



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

IRAQ, Suleymaniah

M. A. decided to voluntarily return to his home country Iraq in July 2015. The SEM (State Secretariat for Migration) granted a return assistance of 3000 CHF for his professional reintegration, 1000 CHF for housing assistance as well as physiotherapy during the first three months after the return. The SEM has mandated IOM to accompany M. A. in this process and to implement his reintegration projects.



Before leaving Switzerland, M. A. planned to open up a small garage. However, after having discussed his plans with his family as well as with IOM in Iraq after his return, he changed his mind and decided to open up a small shop for electrical devices. IOM helped M. A. to work out a new business plan and accompanied him to purchase the needed material for his shop. In the meantime, M. A. found a small apartment and IOM has paid out the additional housing assistance directly to the house owner (6 months of rent). He also received physiotherapy during the first 3 months after his arrival.



In April 2016, IOM visited him in his shop in order to discuss with him his situation. Thanks to his shop he manages to cover his daily needs as well as to support his family, even though he realized that there is a lot of competition in the sector and that he still lacks experience for managing his own business. He also told IOM that he would have appreciated some psychological and social support after his return, not only financial support.

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

