



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

Nigeria, Anambra State

Mr. O. returned to Nigeria in late 2013 with the idea to sell electronics items as he already had prior knowledge in this field. After several weeks of preparation, he started to set up his shop with the help of the reintegration assistance granted by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) supported him in his endeavor and paid the return assistance directly to the wholesaler in two instalments.

On the occasion of a monitoring visit in September 2014, Mr. O. stated that he was grateful for the granted assistance and satisfied with the support he received by IOM. He indicated that the return assistance “gives me the opportunity to do something”. The biggest challenge he faced was the lack of infrastructure in the country. Besides an expansion of his business, Mr. O. intended to start a poultry farm – an activity that he first learned about in the framework of the business training organized by IOM. This one-week workshop is conducted by



IOM and a local NGO and provides information on the basic management of a small enterprise and on selected concrete business activities (e.g. fish breeding, poultry farming).



In March 2016, Mr. O. called the IOM Lagos office to inform them that he is now fully involved in poultry farming and that he is barely able to meet customer demand. He is convinced that this particular activity is very profitable and would encourage newly returned persons to enter into this type of business with the help of the knowledge gained in the business training. Mr. O. further stated that he would be available to advise those who might be interested in this type of business.

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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