



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

Iraq, Dohuk

In the beginning of 2016, Mr. S. decided to return voluntarily to his country of origin Iraq. He found out about the return assistance of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) through information material. He then contacted the return counselling office in order to obtain more details. With their assistance, Mr. S. developed the business idea of a fruit and vegetable stall in Dohuk.



This project was approved by the SEM and Mr. S.'s request for return assistance was granted. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was then mandated with assisting him in the implementation of this business project in Iraq.

After his return, IOM accompanied Mr. S. with purchasing the different products for his stall and paid the reintegration grant directly to the supplier. Since Mr. S. invested in an already existing family business, there was no need to look for a market stall in Dohuk.

IOM visited Mr. S. in August 2016 in order to obtain an impression of his current situation. The returnee earns a living with his business and additionally supports his family with the income. He sees his future in Dohuk and informed that his psychological condition has improved significantly since his return. His plans for the future are to expand his business, resume his education and move into a new home.



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.