



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance – in practice

Sri Lanka, Jaffna

In 2012, Mr J. decided to return voluntarily to his home country, Sri Lanka. Due to his previous experience, M. J. wished to open a hardware store specializing in sound & light equipment. In order to facilitate his reintegration, the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) granted him financial assistance to set up his project upon return.

After his arrival in Sri Lanka, Mr J. contacted the IOM office in Jaffna. IOM staff counselled him and explained him the procedure to implement his project. Mr J. decided to purchase and then rent sound and light equipment for special events like parties, weddings, anniversaries etc. This decision was supported by the IOM offices in Jaffna, who agreed that the local market opportunities were excellent for this type of activity. After submission of all required documentation, IOM could make the payment of the reintegration grant which was used to purchase a generator, amplifiers, loudspeakers, a sound mixer and microphones.

Several months after his return, IOM staff visited his business which was successful. Mr J. could even employ an additional person. He stated that he enjoys financial independence, as well as the ability to support his wife and three children. He considers the reintegration assistance to have been of great help to his reintegration and new activity.



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.

FOM/IOM, February 2014