



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

Ethiopia, Addis Abbeba

Mr. M. left Ethiopia to look for work in Switzerland in 2012. After living in Switzerland for over three years he decided to return permanently to Ethiopia, and contacted the return counsellor to develop a business project – a construction materials store – which was approved by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM).

After he returned, Mr. M contacted IOM Ethiopia and received in-kind assistance for the purchase of stock for his business. Mr. M. is currently earning enough income to support his family and is glad to be living with his wife in Ethiopia again, and they are expecting a baby.

Mr. M. stated that he feels satisfied in his home country, and thinks that return assistance helps returnees bring positive change to their home country.



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.

SEM/IOM, August 2016

