



MONITORING REPORT

August 2009 - January 2010

RAS-Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland



IOM International Organization for Migration
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IOM Internationale Organisation für Migration



Editorial

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IOM Bern wishes to express its gratitude to the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) that made this publication possible. Special appreciation also goes to the IOM missions in the countries of return as well as to the interviewed migrants.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Foreword

At the beginning of 2007, the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) decided to attach more importance to the monitoring aspect of their return assistance programmes. It was therefore decided that the reintegration projects involving people who had returned to their home country as part of a country programme should be visited after six and/or twelve months and evaluated. As part of the individual return assistance programme, FOM decides on a case-by-case basis which projects should be monitored. The aim of monitoring is to measure the efficiency, the allocation of funds and the sustainability of the reintegration measures.

„I convey you my thanks, you have been of great assistance. God bless you.“

Man returned to Kenya.

In order to gather balanced and, for the first time, comprehensive data on returnees who receive individual return assistance, FOM mandated the IOM in summer 2009 to establish a pilot project to systematically monitor individual return assistance projects for a period of six months. Thus, from **1 August 2009** to **31 January 2010** all RAS-projects (*Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland*) were monitored for six months after the returnee's arrival in his/her home country. Monitoring was carried out by means of a questionnaire specially designed for the pilot phase.

All countries and regions were included in the monitoring project, thus enabling comparisons and interesting conclusions to be drawn in the evaluation phase. The returnees were informed about the monitoring project before leaving Switzerland, and IOM was therefore able to keep in contact with most of them once they arrived in their home country.

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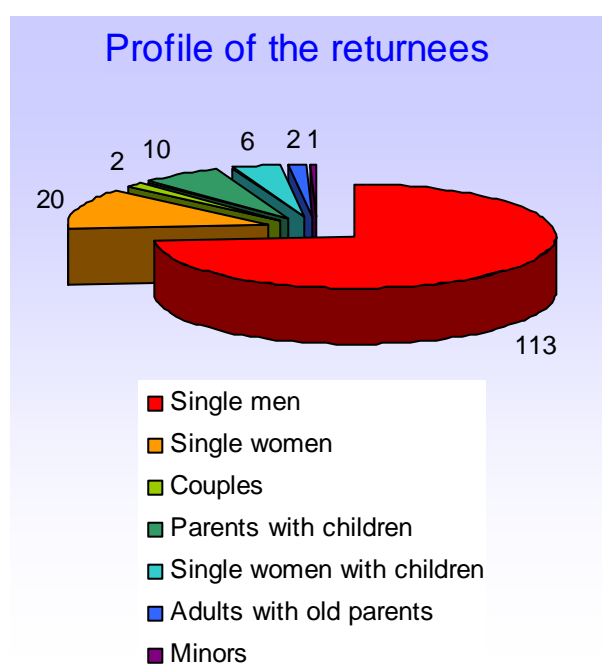
Introduction

From 1 August 2009 to 31 January 2010, IOM Bern was issued 154 RAS mandates for 37 countries. In each case, IOM's task was to pay out the return assistance, to implement the reintegration project and to monitor the project six months after the person's return to his home country.

The figures below show the distribution of RAS mandates. The countries of South-Eastern Europe – traditionally some of the largest recipients of return assistance – remain at the top of the table, with Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia coming a considerably lower second and third.

Region	RAS mandates	
	Count	Percentage
South-Eastern Europe (Western Balkans)	54	35.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	39	25.3%
Asia	33	21.4%
Eastern Europe	12	7.8%
Middle East (incl. Iran)	11	7.1%
Northern Africa	4	2.6%
South America	1	0.6%
Total	154	100.0%

If we take a look at the **profile of the returnees**, the first thing that becomes apparent is that most of the returnees are single men. If we look in more detail at the figures, we see that the returnees' profile varies slightly according to the region to which they return. In relative terms, for example, most of the female returnees returned to Sub-Saharan Africa, most single men to east European countries, and most families with children to South-Eastern Europe.



„This assistance is very helpful. I have no chance here in Bosnia and Herzegovina to save 3000 CHF in two years. “

Man returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Individual Return Assistance (IHI)

Individual return assistance is twofold. It comprises **CHF 1,000 start-up capital** per adult (CHF 500 for minors) - usually paid out when the person leaves Switzerland - and **CHF 3,000 reintegration assistance**. Reintegration assistance can be used for individual vocational projects, accommodation, medical assistance, training courses, or for placing returnees in local regional structures. Asylum seekers of all nationalities who decided to return home voluntarily can apply for individual return assistance.

The objective of individual return assistance is to foster the medium to long-term reintegration of returnees in their country of origin. The various kinds of assistance offered allow the return counsellors and the returnees to prepare an individual reintegration plan, which recognises the facts and meets the returnee's needs. In many cases, reintegration assistance was paid out within the RAS-programme (*Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland*) by IOM in the country of origin once the person had returned home.

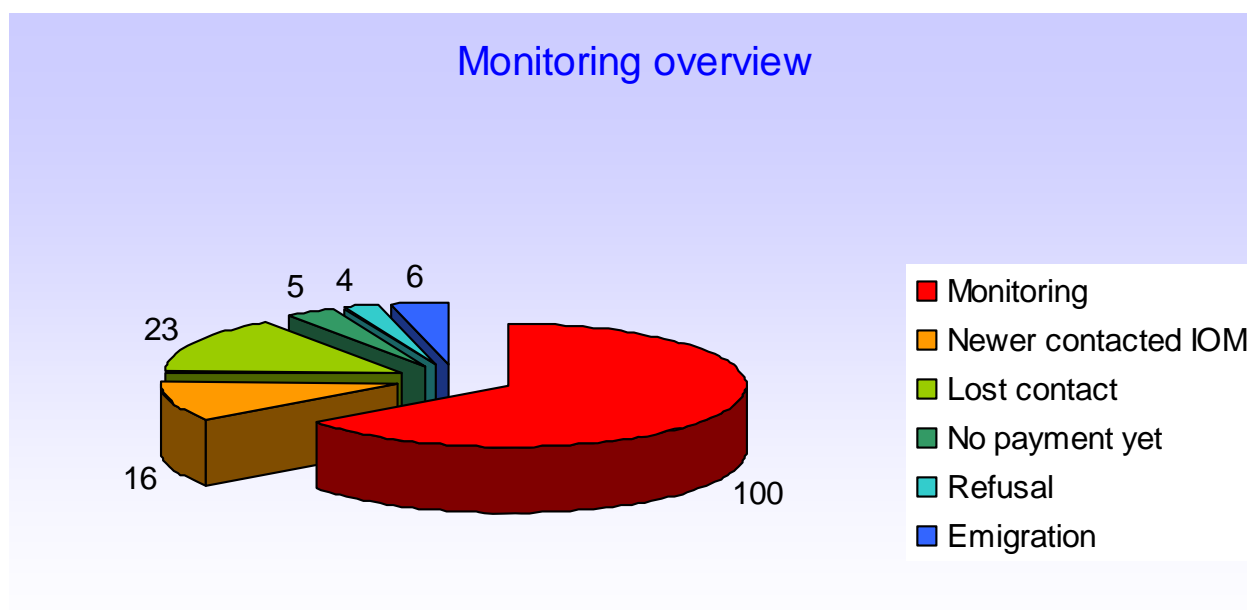
Method and procedure

Around six months after the person's return to his home country, IOM visited the returnee. To monitor the returnee's progress, a standardised questionnaire containing mainly closed questions (either a single word or short phrase) was used to gather data. The questionnaire comprised 60 questions, which often allowed multiple answers and centred on the following core areas:

- General information on the reintegration process and the provision of return assistance;
- Returnee's personal situation;
- Sustainability of reintegration;
- Details on the implementation of the project.

Data management and the analysis of the answers were carried out using the *SPSS Statistics 17.0* programme.

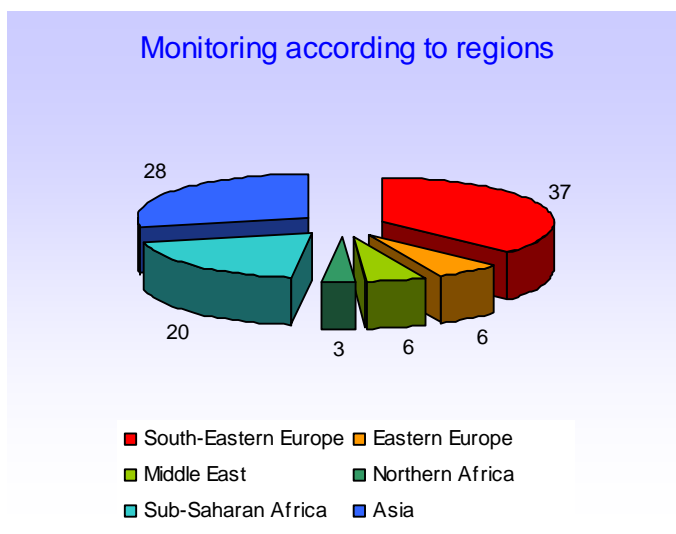
Out of the 154 mandates IOM Bern received from FOM between 1 August 2009 and 31 January 2010, around **100 cases (65 percent) involving 136 people were monitored around six months after the returnee's arrival in the home country.** With the exception of six cases, in which for security reasons a telephone interview was conducted, all the other cases were monitored by means of a personal visit to the returnee. The remaining 35 percent of cases were not monitored for several reasons: in 23 cases (15 percent) IOM paid out the financial reintegration assistance but subsequently lost contact with the returnee and therefore could not monitor his/her progress; in 16 cases (10 percent) the returnees had not contacted IOM six months after their return; in 5 cases (3 percent) there was contact between the returnee and IOM, but the reintegration assistance had not yet been paid out and the case was not monitored; in 4 cases (3 percent) the returnee refused a monitoring visit; and in 6 cases (4 percent) the returnee had re-emigrated.



„This reintegration assistance [...] was the only way for me to start my life with dignity again in my home country.“
Man returned to Syria.

Geographic distribution

The following monitoring report focuses on analysing the 100 cases in which a monitoring visit took place. The 100 cases are divided between six geographic areas and comprise 31 countries in total (cf. world map on the back cover).



- No cases were monitored in South America. Only one person returned to this region (Colombia) and reintegration assistance has not been paid out to date.
- Returnees to Ghana, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali and Uganda could not be monitored, either because they could not be reached or they never contacted IOM.
- Most of the monitoring was conducted in Kosovo (21 cases), Mongolia (13 cases), Sri Lanka (7 cases), BiH (7 cases), Serbia (5 cases) and Gambia (5 cases).
- For various reasons, only 5 of the 18 cases relating to Serbia were monitored: for example, in 7 cases the returnee could not be reached, and in 3 cases the returnee never contacted IOM. The statistics for Belarus are even worse: only 1 of 5 cases could be monitored because – amongst other reasons – in 3 cases the returnee could not be contacted.

South-Eastern Europe	Eastern Europe	Middle East	Northern Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia
Albania BiH Kosovo Macedonia Serbia	Belarus Moldavia Russia Turkey Ukraine	Iran Jordan Lebanon Syria	Egypt Libya Tunisia	Angola Ethiopia Gambia Kenya Congo DRC Nigeria Senegal Tansania Togo	Bangladesh Mongolia Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka

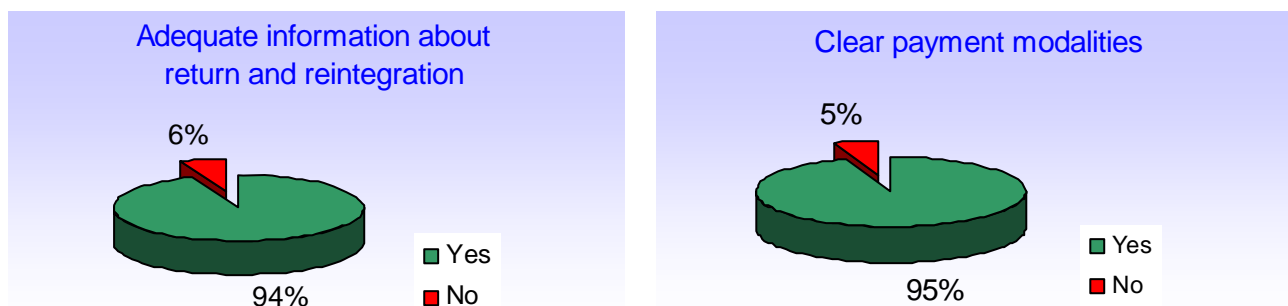
„Through the purchase of milk cows, I am producing milk that I sell to the nearest collection centre. This activity helps me to generate an income and to secure the social stability for me and my family.“

Man returned to Kosovo.

Set-up time in Switzerland

Return counselling

Nearly all the returnees were satisfied with the information they had received from the return counsellors on return and reintegration. They were also clear about the modalities for receiving payment.



In a few cases, there was uncertainty about specific areas such as possibilities for investment in the country of return or organising pro-forma receipts.

„I am very grateful to the return counsellor who helped me to return and to be accepted to this programme. I could not believe that it exists. Most Mongolians living in Switzerland don't believe it. It would be good if they knew how useful it is.“

Woman returned to Mongolia.

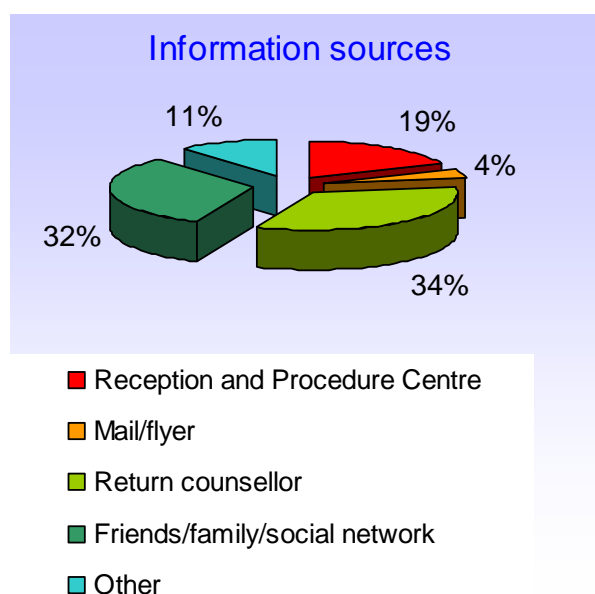
Sources of information

The returnees had obtained information on the possibility of voluntary return from **very different sources**.

A returnee's social network appeared noticeably important as a source of information, particularly for those people who had lived in Switzerland for longer than three years. Information from the Reception and Procedure Centre was important especially for people who had not been in Switzerland for very long. There did not appear to be a difference in the source of information exploited according to the regional origin of the returnee: on the contrary, returnees from all regions used a variety of sources to gain information on voluntary return.

„I understood that I will be provided with cash. But maybe the translator has made a mistake.“

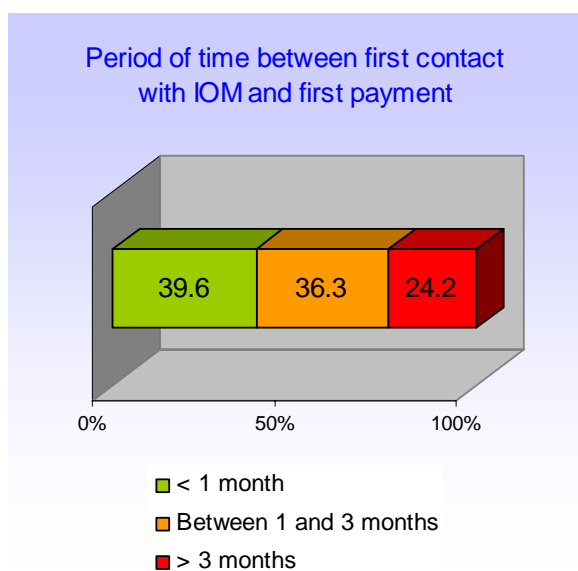
Man returned to Mongolia.



Reintegration in country of return

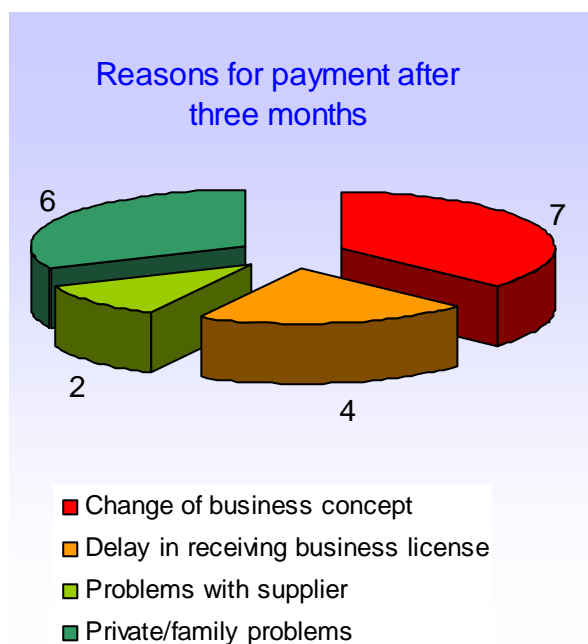
Contact with IOM after arrival

Recipients of reintegration assistance are given a document on their departure from Switzerland containing the contact information of IOM in the country of return. Returnees are required to contact IOM as soon as possible after their return so that reintegration assistance can be provided as soon as possible. The monitoring results provide evidence that returnees express a keen interest and high motivation in implementing the return assistance project promptly. To illustrate this: all returnees who were monitored had contacted the IOM office in the country of return in the first three months of returning home; in 84 percent of these cases, the returnee had even contacted IOM within one month of returning home.



However, the monitoring results show that a longer period of time often passed before reintegration assistance was paid out. Although nearly 40 percent of the returnees received reintegration support within one month and 36.3 percent within one to three months of contacting IOM, in around 25 percent of cases the first instalment of reintegration assistance could only be paid out more than three months after initial contact with IOM.

There are various reasons for this delay. In 7 cases, the returnee changed his/her mind about the business concept, leading to a delay in the project because this rearrangement first had to be cleared with the local IOM office, IOM Bern and FOM. Other cases were delayed because the returnees had experienced problems of a private nature or with regard to family.



„IOM needs to sensitize people so that they can know that this facility is true and okay. I am thanking them for the changes in my life. I want to work with IOM so that Gambians know of this programme.”

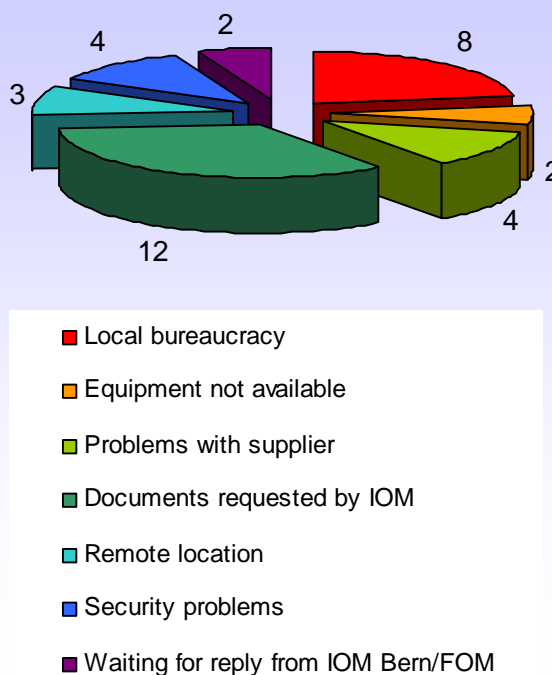
Man returned to Gambia.

In around one quarter of all cases (23.9 percent) difficulties were encountered in paying out reintegration assistance and this inevitably led to delays. Paying out assistance quickly and smoothly usually depends on the returnee because they must provide IOM with the necessary documents. In 12 cases this proved to be a problem. In 8 cases, the difficulty was exacerbated by the slow workings of local bureaucracy.

„I have difficulties to find a business premise and to get a business registration.“

Man returned to Sri Lanka.

Difficulties encountered in paying out reintegration assistance



The monitoring results showed that the following factors can hold up reintegration assistance:

- ❖ Returnees sometimes require time to decide on a definite reintegration project because having decided on a business concept they have to contact suppliers and check the availability of materials and tools.
- ❖ Obtaining the documents required for paying out reintegration assistance can be time-consuming. This applies especially to obtaining a business licence or permit.
- ❖ External factors such as a local bureaucracy or the security situation also play an important role and can slow down the process.

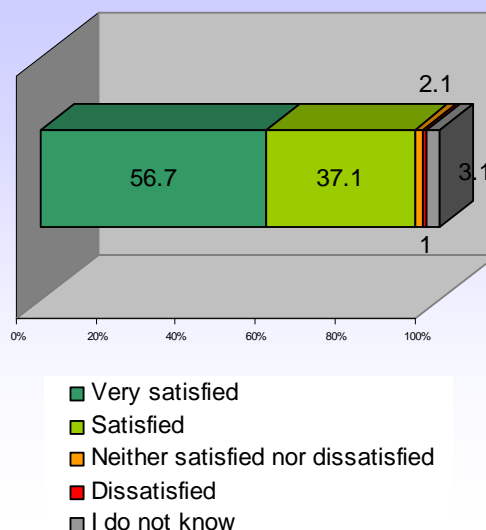
Satisfaction with IOM

Despite certain difficulties and delays in paying out reintegration assistance, 93.8 percent of returnees were satisfied with the services and support provided by IOM in implementing the reintegration project. This implies that in the eyes of the returnees, IOM is efficient and provides valuable assistance in the reintegration process.

„I am satisfied because I received many information and recommendations on how to use my reintegration assistance.“

Woman returned to Senegal.

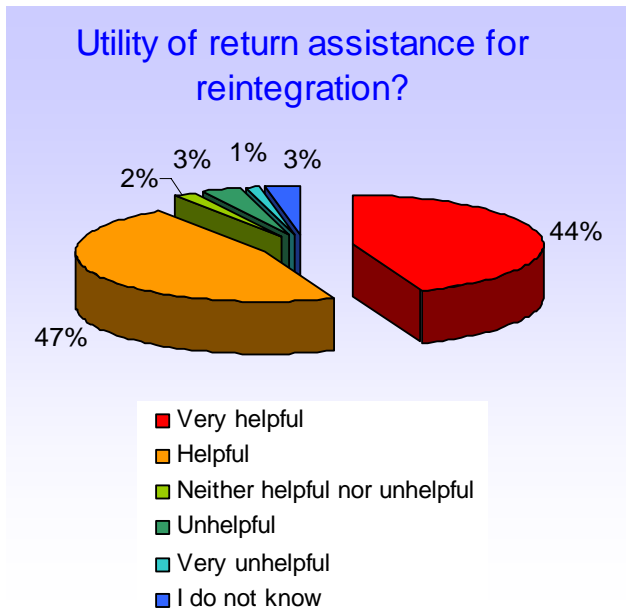
Satisfaction with IOM



Impact of return assistance

Most returnees found the return assistance helpful for the reintegration process. Besides the start-up capital, it often provided returnees with their only source of income on return to their country of origin. For example, the diagrams in the following chapters show that 84 percent of businesses that were established with the help of reintegration assistance were operational six months after a person's return home.

Most of the returnees who were questioned said that reintegration assistance was a useful and helpful contributing factor for long-term reintegration in the place of return: 44 percent considered it "very helpful" and 47 percent "helpful". The other returnees said that either the amount of reintegration assistance or the clientele was too small.



„The assistance is very useful for me and returnees like me. It is giving inspiration to start a business and earn an income immediately after the return.“

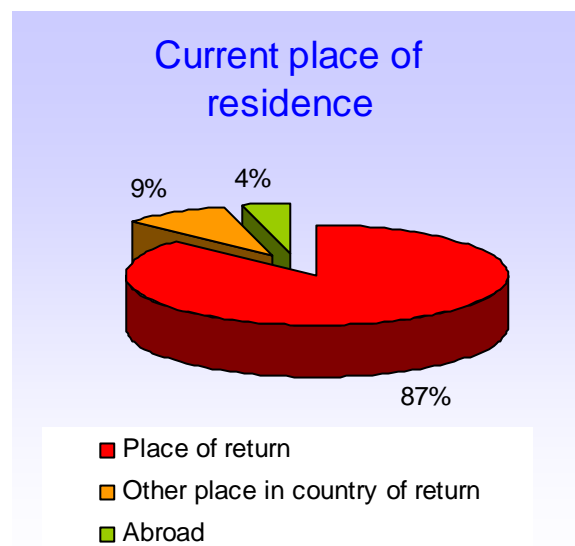
Man returned to Sri Lanka.

Current and favoured place of residence

Of the 100 returnees who were questioned, 87 percent still lived in the same place six months after their return. In 4 percent of cases, close relatives said at the time of questioning that the returnee was currently abroad.

Together with the 6 people who could not be visited as part of the monitoring process because they were abroad, it may be assumed that at least 6.5 percent of those who returned to their country of origin with the help of reintegration assistance between 1 August 2009 and 31 January 2010 had re-emigrated on arrival home.

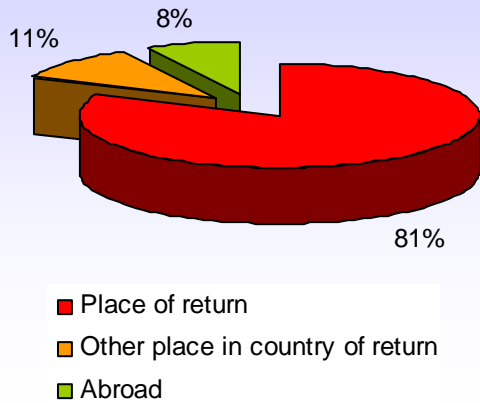
However, due to the numerous cases that, for various reasons, could not be monitored (54 out of 154 cases), it must be assumed that this figure could lie anywhere between 6.5 percent and 35.1 percent.



„I have no intention to leave my country again.“

Man returned to Macedonia.

Favoured place of residence of persons living in country of return



However, if we look at those returnees who live in the country of return and who were monitored (61.75 percent of all departures), 9 out of 10 returnees (92 percent) saw their future in the country of return, and 81 percent even wished to remain in the place to which they returned on arrival. This would indicate a certain degree of sustainability. Moreover, these figures apply equally to all geographic regions. Thus, re-emigration is just as unlikely an option for returnees to South-Eastern Europe as it is for returnees to Sub-Saharan Africa or Asia.

„I want to go to the US to find money.”

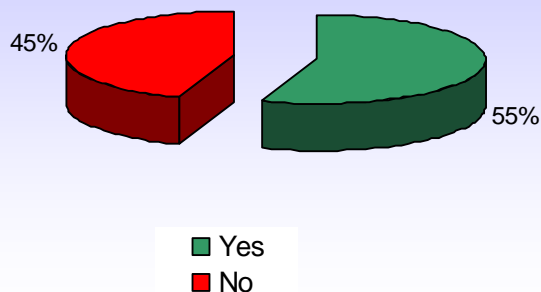
Man returned to Gambia.

Satisfaction of returnees

Not all of those returnees who wished to spend their future in the place of return were necessarily happy with their current situation. Of those who planned to stay in the country of return, 59 percent described themselves as “satisfied”. However, this proportion was significantly smaller (25 percent) for those who wanted to re-emigrate.

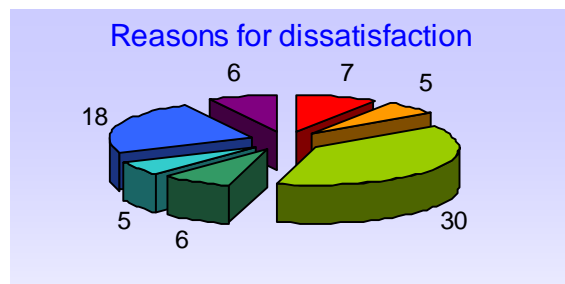
Overall, the monitoring results showed that 55 percent of returnees were “satisfied” and 45 percent were “dissatisfied” with their current situation.

Satisfaction with current situation



The results also showed that the place of return can have a slight impact on a returnee’s level of satisfaction. For example, the percentage of “satisfied” returnees to Sub-Saharan Africa (66.6 percent) and to Asia (59.3 percent) was higher than that of returnees to South-Eastern Europe (51.4 percent). In contrast, neither the duration of a person’s stay outside his/her country of origin nor a person’s gender (59.7 percent of “satisfied” single men as opposed to 54.5 percent “satisfied” single women) would appear to influence a returnee’s level of satisfaction. What was noticeable, however, was that all returnees with children were dissatisfied with their current situation (100 percent in all 6 cases). The implementation of the reintegration project would also appear to have an impact on a returnee’s level of satisfaction: whilst 78.6 percent of returnees who implemented their project at the time monitoring was carried out were “satisfied” with their situation, 84.2 percent of those who had not yet succeeded in implementing their project were “dissatisfied”. Thus it would seem that an important factor in a returnee’s well-being is the speed with which a reintegration project is implemented and assistance is paid out, so that possible financial straits following return to the home country can be eliminated as quickly as possible.

Financial difficulties were mentioned around 30 times by “dissatisfied” returnees as the reason for their dissatisfaction. In a further 18 cases, returnees expressed disappointment with the general situation in the country of return. Besides structural difficulties, personal and health problems also had an impact on the level of returnees’ dissatisfaction.

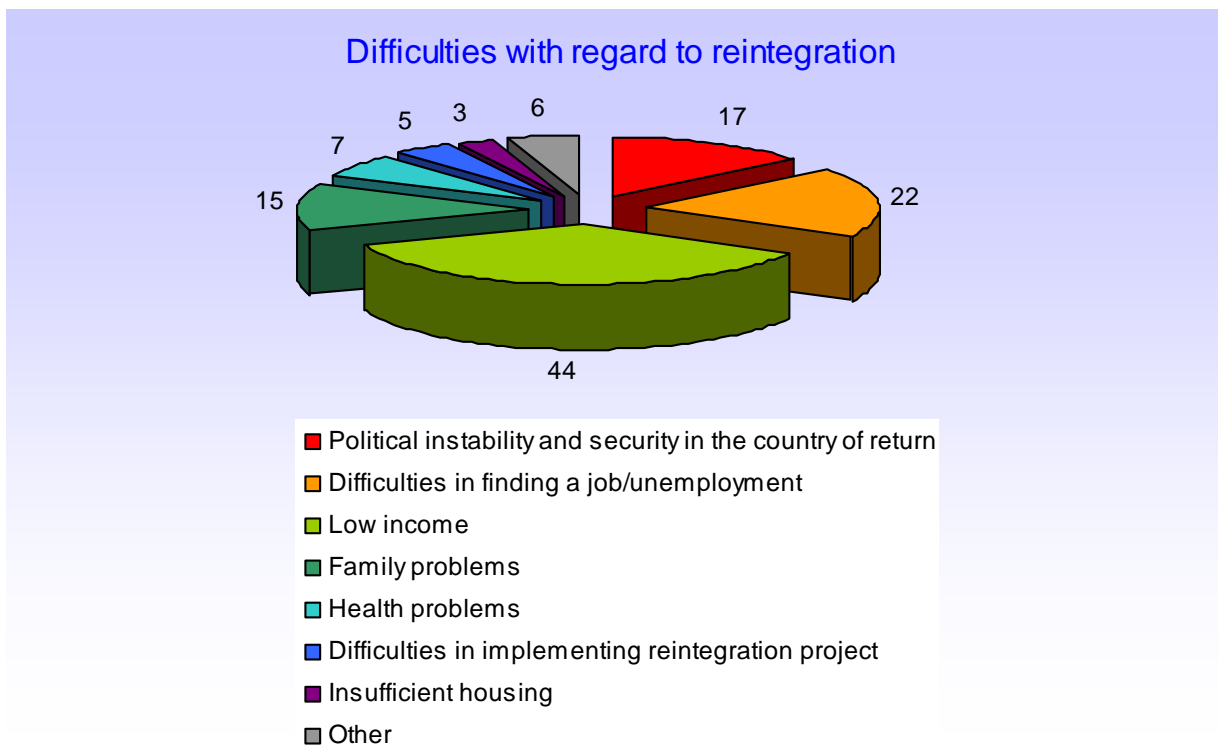


„Compared to the general price level of goods and services in the market, the amount given for my reintegration is low.“

Man returned to Egypt.

Difficulties

Besides the reasons for their dissatisfaction, returnees were also questioned on the greatest challenges and difficulties they faced with regard to reintegration following their return home. The answers showed that financial difficulties on return posed one of the biggest challenges (mentioned 44 times). Further problems mentioned by returnees included looking for employment (22), the political situation (17) and family difficulties (15).



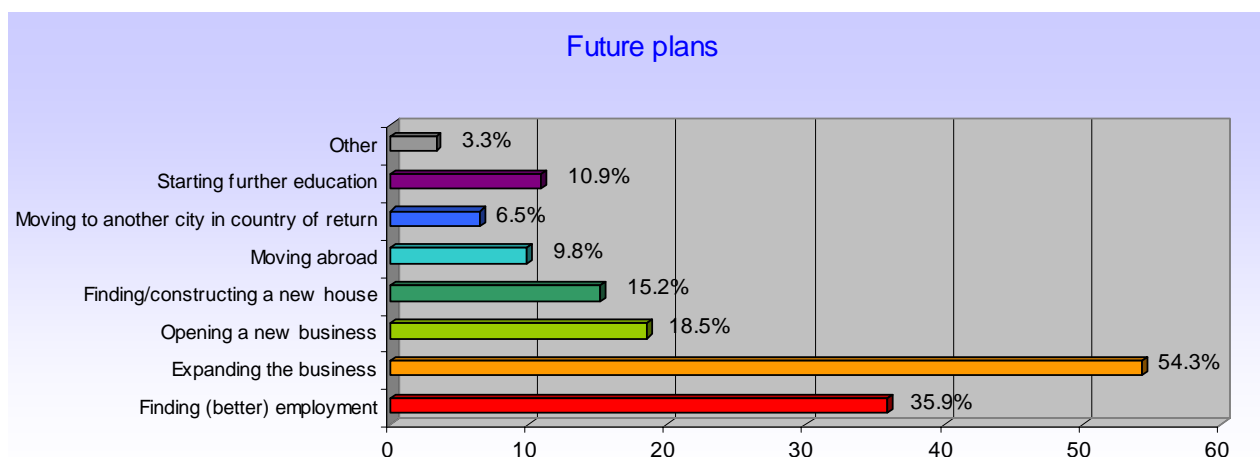
The evaluation of the results showed that the following problems compound reintegration and can lead to dissatisfaction:

- ❖ Returnees often find themselves in financial difficulty after their return. The situation can be exacerbated by delays in implementing the project.
- ❖ The situation in the country of return can pose returnees with considerable problems, especially if project implementation is at risk (for example due to local red-tape and unstable security situation).
- ❖ Health and other personal or family problems can make the reintegration process more difficult and delay project implementation.

Future plans

On being questioned about their future plans, returnees mainly mentioned improving their employment situation. Thus, 54.3 percent said they wanted to expand their business, and 35.9 percent mentioned finding a better job. Only one tenth of those questioned mentioned migrating abroad. More important appeared to be attaining better living space or starting a course of education or training. This illustrates that the returnees primarily wanted to become reintegrated in their place of

return and build a new life. In this respect, there was hardly any difference between the geographic regions: in South-Eastern Europe, more returnees hoped to find (better) employment, whilst returnees to Sub-Saharan Africa preferred to expand their business. Another noticeable factor was that single men were more likely to mention migrating abroad in the future than single women (10.4 percent compared to 0 percent).



„I have currently no shop and all the goods are in my house. But I opened a bank account to save money so that I can get a good bank credit to improve my business.“

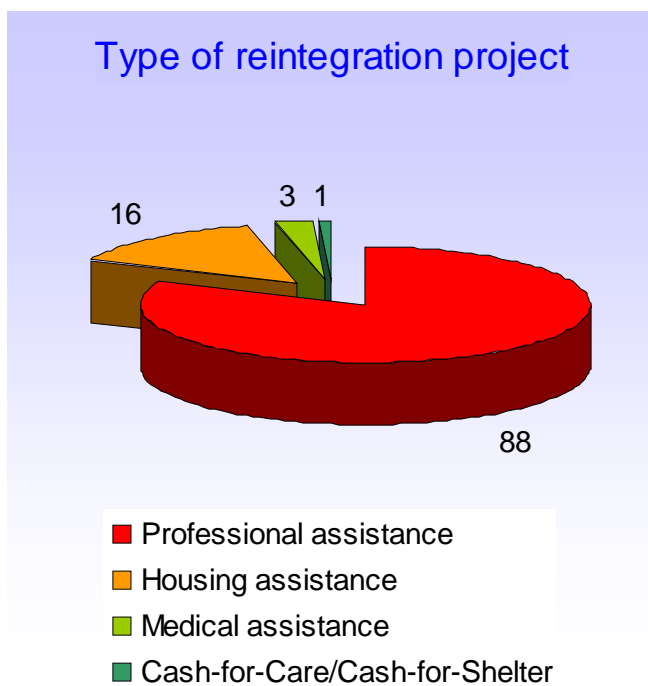
Woman returned to Senegal.

„I plan to get a bachelor’s degree at university and find a job in a Russian-French company.“

Man returned to Russia.

Reintegration projects

As expected, professional reintegration was clearly a central issue and seemed to be a priority for most returnees.



Assistance with accommodation (financing living space, rebuilding or renovating existing living space, etc.) was only required by returnees to South-Eastern Europe (8) and Asia (2). Whilst all returnees who had received support with accommodation were still living in the same place at the time of monitoring as they had been on returning home and said they wanted to continue living there in future, more than 20 percent of returnees who had received assistance with regard to professional reintegration said they envisaged their future somewhere else (and more than half of them said that “somewhere else” was abroad).

Medical assistance was very seldom taken advantage of. This is explained by the profile of the returnees (mostly young, single people).

„Having the opportunity to change the original plan according to the current situation in my own village is an advantage of this programme.”

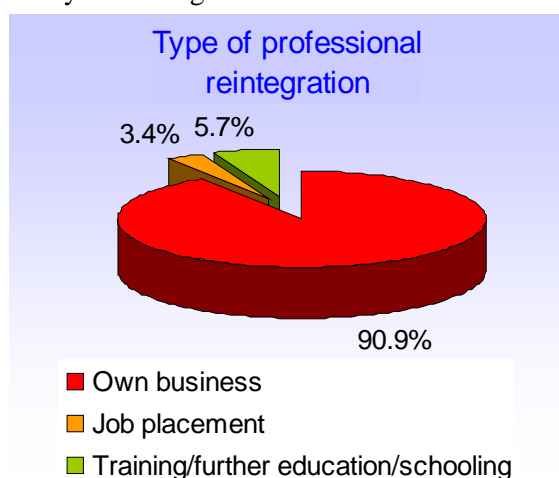
Woman returned to Sri Lanka.

„My family used to run this business until 10 years ago. When I left Kosovo, they were forced to sell all goats and close the farm. But now, when I came back, I saw that it is a good idea to start with the business I know. The assistance was very helpful for me to restart with this business.”

Man returned to Kosovo.

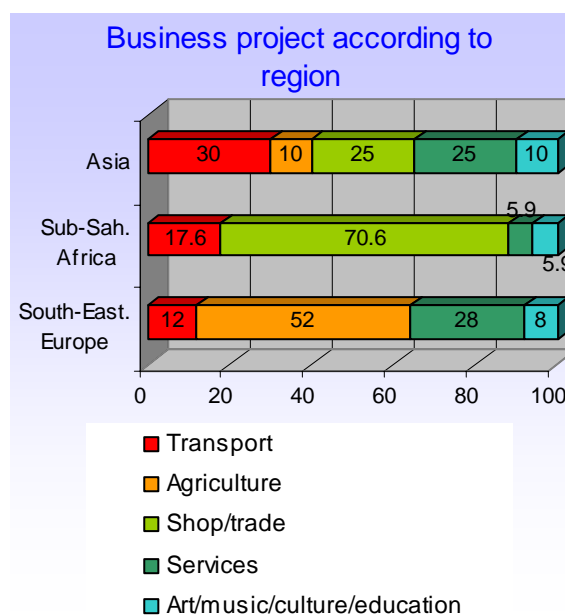
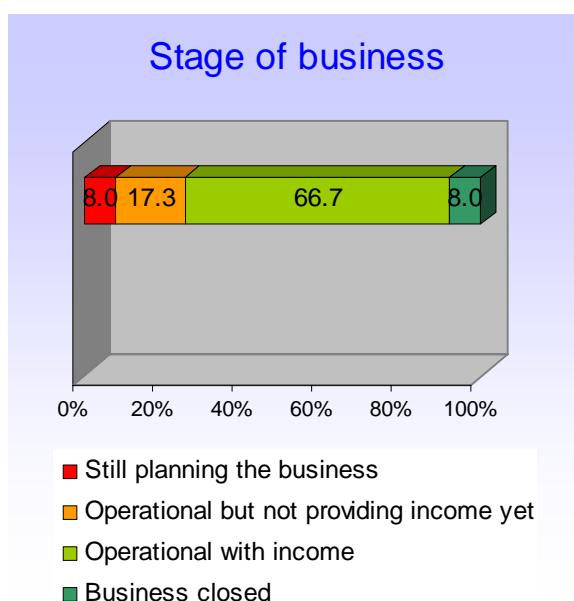
Professional reintegration

91 percent of returnees who received professional reintegration assistance invested the money in starting their own business.



66 percent of those questioned had started their business at the time of monitoring and were living – at least to a certain extent – off the proceeds. There appeared to be no direct link between a returnee's work experience and the successful implementation of a business project: thus, as many returnees with previous work experience in the economic sector they had chosen to implement their project were successful as were not (i.e., had not been able to start their business 6 months after their return).

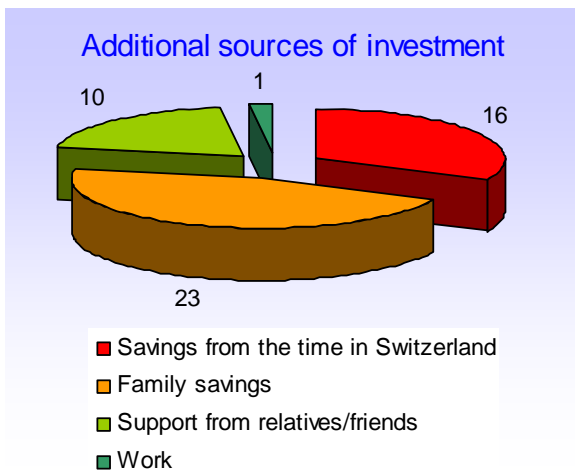
Nearly one quarter of returnees who started a business said they had commercial difficulties. The difficulties most frequently mentioned were: lack of financial means, too few customers and too much competition.



From the results it was noticeable that comparatively more returnees to Sub-Saharan Africa (35 percent) than to other regions were not generating an income six months after starting their business. A comparison between the duration of time until the first pay-out of assistance and the regions showed that the two factors were not linked: nearly 50 percent of returnees to Sub-Saharan Africa received their first pay-out within one month of first contacting IOM.

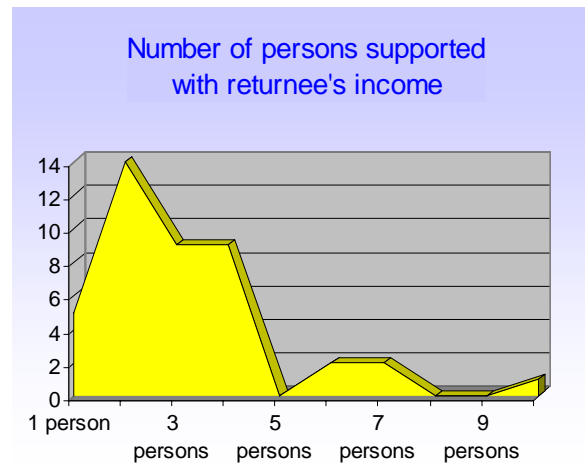
The various business projects can be divided into five economic sectors: transport; agriculture; shop/trade; services; art/music/culture/education. The regional differences were very apparent. Whilst in South-Eastern Europe 52 percent of all projects were in the agricultural sector, most projects in Sub-Saharan Africa involved starting up a shop.

- ❖ 87 percent of all projects in the agricultural sector were implemented in South-Eastern Europe.
- ❖ 53 percent of shops were opened in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ❖ Projects in Asia were relatively evenly distributed between all sectors.
- ❖ Transport businesses were implemented in all regions except for Eastern Europe. Most were established in Asia.
- ❖ During the six months of monitoring, only transport businesses and shops were established in Northern Africa.

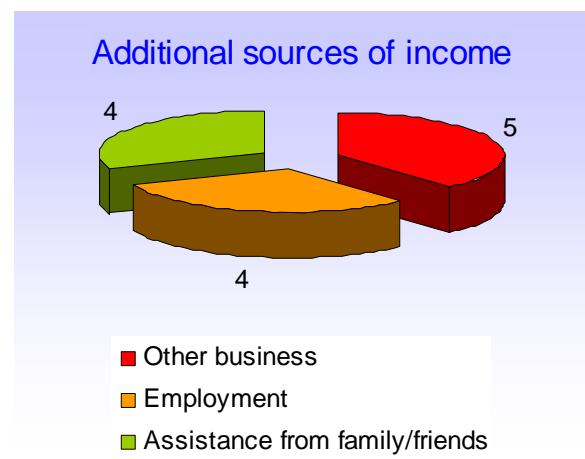


In order to start a business, 41 returnees said that they had had one or more sources of money in addition to the CHF 3,000 return assistance to use for additional investments. Most returnees said the additional capital had come from the family or from money saved while they had been in Switzerland. Particularly in Asia and South-Eastern Europe businesses had been started using money other than return assistance. This shows on the one hand the importance of a returnee having a network in the country of origin. On the other hand it also indicates the difference in value of the CHF 3,000, depending on the level of prices in the country of return.

The reintegration projects are very often not only of economic benefit to the returnee. Nearly half of all returnees who had set up a business employed others; 70 percent of returnees who had started a business employed 1 person, the other 30 percent employed between 2 and 11 people (in a hotel in Nepal). In total, 40 people (mainly in the trade and services sector) were being employed by returnees.



Furthermore, nearly half of all the returnees said they were supporting other people – mainly family members - with their income. In total, approximately 150 people were living off the income of the returnees (one returnee said he was “feeding” 18 people). In contrast, 13 returnees said their income was insufficient to cover living costs and they required an additional source of income.



„My business is still operating but the income is very low because of the competitors. I am satisfied with the assistance and the services offered by IOM, but the grant should be higher because the investments for a business are high.”
 Man returned to Kosovo.

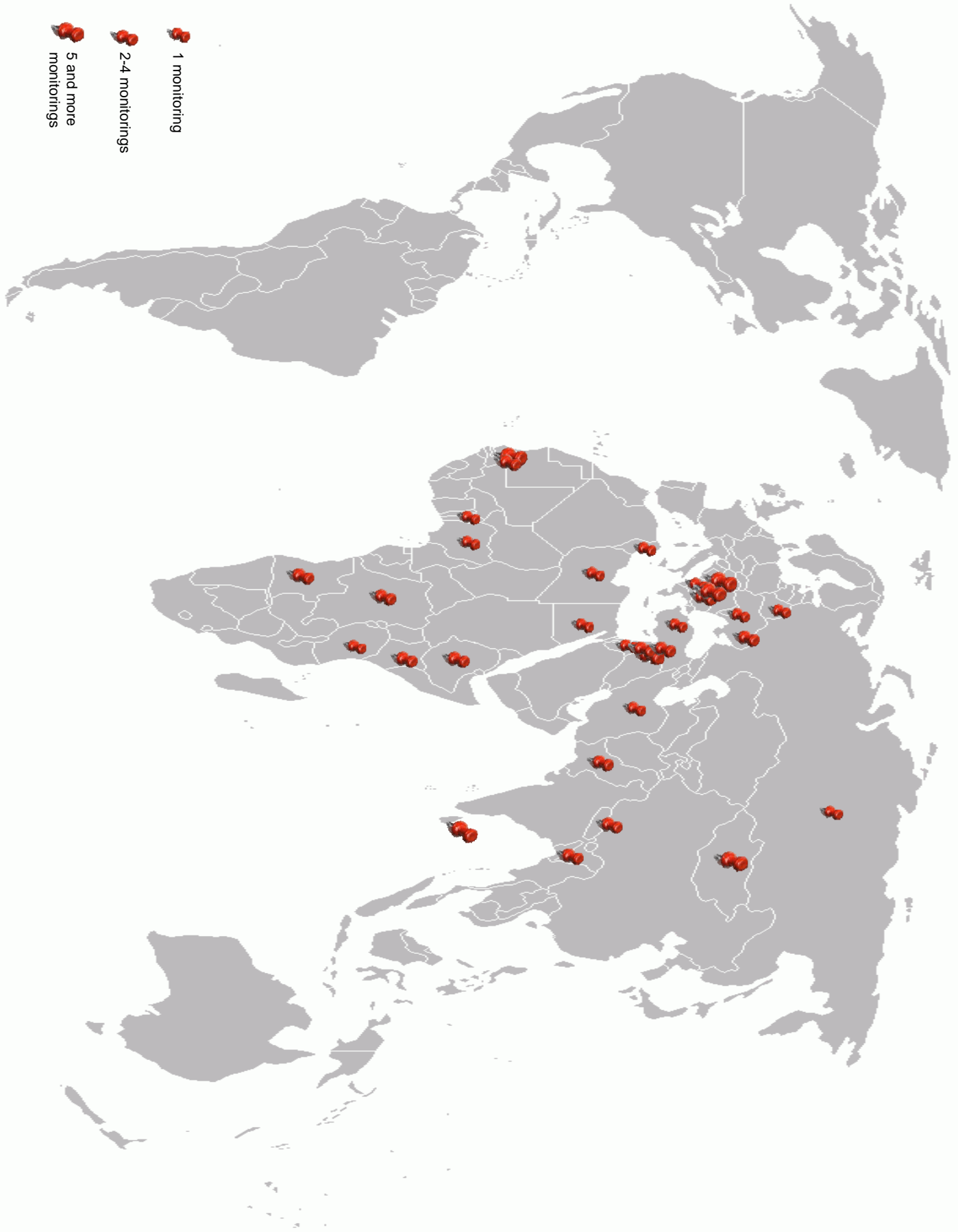
Comments and Recommendations

- ❖ The monitoring results show that there are surprisingly **few regional differences** and that there is broad agreement that reintegration is difficult and challenging. Returnees from all regions said the main problem was a lack of financial resources for the reintegration process. They also mentioned structural and personal worries.
 - ➡ The amount of return assistance is too small in order to make a significant contribution to a sustainable solution. Therefore, there should be a flexible system to increase the amount.
- ❖ Returnees were very **positive** about the services offered as part of the voluntary return package (return counselling in Switzerland, reintegration support by IOM in country of return). This is reflected in the high rate of satisfaction.
 - ➡ The positive results show that IOM is a very good partner for implementing reintegration projects as part of individual return assistance.
- ❖ Nevertheless, the results should be treated with some caution: one third of all those who returned home voluntarily as part of the RAS (*Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland*) programme within the given timeframe could not be contacted by IOM for a monitoring visit. It must be assumed that the reintegration process has been less successful for most of these people. Therefore, in view of these cases, the results in this **report only reflect part of the reality**.
 - ➡ The systematic monitoring of RAS mandates allows an in-depth analysis of the efficiency of the programme. In the previous year, IOM was only tasked with monitoring between 10 to 15 percent of the cases. Permanent systematic monitoring is absolutely crucial if analysis of reintegration measures is to continue.
- ❖ Monitoring was carried out six months after the person had left Switzerland. In view of the fact that quite a high number of returnees only received the first payout more than three months after their return, the **duration of the monitoring would appear to be too short** to make a qualitative judgement about the sustainability of the reintegration programme.
 - ➡ In order to better gauge the efficiency of individual return assistance with regard to long-term reintegration, the monitoring visit should take place, at the earliest, between 9 and 12 months after the person's return.

- ❖ With regard to the sustainability of the programme, IOM and FOM have high expectations of the returnees concerning the **implementation of the reintegration programmes** (permits, receipts, etc.). These procedures are often perceived by the returnees to slow down project implementation. However, in view of the high number of returnees who were not available for monitoring after the payout, these requirements are justified to continue fostering long-term reintegration.
 - ➔ Payout arrangements should be maintained in order to do justice to the high standard of Swiss return assistance. At the same time, there should be more flexibility in exceptional cases.
- ❖ Because of the difficult situation in the respective countries of return and the limited financial possibilities, it is all the more important to realize a returnee's **individual potential**. It was noticeable that even at the same place of return and in similar prevailing conditions there were major differences in the success rates of reintegration.
 - ➔ The return counsellors should continue to address a returnee's individual potential when working out a reintegration project.
- ❖ This analysis does not consider the **influence of other global programmes** by IOM Bern such as RIF (*Return Information Fund*) and SIM (*swissREPAT-IOM-movements*) on the reintegration process. Nor does it draw any comparisons with existing country programmes.
 - ➔ The monitoring concept as part of Switzerland's return assistance programme should be standardised (e.g. revising the questionnaire) in order to simplify in future comparative analyses between various country programmes and the individual return assistance (IHI).
 - ➔ In view of the imminent completion of monitoring reports on the two biggest country programmes (Nigeria and Iraq), the results should be compared as far as possible by the end of 2010 in order to be able to draw conclusions about the differences in the contributions made by country programmes and the RAS programme to sustainable reintegration.

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- 1 monitoring
- 2-4 monitorings
- 5 and more monitorings



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