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# Reintegration Assistance 2002-2005

## EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY

In 1999, IOM UK launched a Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP) to facilitate the return of individuals and families to the Balkans in the aftermath of the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo.

In 2002, this programme was expanded with the inclusion of a “reintegration” component and renamed as the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP).

### introduction

**Reintegration Assistance** is offered to asylum seekers who wish to return to their home countries as a contribution towards a sustainable return. The returnee can choose to use this Reintegration Assistance to start a **small business**; embark upon a **vocational training** course; opt for a **job placement**; or continue their **education**.

IOM UK carried out a monitoring and evaluation exercise to see how people who returned during the period 2002-2005 were doing. The exercise was designed to assess the impact of Reintegration Assistance in particular and, more generally identify in which ways IOM UK’s Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) could be improved.

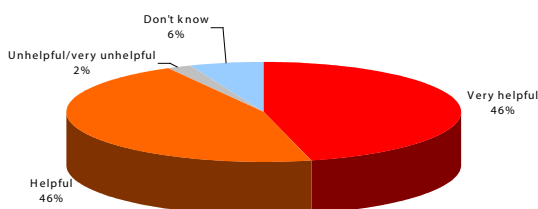
The exercise was conducted by staff from **27 IOM missions worldwide** and from IOM UK. They **interviewed** more than half of the 2,065 returnees who received IOM Reintegration Assistance during the period 2002-2005 either **in person** or **by phone**. (The remaining returnees could not be reached for reasons such as security concerns; road blocks; other geographical constraints or because the returnees had not maintained contact with IOM).

### methodology

- ▷ Of 1074 returnees who were successfully surveyed during the evaluation period, **81%** were **men** returnees and **19%** **women**
- ▷ The majority were between **18 and 30 years old**
- ▷ **38%** of these returnees had stayed **in the UK** for **3-5 years**; **20%** stayed for **more than 5 years**
- ▷ **Two-thirds** of them had returned to just 5 countries, namely **Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran, Albania and Kosovo**. The remaining **one-third** went back to the other **22 countries** surveyed
- ▷ **81%** chose to start a **small business**. **7%** opted to use their Reintegration Assistance for **job placement** and an equal percentage for **vocational training**. **4%** of the returnees chose to continue with their **education**
- ▷ **77%** of the **small businesses set up by returnees** with IOM's assistance were **still operational**
- ▷ **Nearly two-thirds** who opted for **training** found employment after completing their training

### main findings

**92% found Reintegration Assistance 'very helpful' or 'helpful'**



## main findings

- ▷ **85%** of the returnees who chose **job placement** were **still employed at the end of the placement period**, either with the same employer or elsewhere
- ▷ **Over half** who preferred to do a **vocational training course** found **long-term or temporary employment at the end of their chosen course**
- ▷ **94%** of returnees were either **“very satisfied”** or **“satisfied”** with the **information** they received about **IOM’s Reintegration Assistance**

## impact of the assistance

- ▷ **On the returnees** - it helps them to deal with the challenges of return by increasing their self-confidence with opportunities to work and study after a period of inactivity in the UK, thus helping them to cope with social and family expectations
- ▷ **On the community** - new albeit small businesses help the local economy: a wider range of products and services become available; jobs are created and trade with local suppliers increased

## recommendations

- ▷ Offer **business training** more systematically
- ▷ Assist returnees with **more pre-departure counselling** to enable them to think about their options as early as possible
- ▷ Improve **lead times** for the delivery of assistance through IOM Missions
- ▷ Encourage returnees to set up **cooperatives**
- ▷ Provide **accommodation**
- ▷ Undertake **more frequent monitoring**

The above recommendations (and comments), which emerged from the evaluation of people who returned during the period 2002-2005, have been acted upon by IOM UK. They were all incorporated in the ‘New Approach’ launched on 19 October 2007.

## what returnees said

*“IOM’s assistance helped me start something on return. Returning is very difficult as we have no support, no income and the country has changed.”*

- Angolan returnee

*“After four years abroad, training was important to learn the skills needed in my country and the local labour market.”*

- Ecuadorean returnee

*“The assistance was as they said in London. The fund also funded the school for my children. I would only re-migrate if there is war again.”*

- Angolan returnee

*“IOM supported me to adapt again to my country. I am very happy with the assistance although my business is not generating enough income and I would like more assistance to buy more supplies...”*

- Colombian returnee

*“The assistance could improve by offering a more complete and individualised reintegration package.”*

- Kenyan returnee

*“Re-starting my life would have been very difficult as I had sold all I had to go to the UK in search of a better life (...) The assistance allowed me to avoid the shame I would have faced from my family members.”*

- Kenyan returnee

*“The most positive aspect of the programme is all the people who helped us during this time.”*

- Ecuadorean returnee