



Facilitating Sustainable Reintegration through Business Support in Nigeria

The sustainability of small enterprises, set up by the beneficiaries of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in Nigeria, is often negatively affected by the difficult economic environment. Whilst the active trade in larger cities offers many opportunities, returnees are confronted with various difficulties linked to infrastructure and high living costs, fuelled by a growing economic crisis. In addition, the recent COVID-19 situation has and will continue affecting the business environment.

In contrast, the level of motivation, determination, effort, educational background, know-how and experience of the returnees are important factors for the successful implementation of their business projects. Many AVRR beneficiaries have had experience in doing business in Nigeria but often **lack basic entrepreneurial skills** and knowledge of finance and administration. Moreover, returnees have stated that they struggle running their small enterprise or are unable to expand their business due to the **lack of capital**.

To contribute to the sustainability of economic reintegration, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched a project in 2017 with funding from the Swiss Government. The aim is to strengthen and increase the business skills and durability of the individual projects set up by voluntary returnees from Switzerland — and transit countries — to Nigeria (including migrants in vulnerable situations).



The project builds upon existing lessons learned from the reintegration support in Nigeria and focuses on two main components:

- **Needs-based entrepreneurship training** for beneficiaries of AVRR shortly after their arrival.
- **Access to micro-credits** for returnees who want to further develop their small enterprises, in cooperation with a local microfinance institution.

Business Support in Nigeria: Project Objectives

Technical know-how for managing a small enterprise through training

Beneficiaries will take part in the six-day "Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)" workshop module, by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is delivered by trained key stakeholders in the field of migrant reintegration, mental health and psychosocial support staff as well as former returnees.

Practical know-how through vocational and on-the-job training

Migrants in vulnerable situations, having returned from transit countries, will be selected to follow an additional three-day vocational training course in professional activities and will receive a start-up kit for immediate business set-up.

Returnees from Switzerland have the opportunity to do an on-the-job training for up to six months in their respective field of activity, with an existing company or with a former returnee managing an enterprise.

Access to micro loans through a revolving fund

Voluntary returnees who have successfully set up their individual business projects can request loans within a revolving fund administered by the selected microfinance institution, "Self-Reliance Economic Advancement Programme (SEAP)". IOM Nigeria organizes informative events and refers interested persons to SEAP, who assesses their eligibility, capacity in running a business, and their ability to repay loans. SEAP will pay out the loans in several steps. Once the beneficiary has proven to be reliable in repaying, he or she can request a higher loan amount. This progressive approach enables returnees to take out higher loans.

Target group

The project is open to:

- a) persons returning voluntarily from **Switzerland**
- b) and selected persons in vulnerable situations returning voluntarily from **transit countries** (e.g. Libya, Niger)

Key highlights 2020:

- 60 persons** completed the entrepreneurship training course (SIYB)
- 45 persons** completed the 2-day vocational training
- 10 persons** completed on-the-job trainings
- 12 persons** benefited from the micro loan scheme

Institutional cooperation

Members from different governmental agencies and civil society organizations followed a training for trainers for the "Start & Improve Your Business (SIYB)" course, in order to deliver the workshops to the beneficiaries. The project integrates key migrant integration entities, e.g. the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, the National Directorate of Employment or the Patriotic Citizen Initiative.



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