



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Egypt, Cairo

In summer 2012, after having spent more than a year outside of Egypt, Mr. S. decided to return voluntarily to his country of origin. He participated in a return and reintegration assistance program funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Through this program, Mr. S. received reintegration assistance and counselling in order to implement a sustainable business project upon return.

Before his departure from Switzerland, Mr. S. had planned to open a welding workshop in Cairo. Following his arrival in Egypt, he contacted the local IOM office in order to coordinate the implementation of his reintegration project. Given that Mr. S. had chosen a shop locality situated in proximity to a university and that he already had considerable experience as a sales person and business manager, Mr. S. suggested him to adapt his reintegration project. With the help of IOM Cairo staff he developed a more promising business plan for the opening of a small stationary and copy shop.

Following the completion of the detailed project plan, Mr. S. contacted various suppliers and bought a copy machine as well as different office supplies. Once he submitted all supporting documents and invoices to IOM Cairo, IOM could pay the suppliers directly.

With his services, Mr. S. addresses a steadily growing demand in a student district in Cairo. His business is working well and Mr. S. employs an additional person who supports him with his daily tasks. Mr. S. is satisfied with his situation and plans on further expanding his copy and stationary shop.



As a humanitarian and, at the same time, reasonably-priced solution, the concept of Return Assistance has proved itself and gained acceptance in many European countries. The object of Return Assistance is to harmonize the justified interests of migrants with those of Switzerland and the countries of origin. Return Assistance makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable and successful return. It is conceived so as to rule out undesired pull factors in the direction of Switzerland.

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