



2013 MONITORING REPORT

October 2012 – October 2013

RAS – Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM)
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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, 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 uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

SUMMARY

Persons residing in Switzerland under the asylum system who opt to return voluntarily to their country of origin are eligible to apply for reintegration support. The *Reintegration Assistance from Switzerland* (RAS) programme, financed by the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) and administered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provides such support in the form of financial assistance upon return. The object is to support the reintegration process of returnees by giving them the means to undertake a specific project (business-related, accommodation, medical support, vocational training, etc.). Through its regional offices, IOM monitors these cases by making on-site visits a number of months after payment of the cash grant. This report follows on from the previous monitoring report compiled in 2009/2010, outlining the key findings for all participating returnees between January and June 2012 who were interviewed between October 2012 and October 2013. It also contains recommendations for the future of the programme.

IOM conducted 149 monitoring visits in 42 countries between October 2012 and October 2013.¹ Based on the questionnaires compiled, the reasons most frequently given for voluntary return were a failed asylum application or the lack of economic prospects in Switzerland. According to the beneficiaries, the main difficulties encountered in the reintegration process, irrespective of their region of origin, were in relation to finances, family matters or the perception of political instability in their country. Most beneficiaries used their reintegration assistance to fund a business-related project.

The main findings were as follows:

- ✓ 89% thought that return assistance was useful for their reintegration.
- ✓ 79% said that the reintegration project met their immediate needs.
- ✓ 56% were satisfied with their situation after return.
- ✓ Only 20% said they could envisage moving abroad in the future. Most beneficiaries saw their future in their place of return or in another town or region of their country of origin.

While the main regions of return in 2009/2010 were Eastern Europe and Asia, West Africa climbed to top position in 2012/2013. Despite some differences noted in the reintegration process, the results from both periods of systematic monitoring are largely comparable.

The recommendations drawn up in this report are based on the statistical findings and on a more detailed analysis of the situation in four countries of particular significance in terms of their high level of voluntary return take-up and their geographical distribution: The Gambia, Sri Lanka, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99² and Tunisia. The findings have highlighted the importance of the individual component in the reintegration process. Statistically, the chances of a reintegration project succeeding and of the beneficiary being satisfied with their current situation were determined not solely by the type of reintegration project, or the region of origin, or the beneficiary's profile. This highlights the importance of maintaining and of reinforcing one-to-one support and the possibility of tailoring projects to the individual beneficiary's personal and overall situation. In this regard, Swiss counselling on the return process is important and should have access to the right tools. Regular communication with local stakeholders should be stepped up to improve the flow of information. Support in countries of origin is also crucial to the successful implementation of a reintegration project. Making return assistance contingent upon an educational or training component would reinforce such support and ensure beneficiaries the greatest possible chance of success. Recommended measures to consolidate the financing of reintegration projects include encouraging links with financial institutions, increasing

¹ Although the visits were scheduled for nine months after return (between October 2012 and April 2013), some were conducted long after the scheduled date on account of difficulties in contacting the beneficiaries at that time (see "Method and general overview" for more details).

² Referred to hereinafter as "Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)".

the amount of the cash grant given as return assistance, and pooling beneficiaries together for a joint project or loan application. The potential for generating synergies between Switzerland's return assistance and the private or public sector has not yet been fully exploited; however, realizing such synergies, and indeed most of the measures presented here, will depend largely on the financial resources provided.

"Before leaving Switzerland, I was told that I would receive assistance. To be honest, I was a bit sceptical. But my prejudice was broken at the airport, and further positive surprises continued after my return. Everything I was promised was realized. I am really thankful for the assistance."

Male Program Participant, returned to Kosovo

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INTRODUCTION

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization operating worldwide in the field of migration. Its headquarters are in Geneva. IOM is concerned with all aspects of migration (research, counselling, technical cooperation, emergencies, project and programme implementation). As the organization's Swiss representative, IOM Berne is the contact and coordination office in Switzerland for national and international questions related to migration. The office of IOM Berne opened in 1994, following the signing of a framework contract with the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) in the area of return assistance. The main purpose of IOM Berne is to support the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) at all levels of voluntary return assistance and with specific migration-related projects in countries of origin.

Persons residing in Switzerland under the asylum system³ who opt to return voluntarily to their country of origin are eligible to apply for return and/or reintegration assistance financed by the Swiss government. The RAS project is a reintegration assistance project financed by the FOM and administered by IOM worldwide since 2002. Reintegration assistance entails financial support given to implement a reintegration project after a beneficiary's return to their country or origin or another country. These reintegration projects are developed in collaboration with the Return Advisory Centres in Switzerland and take account of each beneficiary's specific needs. The overwhelming majority of cases are business-related projects, although others are related to accommodation, training or medical support. Each individual project is submitted to the FOM for approval. The FOM then commissions IOM to disburse the funds and monitor the cases in the countries of origin.

Since 2007, the FOM and IOM have stepped up their monitoring of cases by visiting certain reintegration projects a number of months after disbursement of the funds. Under the RAS programme, these visits are normally determined on a case-by-case basis by the FOM. However, in order to obtain more comprehensive information and thus be able to draw some general conclusions, all RAS mandates were systematically given a follow-up visit over a six-month monitoring period in 2009/2010. This period of systematic monitoring served as the basis for the first monitoring report. A further period of systematic monitoring was initiated three years later, integrating the recommendations from the previous period. A total of 149 monitoring visits were conducted, in 42 countries, between October 2012 and October 2013. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the RAS programme in 2012/2013, assess to a certain extent the impact on beneficiaries and their reintegration process shortly after their return, and compare the findings from the two periods of systematic monitoring. The report also includes an in-depth case study of the opportunities and challenges posed by reintegration in four specific countries: Sri Lanka, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Tunisia and The Gambia. These countries were selected because of their high level of voluntary return cases and their geographical distribution. The choice was also determined by the FOM's overriding interests in these countries: for example, the FOM has a migration partnership with Tunisia, which has included a specific return assistance programme administered by IOM since 2012.

³ Anyone who has submitted an asylum request, irrespective of their status (asylum seeker, recognised refugee, failed asylum applicant, etc.), is eligible to apply for return assistance.

METHOD AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

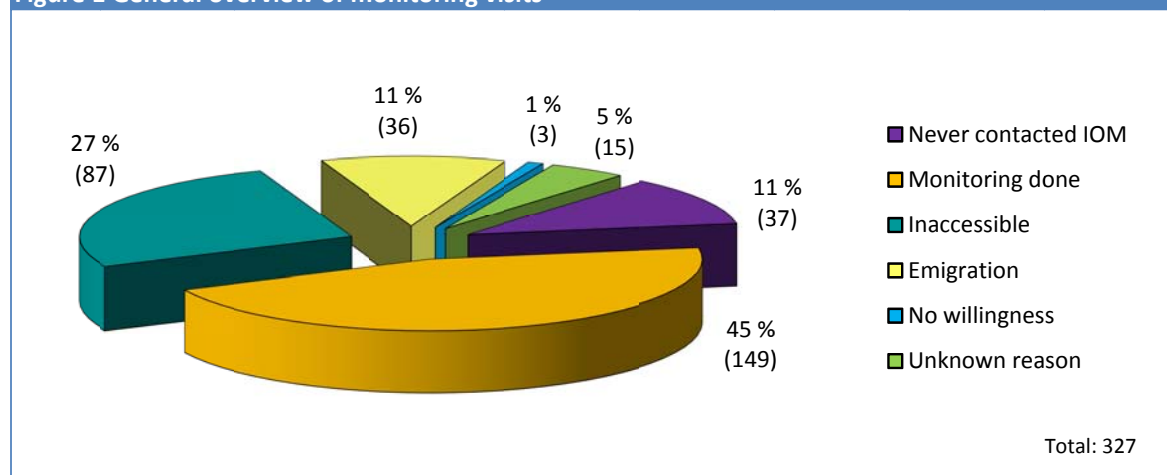
Monitoring took the form of a visit by IOM staff to interview beneficiaries nine months after their return date. In the course of these interviews, beneficiaries were asked to complete a questionnaire specifically tailored by IOM Berne. The questionnaire exists officially in English and French; some offices translated it into the local language so as to facilitate comprehension. It comprises a series of questions, both closed and open, covering various aspects of return and reintegration:

- General information and services offered
- Personal situation
- Status of the reintegration project

All persons for whom IOM received a reintegration assistance mandate between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2012 were subject to a monitoring visit. The visits were conducted between October 2012 and October 2013. If a face-to-face interview was not feasible for technical or security reasons⁴, the questionnaire was completed over the phone. IOM Berne collected all of the completed forms and compiled the information in a database for subsequent analysis.

Between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2012, IOM Berne received 327 RAS mandates⁵ subject to monitoring⁶ (this figure excludes all mandates cancelled prior to departure, "no shows", drop outs following departure, as well as deceased beneficiaries; 34 in total). 149 monitoring forms were collected, i.e. 46%. 37 beneficiaries (11%) did not contact the IOM regional office following their return⁷; 36 persons (11%) had re-emigrated, according to the information obtained by IOM from family and acquaintances; three persons (1%) explicitly refused to complete the questionnaire; 87 beneficiaries (27%) could not be contacted after disbursement of the reintegration assistance (telephone number was not in service or had been re-assigned, company closed down, no address, nomadic, etc.); and in 15 cases (5%), no information could be obtained at the time of drafting the report.

Figure 1 General overview of monitoring visits



⁴ IOM is subject to the directives of the UN Department of Safety and Security, which may impose travel restrictions in certain regions.

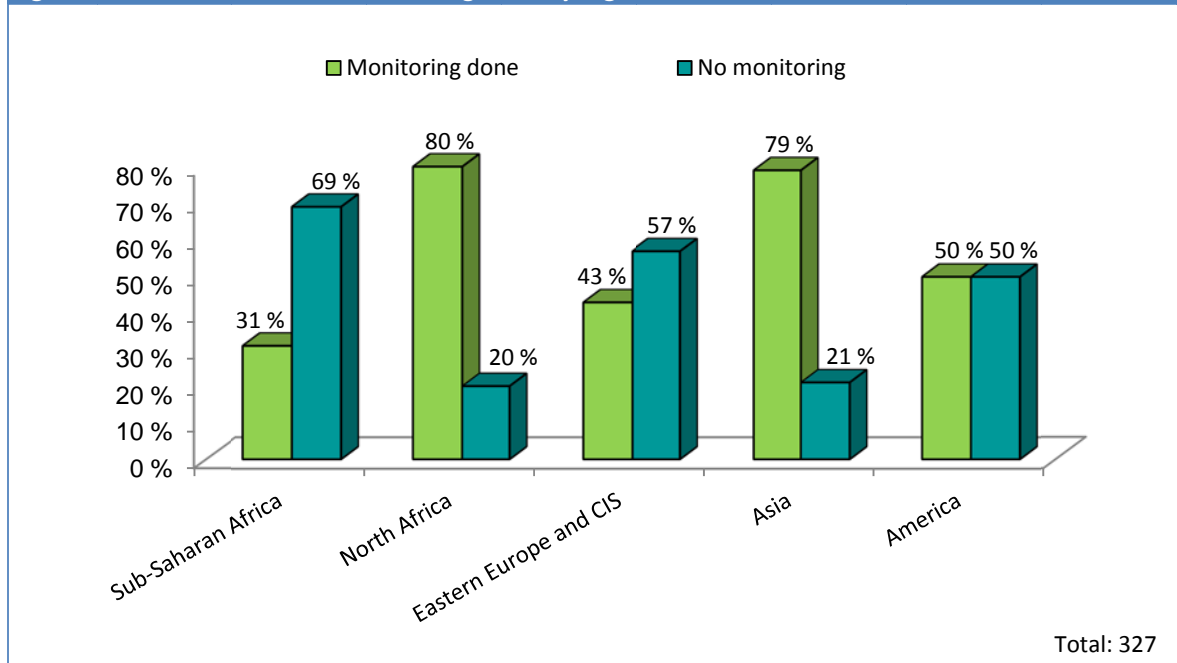
⁵ A RAS mandate is a formal request by the FOM for IOM Berne to disburse reintegration assistance. As a mandate may concern an individual person, a couple or a family, the number of mandates does not correspond to the number of persons receiving assistance.

⁶ RAS mandates concerning post-return reimbursement of simple medications with a value of less than CHF 1,000 were not subject to monitoring.

⁷ No payment was made for these returnees.

During the first monitoring period in 2009/2010, 65% of the planned monitoring visits were actually made. In 2012/2013, the reasons for the difficulties in obtaining information (Fig. 1) after reintegration were similar, but there was a far higher proportion of returnees who could not be contacted (27% in 2012/2013 as opposed to 15% in 2009/2010). It should be noted, however, that wide disparities exist when viewing the results by region. The results were very positive in Asia and North Africa (around 80% of the planned monitoring visits were conducted) but far less so in Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. As only two cases were recorded for the Americas, these results are not relevant.

Figure 2 General overview of monitoring visits by region



The relatively low success rate in 2012/2013 compared with 2009/2010 and the disparities by region can be explained by a number of phenomena:

At a global level:

- During the 2012/2013 period, the visits were conducted nine months instead of six months after return. While this meant that a higher number of projects were operational, as the payments had been made in full, keeping in contact with beneficiaries posed a greater challenge. In some cases it took quite some time to locate the beneficiaries, and numerous visits were conducted long after the planned date.⁸
- Several IOM offices mentioned the general distrust among beneficiaries and their acquaintances with regard to the monitoring questions and their utilization. Some people no longer wished to maintain contact with IOM once the payments were completed. In some regions (specifically in West Africa and Eastern Europe), the family and acquaintances were also reticent to provide information on beneficiaries with whom IOM had lost contact.
- According to information given by acquaintances to IOM offices in the return countries, a greater number of people had access to a residence permit for a European country in 2012.⁹ Re-emigration was thus easier for this category of individuals.

⁸ Of the 149 monitoring forms, 99 were completed more than nine months after return (between 10 and 19 months after the return date).

⁹ Persons with a residence permit for a European country are normally not eligible for reintegration assistance.

- The number of reintegration assistance mandates more than doubled between the first and second periods of monitoring. Following up on cases was thus more difficult in 2012/2013, with human resources still limited in certain IOM offices.

At a regional level: The discrepancies in the results between the regions are largely explained by structural factors and the beneficiaries' profiles:

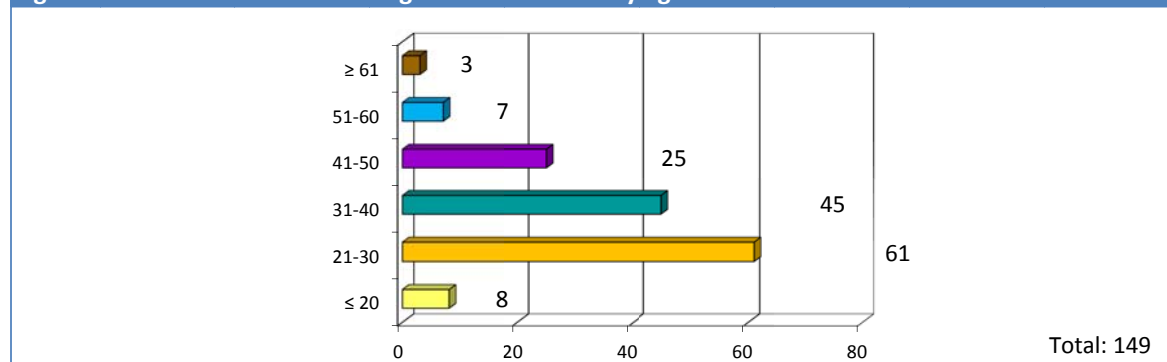
- The absence of postal addresses, population records or fixed telephone lines in Sub-Saharan Africa makes it extremely difficult or even impossible to conduct monitoring visits.
- The existence of an informal economy in Sub-Saharan Africa makes reintegration projects more transient and unstable.
- The free circulation of people in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) favours legal re-emigration, whether temporary or permanent.
- Beneficiaries belonging to Nomadic tribes (such as in Chad) were more difficult to contact several months after their return.
- In some regions, such as in Casamance, the Caucasus or Afghanistan, follow-up visits were at times not possible on security grounds.¹⁰
- In Africa and Asia, some visits had to be postponed or were impossible on account of the state of the roads or the rain season.

In the last two of the above cases, if the telephone number furnished by the beneficiary was not in service, it was impossible to complete the monitoring form.

There is thus a certain grey zone in interpretation of the results as no conclusions could be drawn for the 54% who did not respond to the questionnaire. However, it would appear that the remaining sample is nonetheless sufficiently representative of those in the Swiss asylum system for the following reasons:

- Most of the persons surveyed were male (89%).
- The average age was around 31 years.
- The geographical scope was similar to that of the RAS mandates received between January and June 2012, even though the regions of Asia and North Africa were slightly better represented in the monitoring results.¹¹

Figure 3 Distribution of monitoring visits conducted by age



¹⁰ IOM is subject to the directives of the UN Department of Safety and Security, which may impose travel restrictions in certain regions.

¹¹ Given the higher percentage of persons successfully contacted in Asia and North Africa, these regions are slightly overrepresented in the monitoring results as compared to the mandates received. Overall, however, the distribution remains similar: between January and June 2012, 54% of mandates concerned Sub-Saharan Africa, 22% Eastern Europe, 15% Asia, 9% North Africa, and 1% the Americas. 91% of the RAS mandates received by IOM Berne concerned male returnees. Although IOM does not keep statistics on the average age for RAS mandates received, experience shows that the vast majority of beneficiaries are aged between 25 and 40.

Tunisia (14%), Sri Lanka (13%), Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) (11%) and The Gambia (11%) were the countries with the highest number of completed questionnaires. The findings are thus largely influenced by the responses given in these four countries. However, as the geographical distribution is still relatively balanced per region, the results from this population sample should reflect the extremely varied cultural, geographical, economic and social components of the RAS global programme and correspond to the profile of beneficiaries for whom IOM received a mandate for reintegration assistance between January and June 2012.

Figure 4 Distribution of monitoring visits conducted by region

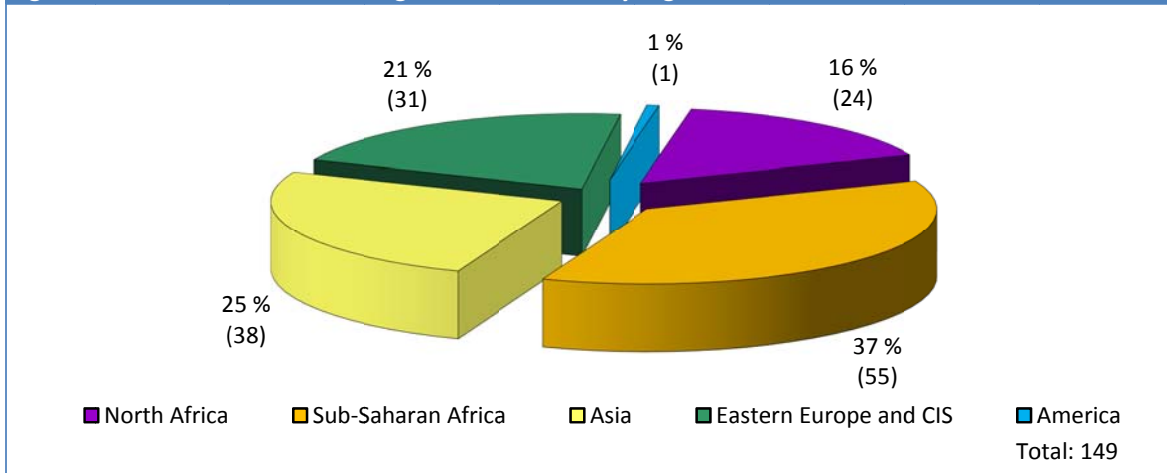


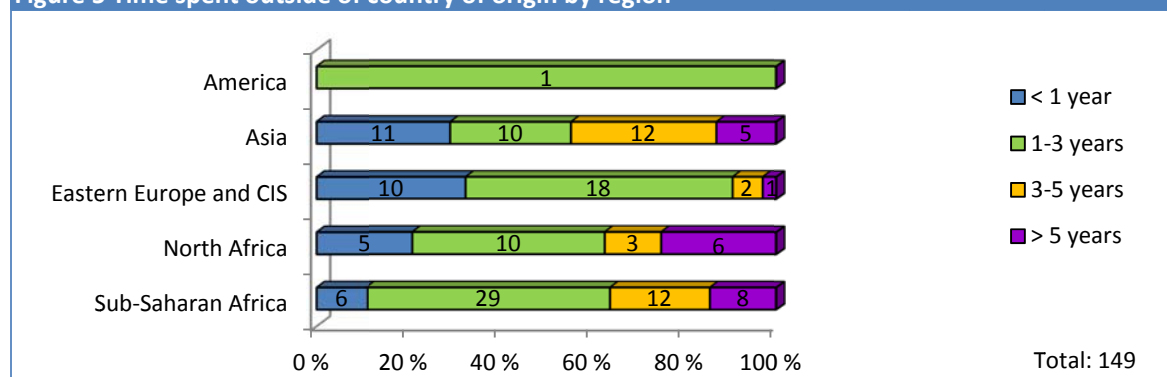
Table 1 Geographical distribution of monitoring visits made

Sub-Saharan Africa	North Africa	Eastern Europe/CIS	Asia	Americas
Burkina Faso (2)	Egypt (1)	Albania (1)	Afghanistan (2)	Mexico (1)
Cameroon (3)	Morocco (1)	Armenia (4)	China (1)	
Chad (9)	Tunisia (22)	Azerbaijan (1)	Iran (7)	
Congo (1)		Belarus (1)	Mongolia (4)	
Ghana (7)		Bosnia-Herzegovina (3)	Nepal (3)	
Guinea (2)		Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) (16)	Sri Lanka (20)	
Mali (1)		Moldavia (1)	Yemen (1)	
Nigeria (6)		Russian Federation (2)		
Rwanda (1)		Serbia (1)		
Senegal (5)		Ukraine (1)		
Sierra Leone (1)				
The Gambia (17)				

RETURN PROCESS AND SERVICES OBTAINED

Time spent outside of country of origin and in Switzerland

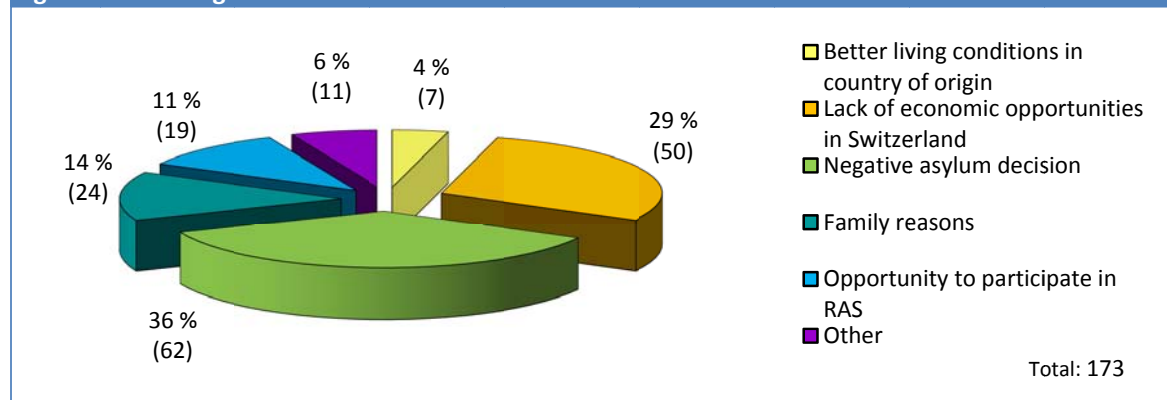
Most beneficiaries (46%) said they had lived between one and three years outside of their country of origin. As shown in the figure below, the distribution between the different time categories is relatively balanced for Asia but quite polarized for Eastern Europe, where 90% of persons had lived less than three years outside of their country of origin.¹² In North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, around 60% of returnees said they had lived less than three years and 40% more than three years. North Africa had the highest percentage of beneficiaries saying they had lived more than five years outside of their country of origin (25%), followed by Asia (13%).

Figure 5 Time spent outside of country of origin by region

Of the 149 cases, 74% were cantonal cases for which the precise amount of time spent in Switzerland is not known to IOM Berne but is, in any case, longer than three months. The remaining 26% were returned directly from a Reception and Processing Centre (RPC) within the framework of the pilot project for Sub-Saharan Africa and thus lived in Switzerland for less than three months.

Reasons for return

In most cases (36%), the reason given for initiating the return process was a failed asylum application. However, there were also other significant reasons for voluntary return, such as the lack of prospects in Switzerland (29%), personal/family reasons (14%) and the possibility of availing of return assistance (11%).

Figure 6 Reasons given for return

¹² "< 1 year": 32% and "1-3 years": 58%

Counselling on the return decision

Regarding the preparations made prior to returning, more than 95% of respondents to the questionnaire confirmed they had received sufficient information from the return counsellors and that the terms of payment were clear prior to leaving. The only reasons stated for dissatisfaction referred to a lack of caring for beneficiaries in the return counselling offered or the fact that some questions were evaded by referring a client to the local IOM office upon returning. One person, however, appreciated the fact that, when the counsellor could not appropriately answer their questions, he organized conference calls with the local IOM office to get more information from the field.

Departure assistance

Payment of departure assistance (cash handed over at the airport in Switzerland) worked out well in all cases. Beneficiaries used this assistance primarily to cover day-to-day expenses or to invest in their reintegration project.

IOM assistance

The beneficiaries who filled in the questionnaire said they contacted the IOM local office on average one month after their return. As mentioned in the introduction, this result does not include those who did not respond to the questionnaire or those who never contacted IOM upon returning. Overall, those who obtained IOM assistance were satisfied or very satisfied (93%) with the services of the IOM local office. The amount of reintegration assistance given, often said to be inadequate, was in some cases cited as the reason for dissatisfaction with IOM; in fairness, however, this cannot be attributed to IOM as the amount is defined in Swiss Asylum Law and determined on a case-by-case basis by the FOM.

"In my case, everything was correctly handled, and delivery was as I wished. My business is running quite well. Thanks to the assistance I was able to open up my own business. I would like to host IOM colleagues for a coffee as a sign of appreciation."

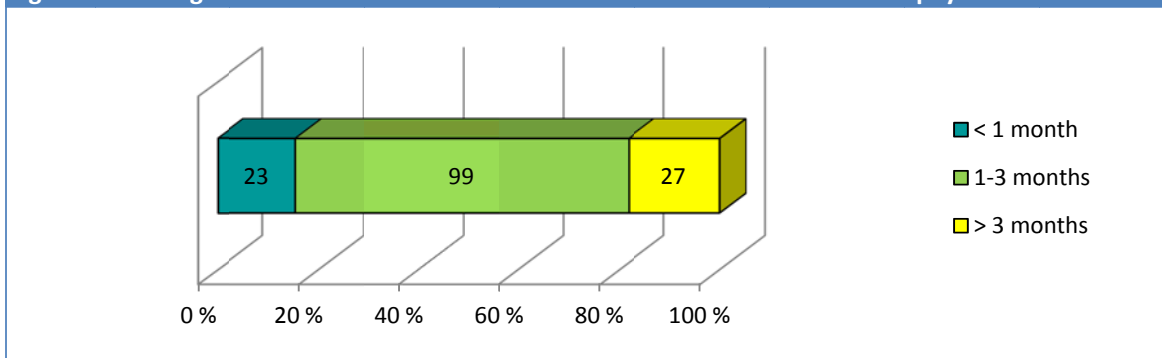
Male participant, who returned to Kosovo

Difficulties encountered in the payment process

19% of beneficiaries said they had encountered administrative problems such as obtaining the necessary documents, waiting for a reply in the case of project changes, or problems with suppliers, the project partner, etc.

In the majority of cases (66%), payment was made between one and three months after initial contact was made with the IOM local office. In those cases where payment took longer than three months, the main reasons were that the beneficiaries had changed the project after returning (25%), the required documents were difficult to obtain (19%), or they were undecided about the type of project they wanted to implement (13%).

Figure 7 Time lag between initial contact with the IOM local office and the first payment



PERSONAL SITUATION

Current place of residence

90% of respondents to the questionnaire were still living in the place of return nine months after returning. 7% were living elsewhere in the country of return. In 2% of cases (three people), the beneficiaries were abroad. In these cases, a certain amount of information could be obtained from family members or the project partner. These figures are biased as they include only those who could be contacted at the time of monitoring, i.e. a total of 149 people. For a more realistic overview of the beneficiaries' current place of residence, we would have to also include those people who could not be contacted at the time of monitoring.¹³

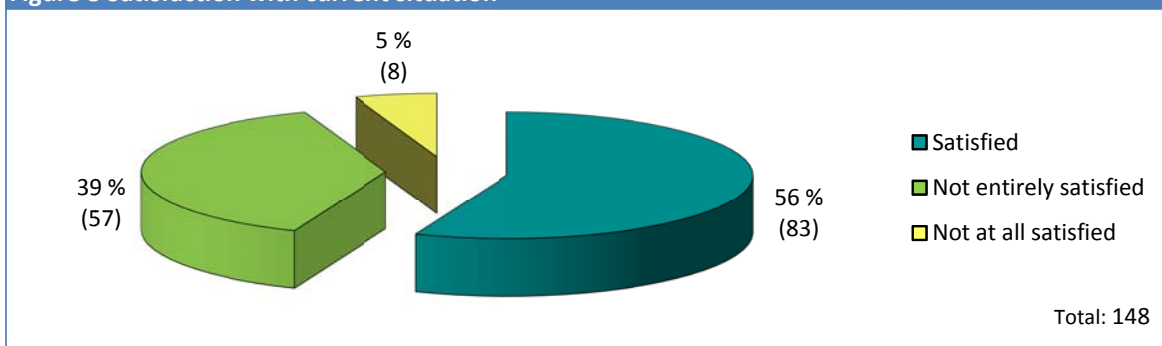
Current situation

89% of those surveyed said that reintegration assistance was useful or even very useful. Moreover, 79% of respondents confirmed that the reintegration project met their immediate needs.¹⁴

56% of those who participated in the monitoring process said they were satisfied with their current situation. 39% were not completely satisfied, and only 5% were dissatisfied with their current situation. The main reasons given for dissatisfaction were (in order of importance):

1. the difficult financial situation (38%)
2. general disappointment regarding the return (17%)
3. their personal/family situation (15%) and accommodation (15%)

Figure 8 Satisfaction with current situation



90% of beneficiaries who participated in the monitoring process said they faced certain difficulties in their reintegration process, particularly (in order of importance):

¹³ See Figure 1 of this report.

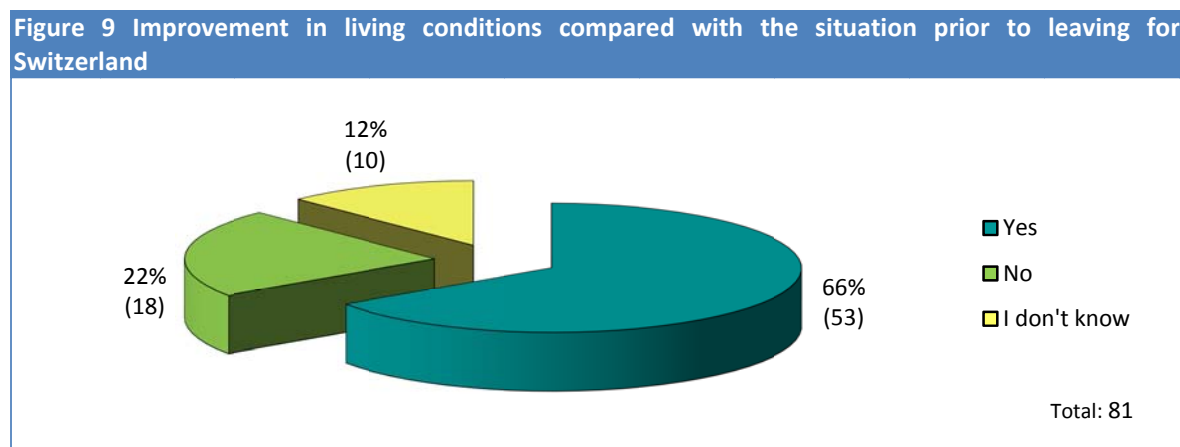
¹⁴ 133 people responded to the question on the extent to which the reintegration project met their basic needs.

1. the low income level (38%)
2. family problems (18%)
3. political and security risk in the country of return (15%)

These difficulties clearly correspond to the reasons for dissatisfaction with the current situation, indicating that, although the financial factor seems to dominate, this is not the sole determinant for a returnee's satisfaction with their general situation.

73% of respondents (135 people) stated that they were financially independent. However, the concept of independence is not defined in the same way by all beneficiaries. Some said they provided financial support to family members, while others stated that they could meet their own needs only. This question thus enables us to assess a beneficiary's economic wellbeing some months after returning only with additional information.

Moreover, of the 81 respondents to the question "Do you believe you live in better circumstances today than before leaving for Switzerland?"¹⁵, 66% answered that their circumstances were indeed better at the time of monitoring. 12% could not decide ("Don't know") and 22% thought that their situation was worse.



The reasons given for the improved situation were, in most cases, the fact of being independent, freelance, or having an optimistic outlook as a result of their business project. Others mentioned an improvement in the security situation or in the condition of the roads and means of communication in their country of origin after returning. Some simply felt happier at home, living closer to their families.

"Since launching my project, I feel more stable and more responsible. My family gave me a lot of support."

Male, returned to Tunisia

Those who said that the situation was not better cited economic reasons (the reintegration project did not enable them to earn as much or more money than before leaving) or personal reasons (difficulties with social and cultural reintegration) after living abroad.

¹⁵ Some offices used an older version of the RAS monitoring form which did not include this question.

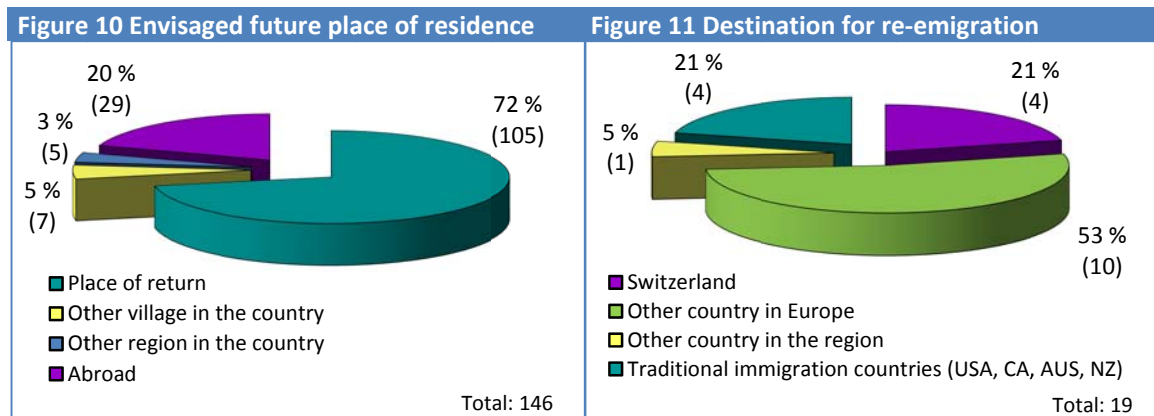
"I'm still in a very insecure financial situation. I just can't see any future in my country. I'm 45 years old and I really don't see how I could start a family in the current situation. I still have the equipment I got from IOM but I don't feel like trying for another year, after all the losses I've already made."

Male participant, who returned to Tunisia

Plans for the future

72% of those asked were planning stay at their place of return in the future, and 8% were considering moving to another village or another region in the country of return, while 20% were thinking of moving abroad again (29 people).

Among those planning to move abroad, 19 stated where they wanted to go. The destinations most frequently cited were the European Union, followed by Switzerland or a country with a history of immigration (primarily USA or Canada).

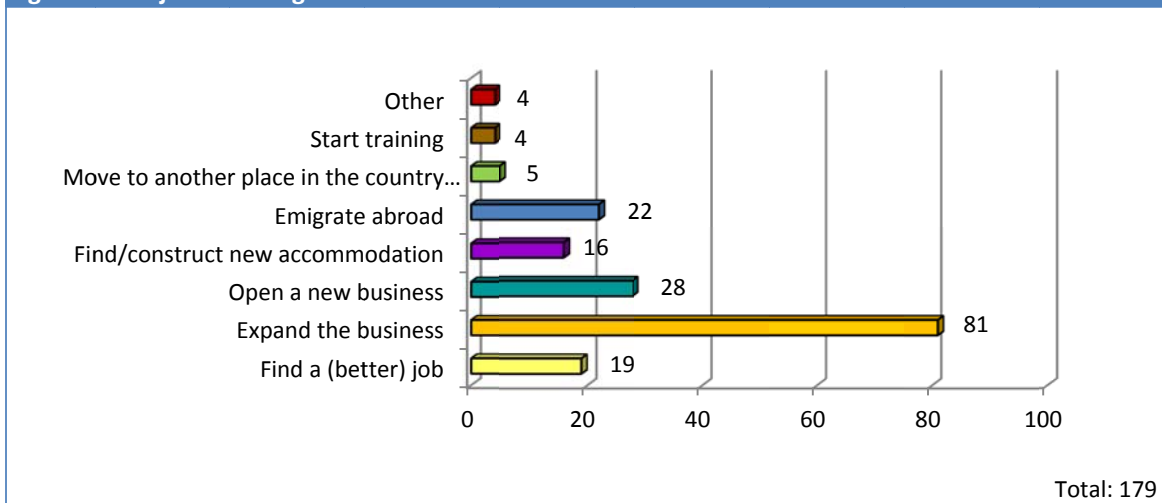


More specifically, beneficiaries' plans for the future were largely focused on their working life: expanding the project, opening another small business, or finding a job.

"I'm very happy with my current situation. I work hard to improve my standard of living. I can see a future here now and could envisage getting married and starting a family."

Male participant, who returned to Tunisia

Figure 12 Projects envisaged for the future

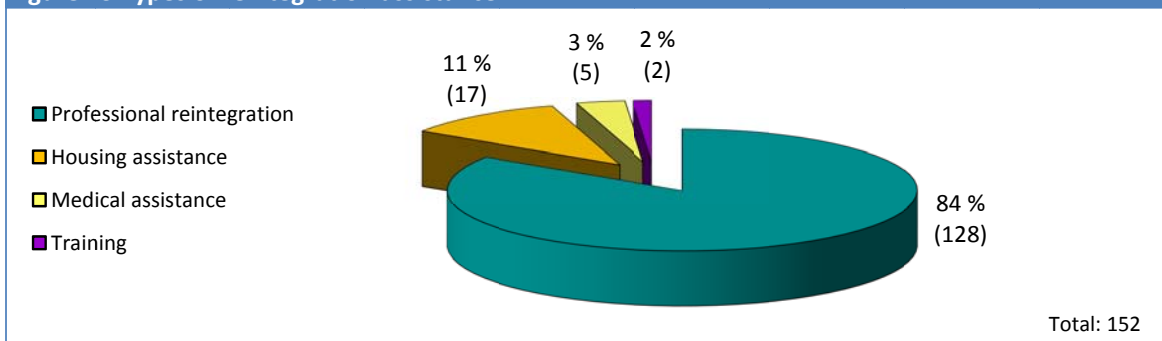


REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

Reintegration assistance was primarily used for realizing business-related projects (84%).¹⁶ The choice of the type of project depends largely on individual needs and choices. Nonetheless, we can note the following trends:

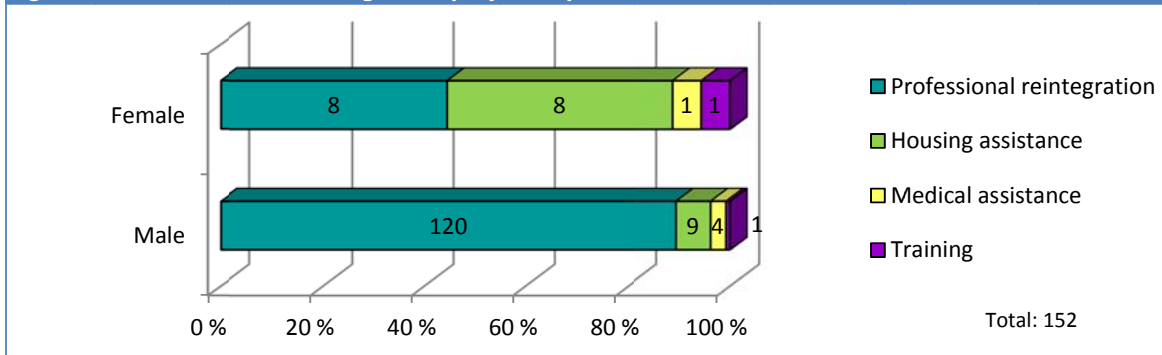
- Statistically, women have made more diversified choices concerning the type of reintegration assistance: 44% of women chose a business-related project, another 44% invested in an accommodation project, and the rest opted for medical support or vocational training (6% each). Of the male respondents, 90% chose a business-related project. However, the limited job opportunities open to women in certain countries and their personal situation should be taken into account when interpreting these results. Frequently, the beneficiaries' personal situation is also a factor in their choice of reintegration project (e.g. single mothers).
- Accommodation assistance was not among the most popular (only 11% of reintegration projects). This type of project was mainly taken up by beneficiaries from Eastern Europe and the CIS (40% from this region, compared with only up to 8% from the other regions).

Figure 13 Types of reintegration assistance



¹⁶ Of the 149 people who filled in the questionnaire, 147 responded to the question on the type of reintegration assistance received. As five beneficiaries had realized a dual-purpose project (e.g. both business-related and medical), the results below are based on a total of 152 projects.

Figure 14 Distribution of reintegration projects by sex



Accommodation assistance

Of the 17 people who requested accommodation assistance, 15 answered the question concerning their current accommodation. At the time of monitoring, most of these people (80%) were still living in the accommodation that was financed, renovated or furnished using accommodation assistance. The main reason for moving cited by the remaining 20% was the cost (the accommodation became too expensive once the grant was used up). All respondents to this question said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received.

"The groundwork of the house was built before and with the reintegration grant, we continued with the first floor. But we had to borrow money from relatives in order to complete the first floor. The grant was not enough. But it was a good start. We are very happy that we have our house now."

Female participant, who returned to Kosovo

Medical assistance

Of the 327 RAS mandates subject to monitoring, 15 included a medical component; however, monitoring was possible in only eight cases and, of these, only five people completed the section of the questionnaire on medical support.

"For returnees like me, it is important to combine medical support with an economic activity so as to ensure a steady income."

Male participant, who returned to Morocco

All respondents said they could continue their medical treatment after returning to their country of origin and all said they had access to basic medical services. Three people stated that they were satisfied with the medical assistance, while one beneficiary said that he would have needed more money to cover the costs of his medication.

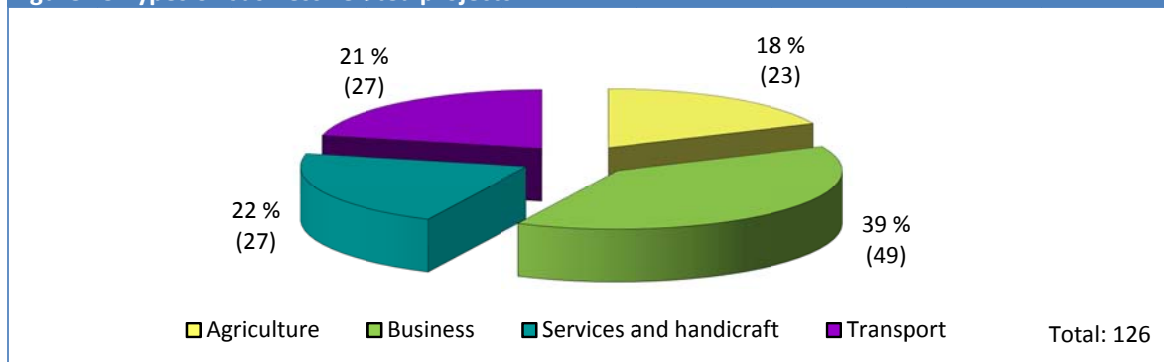
Assistance for a training project

Of the two beneficiaries who opted for training, one did an apprenticeship and the other took English lessons. They were both satisfied, and one said that his new skills would open up new prospects for him in his job search.

Assistance for a business-related project¹⁷

39% of them realized a project in the retail business. Among the rest, the distribution of types of business-related projects was relatively well balanced.

Figure 15 Types of business-related projects

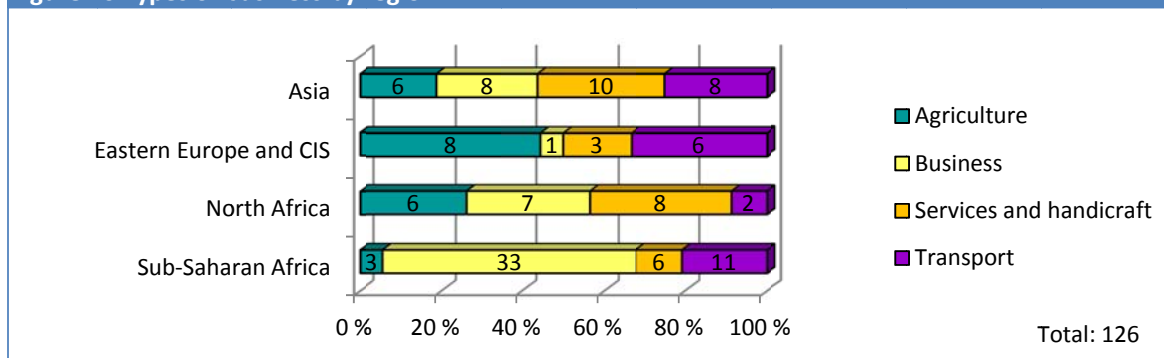


The various categories covered the following types of projects:

- Agriculture: Plantations/crops, livestock breeding, fishing, etc.
- Retail: Small grocery shops, newspaper kiosks, etc.
- Trades and services: Restaurants, doctors, wood workshops, car repairs, karaoke, etc.
- Transportation: Taxis, deliveries, drivers

There were marked regional differences in the choice of jobs: in Sub-Saharan Africa, 62% of beneficiaries realized a retail project, compared with only 6% in Eastern Europe and the CIS, where there was greater emphasis on agricultural projects (44%) and transportation (33%).

Figure 16 Types of business by region

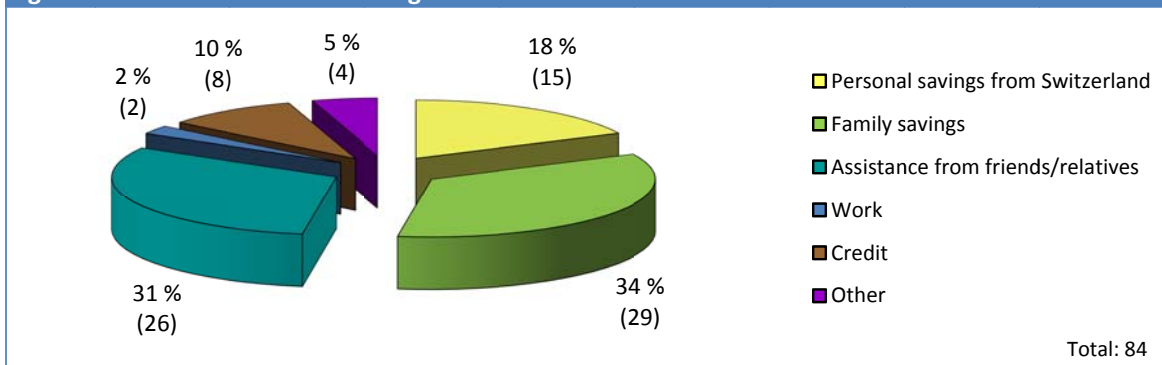


75% of respondents set up their own business, while 18% invested in a family business and 7% went into partnership with an outside party. Family businesses (especially in agriculture) were most popular in Eastern Europe. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 94% of beneficiaries launched their own business project.

84 people (65%) invested additional funds in their reintegration project. The main sources of additional capital were family savings or financial support from the beneficiary's family and/or friends. Only eight of the beneficiaries secured and used a bank loan to consolidate their resources. This figure gives an idea of the importance of family support in the success of a reintegration project.

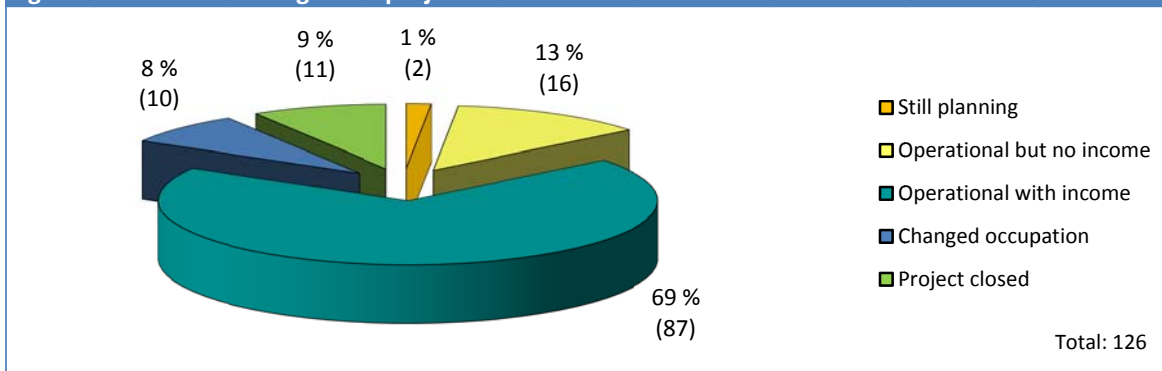
¹⁷ A total of 130 people said they had realized a business-related project. However, those surveyed did not respond to all questions systematically and correctly. Some minor statistical variations should therefore be taken into account. The percentages given always refer to the total number of valid responses.

Figure 17 Other sources of financing



At the time of monitoring, 69% of the business-related projects were operational and generating income for the beneficiaries. Only 1% were still in the planning phase; this figure was 8% for the 2009/2010 period, which may indicate that a visit after nine months instead of six leads to a lower number of incomplete projects at the time of visiting and thus provides more information on their success or the reasons for their failure.

Figure 18 Status of reintegration projects



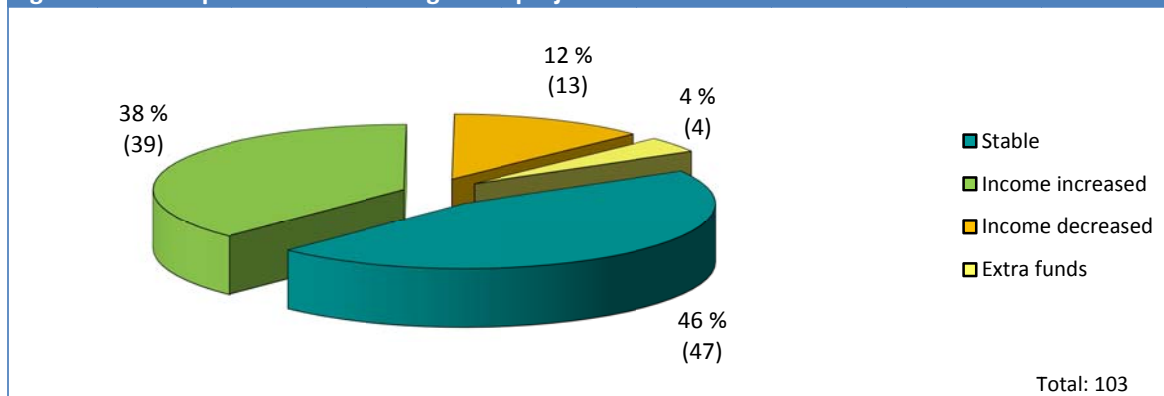
Of the 11 beneficiaries who abandoned their project, six had found a new job. The main reasons cited by the 10 beneficiaries who changed their project was that too little income was being generated and that they hoped to have more success with a new project.

"While I was in Switzerland, prior to returning to Kosovo, I was thinking of using the reintegration grant to purchase a car and provide taxi services. But after arrival, I realized that the competition is very tough in that business, and with the assistance of IOM staff, after several counselling sessions, I decided to use the grant for a farming business. From this business I have a modest income but I am happy."

Male participant, who returned to Kosovo

103 people gave information on how their project was developing. Most of them (88%) said their income remained stable or had increased, or that they had been able to make additional investments since launching their project. Relatively few beneficiaries (12%) saw a decline in their sales figures.

Figure 19 Development of the reintegration project



Likewise, 80% of respondents said they could live on the income generated by their project or that it at least covered their basic needs.¹⁸ For 64% of beneficiaries, the income generated enabled them to give financial support to family members (at least three persons per beneficiary).¹⁹ It should be noted, however, that these two indicators are subjective in nature and that an estimate of the number of people who can be financially supported also depends largely on the cultural and family system.

44% of respondents said that they employed others in their business (with an average of two employees per beneficiary).²⁰ In comparison, more jobs were created in the agricultural and commercial sectors than in transportation, trades and services.

Regarding those projects that had run into difficulties, the main reasons given were as follows (in order of importance).²¹

1. Lack of resources to consolidate the business (28%)
2. Local competition too strong (27%)
3. Inflation and low level of commercial activity in the region (8%)

As with all of the findings presented in this report, the objectivity of the replies should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results; most respondents blamed the failure of their projects on external factors or a lack of resources, although the IOM staff conducting the follow-up often noted a lack of experience among beneficiaries. Only two beneficiaries mentioned their own shortcomings as possible reasons for failure. The inclusion of a training component in Switzerland or on site, as a form of individual assistance from Switzerland, would probably help beneficiaries and increase their chances of success.

BRIEF ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION OF THE RESULTS FOR 2012-2013

Based on the population sampled in the survey, it is not statistically possible to conclude that any individual factor (type of business, region of origin, level of education, gender, etc.) is solely responsible for a project's success. Each beneficiary's individual circumstances must therefore be taken into consideration when planning a return. The level of education, experience, origin and gender as well as the returnee's state of health, family (i.e. whether a burden or support) and motivation combine to form a complex influence on an individual's chances of success. Reintegration assistance should be regarded as start-up capital enabling the beneficiary to get the process in motion, and not as a

¹⁸ 106 people responded to the question on whether or not they could live on their income.

¹⁹ 108 people responded the question on whether or not they could support others with their income.

²⁰ 113 people responded to the question on whether or not they employed others in their business.

²¹ 43 people gave reasons as to why their project was in difficulty.

guarantee of successful reintegration. We note that there is a relatively strong statistical link between the feeling of financial independence and general satisfaction as well as the desire to re-emigrate. Thus, the more financially stable a beneficiary feels after returning, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their situation and the less interested they will be in making another migration attempt. We should remember that returnees' general financial situation is one of the main difficulties they encounter in the reintegration process. It seems, therefore, that the best means of facilitating beneficiaries' long-term reintegration would be to alleviate this problem by offering them the possibility of generating income, carving out their place in society and seeing a real future for themselves.

However, business-related reintegration should not be seen as the only measure: as mentioned above, those who received accommodation assistance and medical support also showed a high level of satisfaction with their current situation. Sometimes, meeting the most urgent of basic needs can be the key to a successful reintegration

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO PERIODS OF SYSTEMATIC MONITORING

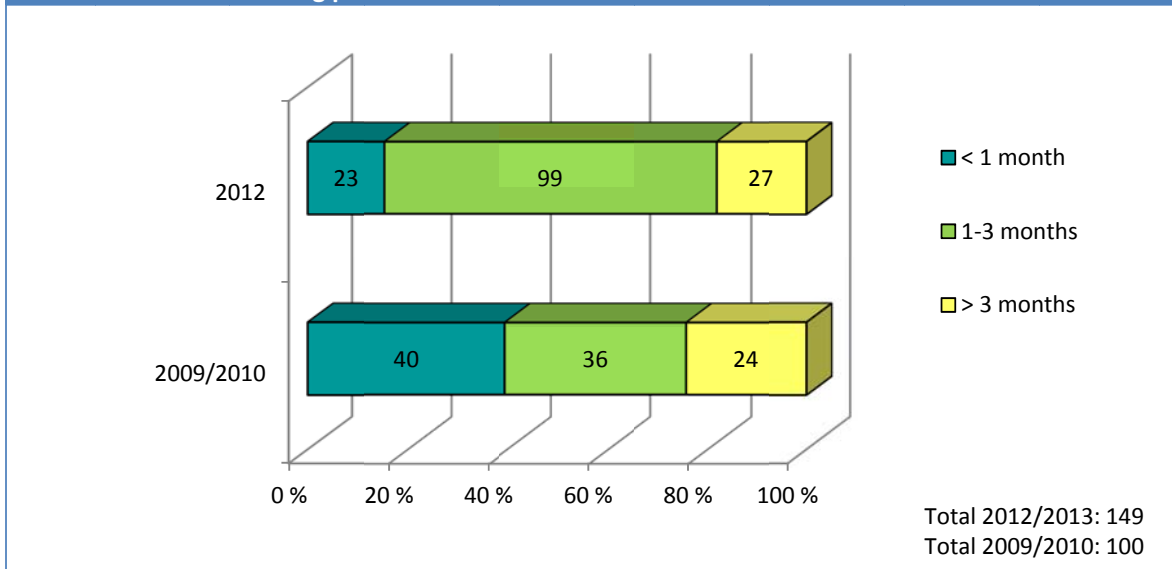
Overall, it should be noted that the geographical distribution changed slightly between the 2009/2010 period and the 2012/2013 period. The regions of North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa increased in proportion, at the expense of Eastern Europe and Asia. These changes resulted from international events (Arab Spring, crisis in Libya, etc.) and changes to the legislation (visa requirement waived for certain countries in the Balkans, suspension of returns to Syria, etc.).

In terms of the monitoring results, the most striking difference is the rate of forms collected in 2012/2013 compared with the previous period (46% as opposed to 65%). The reasons for this difference have already been addressed in the section on "Method and general overview" in this report. Moreover, it should be noted that in 2012/2013, persons returning from the RPCs to an African country were eligible for reintegration assistance (which was not the case during the first period of systematic monitoring), and West Africa recorded the lowest rate of monitoring. Interestingly, however, there was a significant link between the type of return (from the RPCs or from the cantons) and overall satisfaction as well as the desire to re-emigrate. Returnees from the RPCs tended to be more satisfied with their post-return situation than those from the cantons and were thus less interested in moving abroad again. This information should be viewed with caution, however, given the fact that so many returnees from the RPCs could not be contacted during the monitoring phase. There is thus a large grey zone in interpretation of this result. The main difference between returns from the RPCs and from the cantons is the length of time spent in Switzerland: returns from the RPCs have to be made quite quickly (generally within less than three months), while those from the cantons necessarily imply a stay of at least three months.

As predicted in the previous report, visits after nine months led to a decrease in the number of projects not yet started at the time of monitoring and gave a better overview of the impact of assistance and its sustainability. However, it had an adverse effect on the number of beneficiaries that could be contacted. The longer the time lag after first assistance was provided, the more difficult it is to maintain contact with all of the beneficiaries; moreover, those who can be contacted are generally the ones who have succeeded in their project and reached stability in their return. Ideally, there should be one follow-up visit after four to five months and another one after nine months, but this would generate additional costs. Furthermore, given that beneficiaries take an average of one month to contact IOM and, in the vast majority of cases, it takes another one to three months to make the payment, a visit nine months after return provides an opportunity to obtain information on projects that have been running for five to seven months, which would seem to be a minimum to evaluate the impact of reintegration assistance.

Very few differences were noted regarding the results. Whether in terms of the current place of residence, difficulties encountered, future plans, or regarding the current situation, the results regarding the impact on beneficiaries are practically identical for the two periods. In terms of the services provided, satisfaction with the return counselling and IOM was very high in both 2009/2010 and 2012/2013. It seems, however, that there was a longer time lag in 2012/2013 between initial contact with IOM and the date of the first payment. The percentage of cases paid in less than a month was more than halved. However, the rate of payment after more than three months remained relatively stable. There is thus a concentration of initial payments made between one and three months after initial contact.

Figure 20 Time lag between initial contact with IOM and the first payment - Comparison between the first and second monitoring periods



"The project is good and needs to be continued so that other people can benefit. The only problem is that many people do not believe that the grant will be available for a reintegration project upon return. If some returnees could be used as agents in getting to stranded migrants in Europe, more people would be willing to return."

Male participant, who returned to Ghana

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are partly based on the statistics presented above but also on the comments and experience of the IOM missions in countries of origin and in Berne.²² Most of the measures proposed are exploratory in nature and should be validated by other projects complementary to the RAS programme.

1. Importance of the individual component in the reintegration process

The success of the reintegration project depends largely on the person realizing it. The interaction between the beneficiary's skills, education, family support, health, etc. plays an important role in its chances of success. It is thus crucial to ensure individual support. At this level, the flexibility allowed for the type of reintegration project should be maintained.

2. Reinforce the support available

a. Counselling:

Return counselling given in Switzerland should be maintained and may even benefit from more specific communication with IOM on the possibilities of assistance in certain countries or by way of certain programmes. More frequent use could be made of the RIF²³ project and telephone calls organized by IOM. The RIF is useful because it enables the beneficiary to prepare the project before leaving and to anticipate the difficulties that potential beneficiaries may face. Also, visits to Switzerland by IOM colleagues working in countries of origin should be encouraged as these provide an opportunity for a subject-specific exchange of information with Swiss partners (see Recommendation no. 8).

b. Training:

Given that the vast majority of beneficiaries are young men with a relatively low level of education, it would be important to encourage them to attend training courses in small business management and/or development. To motivate beneficiaries to participate in such courses, it should first be clarified whether such courses already exist in certain countries and then make them a precondition for obtaining reintegration assistance. In this respect, courses should be offered in regional areas and small towns and not only in the capital (see Recommendation no. 8). Longer-term vocational training options (school, skills development, etc.) are often rejected by beneficiaries as they neither generate nor guarantee any revenue in the immediate future. One possible solution, particularly for very young beneficiaries, would be to offer cash subsidies throughout the training course and maybe even make the final payment subject to the beneficiary passing the exams. Finally, given the value placed on experience gained abroad, the possibility of enabling those waiting for a decision to participate in courses while still in Switzerland could also be envisaged.

c. Follow-up:

The possibility of developing reintegration plans after return should be more widespread. Beneficiaries often need to talk to their families (who are often partners in the project or resources for the associated skills) and sometimes reacquaint themselves with the country before embarking on a project. Once the payment has been made, follow-up visits should be made systematically to measure the progress of the project and determine the needs several months after start-up. Support could be offered if the project needs to be reoriented/realigned or if additional funds are necessary to improve or develop the project. However, this type of measure should be accompanied by appropriate financial capacities (see Recommendation no. 8).

²² Cf. International Organization for Migration and the Swiss Red Cross: *Ideen zur zukünftigen Ausgestaltung der Massnahmen zur Förderung der Ausreise, der Rückkehr und Reintegration*, Berne, 2013.

²³ The Return Information Fund (RIF) is financed by the FOM and administered by IOM. It seeks to provide impartial, up-to-date information on the reintegration possibilities in the return country.

3. **Create links with micro-credit companies, financial institutions, etc.**

This would enable beneficiaries who have already started a project to obtain additional funding and consolidate their project. The possibility of signing framework agreements could also be extended for countries in which such structures exist. However, experience shows that access to credit is very limited for migrants, who are regarded as a risk profile. Realizing pilot projects complementary to the RAS programme to test the possibilities could be envisaged if the financial means are made available (see Recommendation no. 8).

4. **Increase the amount of reintegration assistance to increase the chances of success**

Although grateful for the assistance received, most beneficiaries said that the amount of CHF 3,000 was often not sufficient to set up a sustainable project. The new asylum directive has opened doors by offering greater flexibility for certain categories of persons. However, a higher amount of assistance could also be envisaged for projects that are particularly promising or those for which it has been demonstrated that CHF 3,000 is not enough. In fact, while the amount of reintegration assistance is not, in itself, a factor in the return decision, it does play an important role in realizing a reintegration project and in its sustainability.

5. **Continue to encourage group work**

Whether in terms of support, project implementation or seeking funds, pooling beneficiaries together is an option often rejected by beneficiaries themselves because of a lack of confidence. However, sharing experience, know-how, resources and risk can turn out to be advantageous. Loan applications from micro-credit institutions could also be facilitated if beneficiaries teamed up together. Finally, putting past beneficiaries who have led a successful reintegration project in contact with current beneficiaries who have recently returned (in a mentoring system) could greatly improve the chances of a project's success (see Recommendation no. 8).

6. **Strengthen links with the public and private sectors**

Certain private companies could be interested in hiring returnees from Switzerland and even offering them a training place. In the public sector, help should be given in searching for support programmes and their terms of participation so as to develop synergies between the RAS programme and national programmes. However, this type of measure should be accompanied by appropriate financial capacities (see Recommendation no. 8).

7. **Keep the monitoring visits at nine months after return**

Although this measure reduces the number of people that can be contacted during the monitoring period, it is still preferable to maintain it as this is the minimum time needed to observe the impact of reintegration assistance.

8. **Ensure availability of the financial resources required to build staff capacity and implement the above recommendations.**

The quality of case monitoring, which depends largely on the resources made available, is crucial to the successful implementation of reintegration assistance. Some IOM offices do not have the staff and infrastructure needed to implement return projects. The activities recommended above for helping to improve reintegration assistance (close monitoring, search for national assistance programmes, negotiation of framework agreements with microfinance companies, implementation of a mentor system, etc.) require certain additional investments in terms of staff and logistics, which should possibly be treated as separate projects ancillary to the RAS programme.

As the statistics presented in the monitoring report are only general in nature, the following annexes provide more precise information about reintegration challenges and opportunities in specific countries: The Gambia, Sri Lanka, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) and Tunisia. These countries were selected for the following reasons:

- relatively high level of voluntary return take-up
- broad geographical coverage
- the FOM's strategic interest

The annexes take the form of single-page data sheets outlining the key points. They have been produced with input from the IOM regional offices, based on a series of guiding questions tailored by IOM Berne and the FOM.

A.1 THE GAMBIA

Beneficiary profile:

- Young men aged between 18 and 30. Most have not completed secondary schooling. Some have never gone to school.

Context:

- 46.5% literacy rate (UNESCO)
- Ranked 165 on the 2012 Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Expected economic growth of 5.6% in 2012/2013, driven mainly by the agricultural sector (African Development Bank).
- Lack of natural resources. Economic activity is concentrated in the Greater Banjul area. Flourishing tourism industry on the Atlantic coast. Agriculture has much potential throughout the country.
- Roads in poor condition.
- Existence of highly experienced microfinance institutions.

Challenges and opportunities:

- Flourishing tourism on the Atlantic coast raises the cost of living and exposes young Gambians to a life of wealth and luxury, making them more inclined to want to move abroad.
- The social structure influenced by the Muslim culture in which a man may have up to five wives means that the head of the family has a large number of dependants.
- Young men are under pressure to seek a better life abroad and provide financial support. Families often get into debt or sell off property to enable the young to leave.
- Returning home is seen as a failure and a source of shame. Many Gambians therefore want to move back to Europe, and the priority is on reimbursing the family and their travel debts after returning.

Reintegration assistance:

- According to the microfinance institutions (SDF, GAWFA), start-up capital of CHF 3,000 is sufficient for a small business, particularly if additional microloans are also available. Beneficiaries, however, consider this amount insufficient. Indeed, some projects, such as starting a taxi business, cost around CHF 5,000 to 6,000.
- Main types of project in The Gambia: taxi, farming, retail shop
- Particularly risky projects:
 - o Taxi: Profitable only if a good vehicle can be obtained and if the beneficiary himself drives the taxi. There are practically no possibilities for expansion. The market is almost at saturation point. Accidents can lead to high repair costs.
 - o Livestock breeding: Requires high start-up investment; long time lag before the business becomes profitable. Working capital and a good sense of organization are thus necessary.
 - o Retail shop: Requires managerial skills; difficulty in dealing with social pressure (e.g. family members expecting goods for free).
- Promising projects: Agriculture (vegetable growing), fishing, fattening farm.
- Particular profile: Very young beneficiaries can get a basic education or an apprenticeship.

A.2. SRI LANKA

Beneficiary profile:

- Mainly men, aged 35 or over, primary education.
- Medical problems are frequent.
- Often have lived more than five years outside of their country. Difficulties in readapting upon return.

Context:

- Ranked 27 among countries with the highest emigration rate in 2012 (World Bank)
- 30 years of internal conflict led to large migration flows from the North and East of the country to Europe, especially between 2000 and 2008.
- The level of poverty is another factor driving emigration.

Challenges and opportunities:

- There has been a distinct improvement in mobility, means of communication, as well as access to the health system, banks and financial institutions in rural areas. Infrastructure development throughout the island (rural and urban zones) is creating many revenue-generating opportunities.
- Increase in the cost of living.

Reintegration assistance:

- Obtaining an ID card, business licence, invoices, etc. can sometimes be problematic.
- The beneficiary's individual experience and skills play an important role in the project's success. Many opt for projects known to generate money quickly (e.g. tuk tuk). This type of project often results in losses or a quick resale of the equipment for an immediate profit.
- Beneficiaries should be encouraged to attend training courses (some offered by IOM) in small-business management and development.
- CHF 3,000 is not sufficient to start up a project, particularly for tuk tuks, small shops or fishing projects. It is really only enough to obtain very basic equipment.
- Particularly risky projects: Tuk tuk, buying any sort of vehicle in general. Unless the beneficiary was already working in this sector before leaving Sri Lanka. Accidents can lead to high repair costs.
- Promising projects: Rice mills, food processing, nursery gardens. However, it takes more time to generate revenue.
- Cultural and social barriers prevent beneficiaries from investing in maintenance/cleaning projects or restaurants, despite having acquired experience in these areas in Europe.
- Particular profile: It is very difficult for older people to realize a reintegration project. The best option is to invest in a business owned by a family member, who then takes care of the beneficiary.

A.3. KOSOVO (UNDER UNSCR 1244)

Beneficiary profile:

- Mainly men, aged between 20 and 40, primary or secondary education.
- Between one and five years outside of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

Context:

- Slow growth, poor institutional development, lack of business opportunities, ethnic tensions.
- Very young population (50% of the population aged under 25) with a high unemployment rate (60% to 70%, depending on the source).
- A large and successful diaspora abroad, sending remittances and strengthening the belief that migration to the West brings financial security.
- Cost of living relatively high with respect to the average wage. Even those who have found a job often find it difficult to meet their basic needs.

Challenges and opportunities:

- Return is seen as a failure, and emigrants returning to Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) face stigmatization. The return experience is emotionally difficult, and beneficiaries are subject to reverse culture shock.
- Ethnic tensions often pose a barrier to reintegration.
- Access to credit is restricted, and interest rates are very high on account of the volatile economic situation. Microfinance institutions grant loans mainly in rural zones, but on very unattractive terms for lenders.
- Family plays a very important role. Those who have family in the country often find reintegration easier.

Reintegration assistance:

- Job opportunities for poorly educated people are very limited. Setting up a business is often the only option for beneficiaries, but many lack the necessary skills and experience.
- Given the high rental expenses and equipment costs, CHF 3,000 is not enough to set up a business-related project. Supplementary investments are necessary but often increase the risk of indebtedness if the reintegration project fails. Government subsidies are available for agricultural projects.
- Promising projects:
 - o Agriculture (livestock rearing), construction, beauty salon.
 - o Strong demand for know-how in the foodstuffs industry and in electrical engineering.
- Particularly risky projects:
 - o Taxi: The amount available under reintegration assistance is not sufficient.
 - o Internet café: Very low demand as most homes are now online.
 - o Grocery shop: Too much competition from supermarkets.
- Particular profile: Those with health problems often face limited treatment possibilities in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

A.4. TUNISIA

Beneficiary profile:

- Young men aged between 20 and 40. Most have not completed secondary schooling.
- From different regions: Tunis and inland regions (Kairouan, Kasserine, Sidi Bou Said)

Context:

- Tunisia is a middle-income country with a largely urban population.
- The 2011 revolution highlighted the extent of the country's structural frailties, with regional disparities, unemployment among graduates, and corruption all contributing to emigration.
- Unemployment among those under 29 rose from 25% to 38% between 2005 and 2011.
- Young men are under pressure to seek a better life abroad and provide financial support for their families. Return is seen as a failure and is thus often poorly understood and accepted by family and friends.
- Large migration flows to Europe reinforce the image of migration as a means of escape or an opportunity.
- Socio-political tension and growing security problems, particularly in the regions.

Challenges and opportunities:

- Setting up a business is often the only option for beneficiaries, but many lack the necessary skills and experience.
- Interest rates on micro-loans are very high. Loans from the Tunisian Solidarity Bank, which offers more reasonable interest rates, are very difficult to obtain.
- Lack of governmental structures for supporting beneficiaries; weakness of civil society. Cooperation between the government and NGOs is still very fragile.
- The increase in the cost of living in Tunisia complicates the reintegration process. Beneficiaries are sometimes tempted to recuperate the grant as cash and use it to pay off debts, bills and other expenses (schooling, medical, etc.).

Reintegration assistance:

- In the IOM's experience, CHF 3,000 would be sufficient to start up a small project. However, beneficiaries see this as too little to sustain their project.
- The beneficiary's age, experience and individual skills play an important role in the project's success, as does family and community support.
- Beneficiaries are encouraged to take training in managing small businesses to improve their skills. However, very few have opted to do so as it is not a mandatory condition. Those with a certain level of education and who have followed such courses are generally satisfied with them and would recommend them.
- Main types of projects: Services and retail shops (restaurant, hairdressers, garage, grocery, etc.), followed by agricultural projects (livestock rearing and fishing).
- Particularly risky projects:
 - o Livestock breeding: Requires high start-up investment; long time lag before the business becomes profitable. Working capital and a good sense of organization are thus necessary.
 - o Grocery: Intense competition from supermarkets and high costs if the beneficiary has to rent and fit out the premises.
- Promising projects: Second-hand clothes shops, investing in an existing project (partnership).

Map 1 General overview of the forms collected by country



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