their initiatives—or lack thereof—in areas like language education, community centers, and employment support is essential to assess whether policies are effectively promoting social harmony and preventing tensions.
3. **To Document the Legal and Social Environment:** Monitoring allows CSOs to document how national policies are implemented locally, tracking the evolution of the legal environment and its direct impact on the daily lives of Syrians, which is crucial for long-term advocacy.

## How CSOs Can Monitor Public Institutions

CSOs should employ a mixed-methods approach, tailored to each group.

### A. Monitoring for Returnees:

- **What to Monitor:**
  - **Role of Directorate of Migration Management:** Procedures for obtaining "voluntary return" status; the content and clarity of information provided about return.
  - **Involvement of Municipalities:** Any role in identifying or registering potential returnees.
- **How to Monitor:**
  1. **Policy & Document Analysis:** Review official circulars, protocols, and public statements related to the return process.
  2. **Structured Interviews with Officials:** Engage with relevant public officials or international organizations which already engage with public institutions to understand their mandates and procedures regarding returns.
  3. **Community-Level Feedback:** Collect testimonies from Syrians *before* their departure on their interactions with public institutions and what influenced their decision. This is key to identifying indirect pressures.
  4. **Use of Right to Information Laws:** Submit formal requests, as far as possible, for data on the number of returnees, the procedures followed, and the services provided.

### B. Monitoring for Those Staying:

- **What to Monitor:**
  - **Municipalities:** Access to municipal services (water, transportation, social aid); implementation of social cohesion projects; discriminatory practices.

- **Ministry of National Education:** Enrollment rates of Syrian children; availability of Turkish language support; prevention of segregation in schools.
- **Ministry of Family and Social Services:** Access to social assistance and protection services for vulnerable cases.
- **Ministry of Labour and Social Security:** Access to work permits and protection against labour exploitation.

### **From Monitoring to Impact**

For CSOs, monitoring is not an end in itself but a pathway to impact. The data collected provides the evidence base to:

- **For Returnees:** Advocate for transparent and voluntary return procedures and sound reintegration support.
- **For Those Staying:** Advocate for more inclusive policies, better resource allocation, and the removal of barriers to social cohesion.

By systematically monitoring public institutions, municipalities and refugees CSOs fulfill their role as independent watchdogs and essential partners in building a future that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals affected by displacement, regardless of the path they choose.