



Return Assistance: a change in one's perspectives

Return Assistance in Practice

The Gambia

Mister S had stayed four years out of his home country, when he decided to return voluntarily to Gambia with the Swiss Return and Reintegration Assistance Programme which is financed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

At his arrival at Banjul's airport, he was welcomed by IOM who had organized the trip to his home village. After a few days, he contacted the IOM office in Banjul that explained him the next steps, and helped him to develop a business plan for the setting up of his reintegration project. When the business plan was approved by the SEM, IOM was ready to make the payment, so he went to Banjul's livestock market and selected the cattle he wished to purchase.

With the reintegration grant, he could purchase twelve cows, and he could pay for the transportation to his village.

Almost one year after his return IOM visited Mister S He was very satisfied with their support



he received and happy with his current situation. He planned to expand his business although he admitted that it takes some time to generate a good income. Indeed, the cattle needs to be fattened before it can be sold. But Mister S was working as a part-time farmer which was bringing additional income. He was very proud of his project and wished to continue his life in his village, close to his family and relatives.

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 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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