

Stories of Return

Europe



IOM International Organization for Migration



Who we are

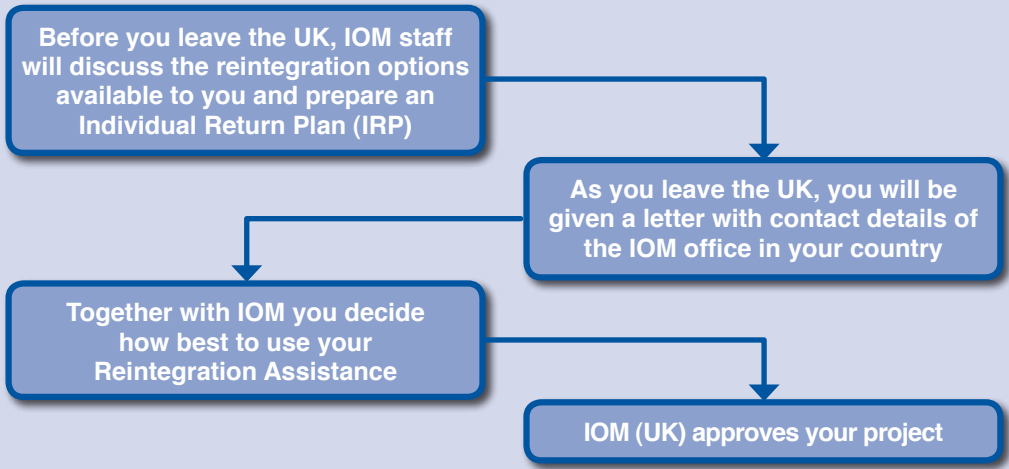
IOM is the world's leading independent migration agency. Since it was founded in 1951 it has helped over 13 million migrants, in the belief that migration – if dignified, orderly and voluntary – is of benefit to the individuals concerned and society as a whole.

Since 1999 IOM UK has assisted more than 27,000 people to return to some 130 countries.

IOM UK runs two voluntary return programmes: one is for anyone who has been in the asylum system at any stage - applying, appealing, refused – (VARRP); another for irregular migrants – who have overstayed their visas or have been smuggled or trafficked into the country (AVRIM). Under both programmes we arrange flights and onward transportation to the home doorstep but under the scheme for asylum seekers we also provide Reintegration Assistance in the country of return. This is delivered not in cash but in the form of targeted payments to pay for education, vocational training, job placements or, in 80% of cases, to help buy equipment and supplies to set up a small business.

This leaflet features just a handful of the many stories from people who have returned home after living in the UK. Circumstances vary from country to country, from individual to individual, but this brief snapshot shows how Reintegration Assistance can make a contribution to a more sustainable return home.

The Reintegration Assistance process



Albania, Tirana Vineyard

Mr. G returned to Albania in 2004. He now lives in a remote area of Tirana, a beautiful location with fertile land but which offers few opportunities to make a living. Whilst he was in the UK, he saw an increased demand for bio products and he believed that there was an opportunity to develop an organic products business in Albania. It is now 3 years since he started the vineyard

on his family's land and the production of grapes and raki - an Albanian spirit - has now increased. Maintaining quality despite the unstable weather conditions is a challenge. However, little by little, he is building a circle of clients that appreciates the quality of his products. He is planning to open a restaurant cooking bio products in the future.

Albania, Durres Internet café and restaurant



"I returned in July 2006 and visited IOM's office in Tirana straight away to talk about the opportunities for reintegration.

In the UK, I was always thinking of having my own business and I decided to take advantage of my Reintegration Assistance to open an internet café. My parents own some commercial premises in Durres but the place was awful. Nobody wanted to rent it even though it is in a good location. I decided to use IOM's Reintegration Assistance to buy some computers for an internet café. I couldn't afford proper furniture so I purchased some raw material for the bar with my own savings. I found a carpenter and gave him instructions on how to arrange everything. It was tiring but three times cheaper! As of February 2007, I haven't started to earn any money yet. A few clients are coming but I do not charge them. I first want to let people know about my place.

I don't miss my life in the UK. I was 17 years old when I went and studied there. But now I am convinced I'm doing the right thing here. This is only the start and I will work hard to have a big business. My father was pushing me to come back, and now that I am here my family is very happy and is strongly supporting me in what I'm doing."



Albania, Shkoder Car wash business

Mr. P returned to Shkoder with IOM in February 2006. He already knew about IOM because one of his cousins had previously been assisted. He did not contact the office immediately after his return since he got married. Later on, he approached IOM with the idea of setting up a car wash business and was provided with help in buying professional equipment such as a vacuum cleaner, a wash pump and a vacuum pump. He is now employing one person and the business is going well. Mr. P is happy with his activity and with the assistance he received.



Albania, Vlora Waiter

Mr. S returned from London in August 2005 after he learnt that IOM could assist with his return and reintegration.

He decided to return to Albania hoping to see a change in the economic situation. He started to look for a job but it was impossible to find anything in his village. Hope for the Future, an IOM partner

organisation, helped him to find his way in the employment market. Mr. S decided that he wanted to find a job in the city as life in his village was very tough. Hope for the Future conducted a market assessment in Vlora to find which jobs would best suit Mr. S's abilities. He had no formal professional skills and the low-skilled jobs that he could get were badly paid. Finally, he got a job as a worker in a grocery shop. IOM agreed to supplement his salary for a period of 12 months so that he could afford the cost of living in the city.

However, after a year his salary was too low to cover his basic needs and he had to find something else. Mr. S is now working in a bar on the beach as a waiter and as the bar owner's assistant. Despite all the ups and downs, he is happy with what he is doing and he hopes that his situation will gradually improve as he feels that the economy of Albania is developing and that tourism has a future.



Albania, Shkoder Farming

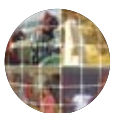
Ms. P returned to Shkoder at the end of May 2006 with her two children. Ms. P contacted the IOM office soon after her return to discuss her Reintegration Assistance opportunities. With her two young children, it was going to be difficult for her to work, so she decided to invest her Reintegration Assistance in the family farm, purchasing four cows with IOM's help. Ms. P is happy to be back in Albania with her family and she is not thinking of re-migrating.



Armenia Farming

"I am 30 years old and an economist by profession but have never previously worked in farming. After three and a half years I realised that London was not for me. In spite of the good relationship I had with people and the city's open society, I felt like an alien there. I learned about IOM and applied for assistance to return home.

IOM London helped me to travel home and set up a small business in my village. Now I am back with my family, I have a small farm with four female pigs, a male pig, three cows and a bull. I have good prospects to develop my business in the future. I got married and I am happy living and working in my country."



Georgia, Tbilisi
General shop



Mr. and Mrs. E returned to Georgia with their two children in October 2005. They already had some work experience in the retail business and upon their return decided to expand one of their relatives' general and grocery shops which had already been running for twelve years. IOM assisted them to purchase various goods and equipment such as a refrigerator, a cash register, scales, a computer and a vacuum cleaner. The business has expanded since, benefiting from a lack of competition

in the local area. Three new jobs have been created and the family is making an average profit of 7-8000 Georgian Lari (3970-4530 US dollars) per month despite facing major electricity disruption. IOM was also able to help Mr. and Mrs. E's family after their house completely burned down when a fire spread from their neighbour's property. With the remaining balance of their Reintegration Assistance, IOM agreed to help them with their rent for three months.



Georgia, Tbilisi
Oil transportation



In March 2006, Mr. S and Mr. C returned to their homeland with IOM after two and a half years in the UK. They live in the same village near the capital. After their return, they decided to set up a business in partnership and received IOM's assistance in May 2006 to purchase a tank-truck for oil and diesel transportation. Currently, their monthly income is 400-450 Georgian Lari (230-255 US dollars). The business was doing better during the first few

months of operation but then petrol stations bought their own tank-trucks which had more capacity, leading to more competition. Mr. S and Mr. C are thinking of selling the tank-truck to buy a dump-truck instead and use it for various construction firms. Due to the increased activity in the construction business in Tbilisi, there is hope that the dump-truck will be in demand and generate more income for them.



Kosovo, Prishtina

On the job training in a construction company

Ms. L returned to Kosovo in July 2005 after six years in the UK. In April 2006, she was offered a work placement with a possibility of extension in a construction company based in Prishtina. The company is successful with ongoing contracts with foreign donor agencies and employs up to 300 staff. She worked as an administrator and an assistant manager and made use of her knowledge of English acquired while living in the UK. During the first six months of her contract, IOM contributed towards part of her salary. However, in October 2006, she left this company and has since found another job.



Kosovo, Peja

Sandwich bar

Mr. A returned to Kosovo in August 2005. Mr. A had extensive experience in the catering business in Kosovo before he left and worked as a waiter in the UK. Upon returning, he opened a sandwich bar in his home town of Peja. He already owned the premises and with IOM's assistance purchased two new refrigerators in March 2006.

This activity created regular employment for him and his brother, as well as for

three other staff members in an area where there is high unemployment. The business is now running well and generating a stable income. Mr. A can support his family and enjoys a good social standing within his community.



Kosovo, Gllgovc

Agriculture



Mr. H returned to his home village with IOM in December 2005. Before he went to the UK, Mr. H was working on the family farm. His brother continued to run the business during his absence. Upon his return, Mr. H decided to offer mowing services to the residents of his village and the surrounding area. Since there is only one mowing machine in his area and the mowing of fields is only part of the work

that is needed, he identified the need for additional equipment. Thanks to IOM's assistance, Mr. H invested in a swathing machine which allows him to cover an area of around 700 hectares over the summer. He has also bought a second tractor to further enhance his business. He is now happily living in Kosovo with his wife and three children.



Kosovo, Peja

On the job training and employment in a shop

Mr. K returned with IOM to his home town in March 2004. He did not have any specific professional skills or experience in sales, but he was able to benefit from practical on-the-job training in a shop for six months. IOM supported this initiative by subsidising Mr. K's salary during the whole training period. The owner of the shop, located in the centre of Peja, started this successful business in April 2004 and needed a shop assistant. At the end of his training period, Mr. K was offered a permanent position, which provides him with a regular and sustainable source of income.

Macedonia, Prilep

Photoshop business

Mr. J returned in January 2006 with his family to his home town in Macedonia. With IOM's assistance, he established a small photoshop business in June 2006. The assistance funded the rent of a shop and purchase of necessary technical equipment. Although it took a long while before Mr. J could purchase the specific photoshop Nikon equipment he needed, Mr. J said the process of reintegration and business set up went smoothly



Ukraine, Rivne

Badge production



Mr. K is Armenian and his wife is from the Ukraine. They decided to return to Mrs. K's home country in September 2005 after seeing an advert in a newspaper about IOM's programmes. Upon his return, Mr. K had to start from scratch. He had previous experience in printing material production and followed a course on badge production. He started a badge and pendant production business in January 2006. With the assistance of IOM, he was able to purchase the necessary equipment. Unfortunately Mrs. K cannot work in the business since she needs regular treatment in hospital. Mr. K designs the pictures for the badges on a computer in his flat and he has re-equipped the garage for pendant production.

Mr. K has had several large orders so far, in particular from the Rivne zoo and museum. However, these were one-off orders, and his goal is to get more regular clients to ensure consistent business. Most customers are based in Rivne, but Mr. K would like to find more clients in other cities. In the future, he plans to increase the product range with postcards and T-shirts with logos, for which he will have to buy specialist equipment. He now aims to attract schools and students for his business by preparing samples of badges for graduating students with photos of their school and the years of study. To this end, he has already held several meetings with school headmasters.



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