



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

The Gambia, Central River Region



In early 2016, Mr. B. voluntarily returned to his home country The Gambia. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) granted a return assistance of 3000 CHF for his professional reintegration consisting in a cattle breeding project in the Central River Region, an activity he used to practice before his migration. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) accompanied Mr. B. in this process and helped him to implement his reintegration project.

In the framework of the monitoring, IOM Banjul staff visited Mr. B. in August 2016. Mr. B. stated that he was satisfied with the support he received from IOM and that he did not encounter any problem with the delivery of the reintegration assistance grant.

Living in an own flat, Mr. B. described his overall standard of living as “average” but living in a better situation than before he left The Gambia, as he owns his cattle. However, he was only partially satisfied with his current situation. His cattle breeding business was operational, but Mr. B. was not yet earning an income from it. However, he indicated said that he planned to expand the herd and sees his future center of life in the place of return. Having been asked whether he recommends a participation in the return assistance program to other persons, Mr. B. answered: “Yes, because it helps you to own your business and also, you are free from the stress abroad.”



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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