

Voluntary return and reintegration

How the right advice is helping people to take opportunities in their home countries of origin

Worldwide, more and more people are leaving their home countries. Besides war and conflicts, there are a variety of different reasons why people left their home countries. For example, they could not see any prospects for themselves and their families in their countries and regarded migration as their last resort. Yet, most of them would like to stay in their country or later return and start over. All these people need orientation about the opportunities in their countries of origin and support during reintegration. Informed return and reintegration of people who are interested in returning from Germany, as well as the advice for the local population in the countries of origin, is therefore have a high relevance.

The programme "Migration for Development" is part of the initiative "Returning to New Opportunities" and creates economic prospects for these people in selected countries of origin. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it supports with return and reintegration, since the beginning of 2017.

Well advised: assistance available in Germany

The initiative focuses on individual advice – from preparation in Germany to a new start in the country of origin. In order to provide relevant information to interested individuals while they are still in Germany, the internet platform "Startfinder" presents all important information regarding the advice services and individual support measures in the countries of origin.

Moreover, the programme works closely with cities and municipalities throughout Germany. It supports existing services by charity organizations and social agencies in providing advice on returning and reintegration. Coaching, for example, can help make returning and going back to work easier or facilitate access to further vocational education and training in the country of origin.

At selected local authorities and church and social agencies, so-called reintegration scouts act as a bridge between return advice in Germany and existing services in the respective countries of origin. The reintegration scouts assist the return advice centres by creating contacts in the relevant countries. They also provide information on local job prospects and support services, including advice on start-ups or vocational education and training.

Apart from this, GIZ works together with private organizations and agencies throughout Germany and offers vocational training measures for potential returnees. These include, among others, courses in civil engineering and diverse trades, business start-ups, languages, and IT courses.



A successful fresh start back home

A successful return thus begins in Germany and continues with support services in the country of origin. To assist returnees with their reintegration, the programme operates, together with national partners, so-called Advice Centres for Jobs, Migration, and Reintegration in selected partner countries. Currently, there are centres in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Iraq. In Afghanistan, advice is offered in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Centres in Egypt, The Gambia and Pakistan are being planned.

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The centres provide tailored advice and information on training and employment options and organize job and career fairs, information events, and application trainings. In addition to the advice, interested people are also placed into a range of courses, vocational training measures, and psychosocial support services that enable them to improve their chances on the labour market. People who opt for self-employment can benefit from training and support for starting up a business.

The centres operate with the respective national labour administration and employment agencies. They work closely together with various projects of German development cooperation, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and local institutions in the partner countries. Thereby they take an inclusive advisory approach: Apart from returnees from Germany and other countries, they address also internally displaced people (IDPs) and the local population who get advice on employment opportunities within the country, on the requirements and possibilities of regular migration and on the risks of irregular migration.



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First-hand report of a return



Euresa Bajrami, Kosovo

‘Together with my family, I came to Germany in early 2015. I was seventeen at the time. We lived in north-west Germany, where I attended vocational school and trained in catering and nutrition. I particularly liked baking cakes and became interested in the art of pastry making. When we returned to Kosovo in mid-2016, I wanted to pursue this interest, but I did not know how I could go about doing that back home. Therefore, I turned to the migration advisory centre in Kosovo for advice. At their suggestion, I took a patisserie course at a recognized vocational college. Then I took the plunge and started my own business. Together with my mother, I launched a small pastry business in Pristina. So far, we have been baking cakes at home and selling them through the internet. But we would like to open a shop in the future. The centre also gave me advice on training opportunities in Germany, as I would like to do a restaurant and catering course there. I want to use the skills I gain to grow our family business. Maybe we will be able to hire some staff at some stage and create jobs for other people in our home country.’

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