

Stories of Return

Asia & Middle East



IOM International Organization for Migration



Who we are

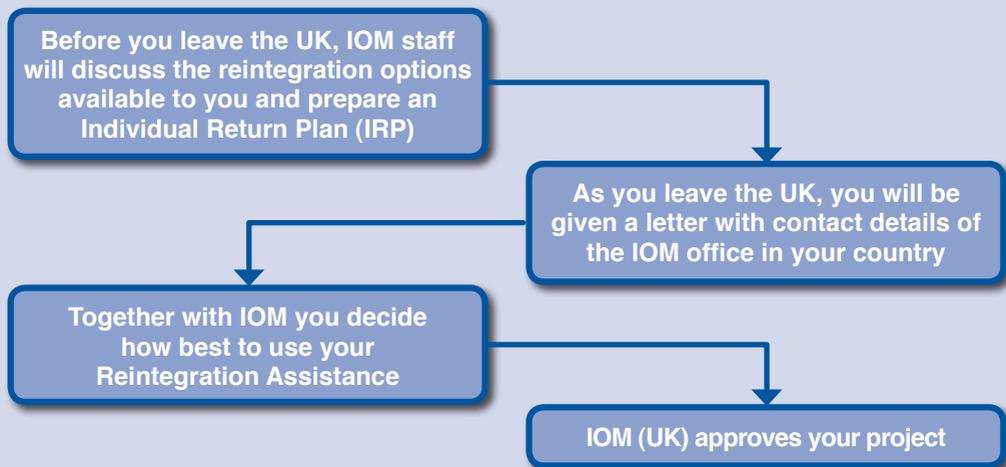
IOM is the world's leading independent migration agency. Since it was founded in 1951 it has helped over 13 million migrants, in the belief that migration – if dignified, orderly and voluntary – is of benefit to the individuals concerned and society as a whole.

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



Afghanistan, Kabul Province Laundry

Mr. Z is a tailor by profession. When he returned to Afghanistan in June 2006 he decided to start a laundry business in partnership with his friend Mr. F - pooling their joint resources because of the significant capital required. Both partners were very active during their counselling sessions with IOM and they were prompt

in providing IOM Afghanistan with all the necessary documents for their business start up. The laundry is now established in Kabul and has customers from both the local Afghan and foreign expatriate communities. The only problem they face is the irregular electricity supply which sometimes interrupts their work. They plan to buy a power generator to better serve their customers. Both partners are satisfied with their monthly income and are happy to have reintegrated back into local society.

Afghanistan, Khost Province Textile shop



Mr. K is a tradesman by profession who used to work in the textile business before emigrating. Upon his return from the UK in April 2006, he approached the IOM office in Kabul to enquire about the kind of assistance he could get and finally opted to restart his former business. Since he was living in Khost province, one of the high security alert areas in the region, he and IOM had difficulty assessing the project and obtaining the required documents. His business eventually got approval from IOM London after being assessed by IOM Afghanistan. The business was started in July 2006, but unfortunately Mr. K was forced to cease trading in October 2006. However, he is planning to use the budget he has got in hand to start a new business. Once he has decided how best to proceed, he will get in contact with IOM Kabul for further advice.

“Security is the general problem of all Afghans, especially in southern areas of Afghanistan. I am happy that I returned to my country through IOM’s orderly and managed programme, but the fact that I had to leave was very unpleasant for me.”



Afghanistan, Northern Regions Animal husbandry

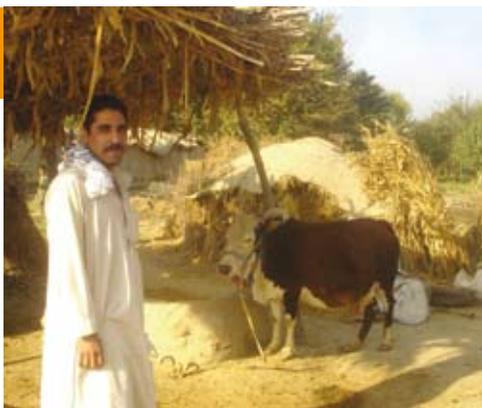
Mr. K belongs to the nomadic Kuchi Tribe. Upon his arrival, he had around five counselling sessions with IOM until he opted to start animal husbandry.

He used IOM's assistance to purchase a tent and some animals. Mr. K is father to a daughter and son and he wants

them to live in cities rather than follow a nomadic life, although he is a much respected member of his tribe. He has a deep interest in education which he only managed to continue until fourth grade. He now plans to join an educational centre once he gets the opportunity.

Afghanistan, South Eastern Regions Animal husbandry

Mr. W belongs to a Kuchi tribe, whose traditional activity is animal husbandry producing and selling dairy products, wool and meat in the market. Upon arrival in September 2006, he started looking for his family. Once he tracked down his tribe, he established contact with IOM and requested to buy some sheep and cows for his business.



Since he has experience in this sector he is confident he will be able to develop his business and employ his nephews. He is now supporting his wife and parents and is happy to be back home. *"I have received a good amount of assistance from IOM in the UK and in Afghanistan with which I managed to build a life and get a good reputation among my tribe."* He says he is grateful to IOM for its wonderful support and the promises that were fulfilled upon his return. Mr. W is currently moving from one place to another but he plans to expand his business as soon as he finds a good location.



Afghanistan, Maidan Wardak Province Fuel station

Mr. J returned from the UK to Afghanistan in July 2005. He is an educated man with two years' work experience in the photography business. Upon his return, he approached IOM for assistance and soon decided to re-start his former business in his birth

place in the Maidan Wardak Province. This was not an easy task for him as he had to find a good business location and his idea was not supported by the elders and religious scholars of his village. Despite this opposition, Mr. J managed to start his photography shop with IOM's assistance in August 2005. Unfortunately, he had to stop his activities at the beginning of 2006 due to a lack of customers. In June 2006, Mr. J revised his business idea, met a fuel station owner and asked to be employed in his business. He was required to invest 2000 US dollars through buying a digital fuel pump in exchange of 25% of the monthly net profit. Mr. J decided to go ahead with this business partnership. During a visit in November 2006, he thanked IOM: *"I had IOM's support to help me do any business that I thought best for me."*

China, Fujian province Shoe shop

Mr. P stayed in the UK for more than six years. He returned to China in June 2006 with the help of IOM and was reunited with his wife, daughter and son. He did not have a job so he decided to move with his family to another city - Guangzhou, - more than 400 miles away. He borrowed some money from friends and relatives and with his own savings managed to gather 13000 Chinese yuan (16,000 US dollars) to open a shoe shop. Initially, he did not have enough capital and could only buy relatively few shoes at a high cost. After IOM helped him in November 2006, he was in a position to buy more shoes for a cheaper price. He is now able to compete with other shops, and is in the process of opening another shop in a nearby city.





China, Shanghai
General shop

Ms. Q returned to China in September 2006. She had previous experience working in shops and restaurant management as well as book keeping. IOM encouraged her to open a shop and advised her to consider running a franchise supermarket. She chose this option and enrolled in a course with the 24/7 franchise shop *Hao De Express*.

With IOM's assistance and her own savings, she paid for the course fees, which included a month of training and a one month internship. When she passed the training, she was offered a contract and IOM paid for her first contractual fee. She now manages her own shop in which she employs a few staff.

India
Grocery shop

Mr. P started a grocery shop in his own house. This is the only grocery shop in the locality. It is managed by Mr. P and is thriving. The daily sales are about 2000 Indian rupees (45 US dollars) and on average he makes about 200 rupees profit per day, which represents a monthly income of 6000 rupees. Mr. P is very satisfied with his activity and the local community is also happy because they do not need to go to the distant market, but can get their daily requirements on their doorstep. Mr. P is thinking of expanding the business by adding a telephone booth and a Xerox machine to increase his daily income further.



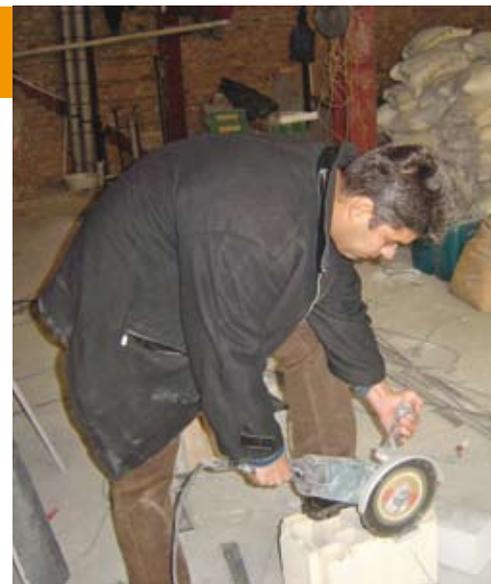
India
Ornament show room

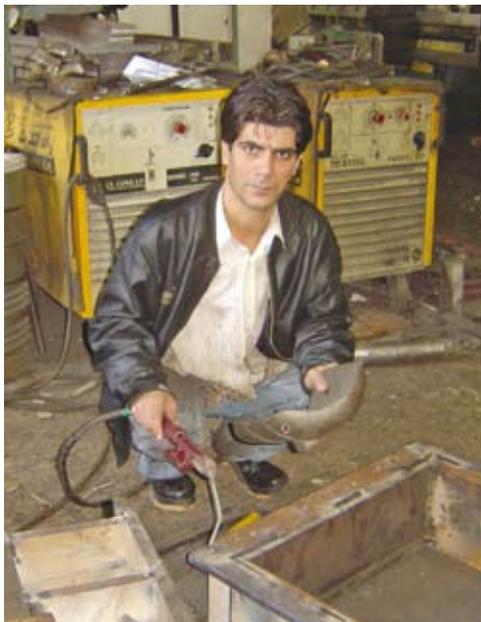
Mr. S set up an ornament showroom. He is selling jewellery and providing services such as the repair and resizing of jewellery. Thanks to the assistance he received from IOM, his shop is equipped with a weighing machine, a strong safe and appropriate hand tools. He employs a qualified goldsmith for the repair and resizing of the ornaments. He is earning 200 Indian rupees from the sale of ornaments and 250 rupees out of the repair and resizing of old ornaments per day. After deducting various running costs like electricity and wages, he manages to make a profit of 10,050 rupees (approximately 230 US

dollars) per month. He is managing the business with the help of his wife and they are satisfied with the assistance they received from IOM.

Iran, Tehran
Car maintenance

Mr. D returned home in May 2004 after nearly four years in the UK. IOM assisted Mr. D with the purchase of car maintenance equipment to start a new business. He established his business in rented premises where he was changing the oil and doing the maintenance of vehicles. Following disagreements with the landlord, he decided to shift to his family's traditional business. He sold the equipment provided by IOM and joined his brother's construction business. He is now doing well in this second venture.





Iran, Tehran Welding workshop

Mr. C returned to Iran in October 2003 after nearly two years in London. He did not apply for Reintegration Assistance before he left, but was able to do so when he arrived in Tehran. Before he migrated to the UK, he was a professional welder with more than fifteen years' experience. When he returned, his uncle offered him a position in his welding workshop so that he could use his professional skills. Mr. F was able to contribute to the business thanks to IOM who provided him with the welding equipment he needed. His business is running successfully, and he can support the rest of his family.

Iraq, Suleimaniyah Automobile tyre trade

Mr. A returned with IOM assistance in May 2006. He was still attending secondary school when he left for the UK. After some consideration and discussions with his family, he decided to start at the bottom of the ladder and work with a skilled professional. With IOM's financial assistance, he entered into a partnership with one of his relatives who is an automobile tyre dealer. They sell various types of high quality automobile tyre from the top manufacturers of Japan, Thailand, China and Indonesia.



Iraq Sheep breeding

Mr. D returned with IOM assistance in March 2006. Before he travelled to the UK, he left school in 1997 and helped his father breed sheep. Upon his return to Kurdistan he decided to resume this vocation. He is working in his village since it is an ideal location to raise sheep for meat production. He buys lambs, breeds and sells them either directly to his clientele or to the live animal market. He believes that with this business he can play a great role in promoting the agricultural infrastructure of his country.

Iraq, Suleimaniyah Butcher's Shop

Mr. F left school in 1994 because he was not very interested in studying. He then started to work as a shop assistant in a butcher's shop. When he returned with IOM in March 2006, Mr. F decided to resume his previous job. He is already renting a shop for that purpose and obtained the business licence to enable him work as a butcher.



Mongolia, Ulan-Batar General shop

Mr. O decided to return to Mongolia with IOM in May 2006 after he heard about the programme from a friend. Before returning he had already the idea of opening an off-license general shop. Upon his return, he signed a one-year franchise contract with City Shop, a chain of small general stores with more than 90 shops in Mongolia.

IOM assisted him to buy basic equipment such as refrigerator, heating system, basic furniture and his initial stock. Since it is an off-licence shop, Mr. O has to work long hours and employs one member of staff. With more than 2200 families living in the shop's surroundings, Mr. O feels that there are good prospects for the business.



Nepal, Kaski District Hotel and Restaurant

Mr. T returned to Nepal in May 2006 with the help of IOM. Mr. T had previously trained in food preparation and control at the Hotel Management and Tourism Training Centre in Kathmandu where he obtained a foundation certificate in food hygiene.

He also had the experience of working in a three star hotel in London. Upon his return, he decided to start his own hotel and restaurant which is located in the base camp of Mount Annapurna, a very popular trekking location in Nepal. He requested IOM's assistance to buy the restaurant's equipment and some furniture in October 2006. With ten bedrooms, Mr. T's hotel and restaurant potentially offers employment for eight people: two people in the kitchen, three in the restaurant, two for housekeeping and an accountant.



Pakistan, Islamabad Electrical goods store

Mr. A spent three and half years in London. He said that he faced no problems during the reintegration process after he returned in May 2006. He quickly found an electrical goods shop whose owner was eager to sell. He did not want to waste any time and bought it with his own savings and then used the Reintegration Assistance to purchase stock and merchandise.

The business is doing very well as it

complements the current construction boom in the area. Mr. A says it has exceeded his expectations. By the end of next year, he hopes to expand thanks to a partnership with his cousin who is a wholesale supplier. Another cousin, who was previously unemployed also works at the store. He has invested in a community savings scheme and plans to use the funds to increase his stock selection. He is happy to be reunited with his family whom he now supports. During a visit, he praised IOM for the assistance provided and said, "The IOM staff were very cooperative. I had no problems of any sort."



Pakistan, Lahore Sewing centre

When she returned in December 2005 after five years in the UK, Mrs. N realized the need for a sewing centre in her locality. In February 2006, she purchased sewing machines with her Reintegration Assistance. Whilst the business seemed to get off to a good start, she was unable to set-up a proper sewing centre. The first obstacle was the size of her house, which proved to be too small for such a business. In addition, she faced some health problems. With the business not producing the desired results, she is planning to sell off all the machines and open a maternity centre. She now realises the value of proper market research and study prior to starting any business activity, but is grateful for the support and advice she got from IOM.



"I could have made a better choice of business, but IOM's support and encouragement did give me a lot of confidence in starting and managing my own business."



Pakistan, Chenab Nagar Crockery shop

Mr. A's family had a crockery business running in his home town even when he was in the UK. When he returned to Chenab Nagar in July 2006 he returned to this activity and invested the IOM Reintegration Assistance in expanding the family business. Since the business

was already established, there was no necessity for any market research to identify a business activity. He occupies a big shop in a relatively small town and is extremely optimistic about future plans to expand the business.

"The financial assistance provided gave me huge confidence upon my return. With the country already struggling with arranging jobs for young people, I was able to get enough money through IOM to expand our family's running business. It's tremendous!"



Sri Lanka, Colombo Grocery shop

Ms. T was assisted to start up a grocery shop in January 2004. As a single parent, she has to take care of her two children and give them an education whilst earning a living. She has employed two relatives to run the business when she is away and shares the income. Running a profitable business has proved to be difficult. When two nearby garment factories closed, she lost most of her regular customers. The business also suffered from the building of a new road which bypasses her shop.

Sri Lanka, Ratmala, Colombo Garment Factory

After her return home in January 2005, Mrs. V found part-time employment in a shop. She was initially assisted from March 2005 to support her children's education. Her son is now employed but she still has to support her daughter who is studying in India.

With IOM's support and her own savings, she started a small garment business. She employs at least three people in the workshop. Mrs. V would like to expand her business to increase her income but it is sometimes difficult to get regular orders and she often struggles to find the money to buy material. Her workshop is rather small since it was set up in her private residence. To be more profitable, she would need to buy additional equipment, such as a single needle machine, a padlock machine and a bottle iron. To get additional income, she works at a furnishing house in the evenings and rents out part of her house.



Sri Lanka, Batticaloa Fishing and transport

When Mr. S returned to Sri Lanka in May 2004 he started a fishing business. He used his personal savings, a bank loan and IOM's Reintegration Assistance to purchase a fishing boat and lorry. At the beginning he encountered some rivalry from his competitors, but he is now well-established in the open market. He hopes to increase his income by expanding his

work force and by purchasing another vehicle for hiring purposes. Although the present conflict situation is setting back the achievement of some of his goals, Mr. S is very enthusiastic about his project and feels that IOM's assistance has been beneficial. He is very happy to be reunited with his family.

Sri Lanka, Batticaloa Pharmaceutical distribution

Mr. P returned to Sri Lanka in September 2005. He developed a pharmaceutical distribution business in the Batticaloa district. With nearly eleven year's experience in this sector, he is very knowledgeable and commercially aware. He has recently been given the opportunity to cover an additional area in Kalmunai and is constantly looking for more clients. He feels very proud of his achievement. He also owns a store in Kallady, three kilometres away from Batticaloa town. He enjoys working round the clock and employs four people. He feels that if he could own a pharmacy, he would make more profit out of the daily sales and develop his management skills.



He now earns more than he did in the UK, and is happy to be back with his family in his native home. He says that it is a 'blessing' that IOM provided timely assistance to improve his standard of living. *"If not for IOM, I would not have achieved this goal."*



Sri Lanka, Ampara
Tractor for paddy farming



Immediately after his return from the UK in July 2006, Mr. F did not really have any idea what kind of business to go into. IOM encouraged and advised him and he finally decided to invest in a tractor for paddy farming. Although he faced delays in getting the tractor registration documents, his business is now running smoothly albeit not according to the original plan outlined in the business proposal. He decided to give up using his tractor for farming due to the low price for paddy field work. There are better earning opportunities in the construction sector. For example, many NGOs are currently involved in permanent house construction and infrastructure development and there is a high demand for tractors to provide transportation of

construction materials. Mr. F's tractor also offers transport services on a leasing basis for a contractor to transport gravel to a local hospital. He employs a driver whom he pays 11,000 Sri Lankan rupees (100 US dollars) per month and he earns an average of 25,000 Sri Lankan rupees per month. He also has plans to use his tractor for ploughing his own farming land and may start a hardware shop in the future.

"I feel very happy that I am the owner of a tractor. I would say my thanks on behalf of my family to IOM who provided assistance to initiate a business and give me the self-confidence to run it successfully."



Sri Lanka, Ampara
Rice wholesaler



Originally, Mr. S thought about starting a textile business. After arriving in his home town in February 2006, he found that there were more opportunities for trading rice. He benefited from IOM and his relatives' financial assistance and opened a shop in

March 2006. He is currently employing two people, whom he pays 8,000 Sri Lankan rupees (75 US dollars) monthly, to assist him and deliver the orders to the customers by three-wheeler and motorcycle. There is quite a lot of competition, and it is difficult to find and keep the customers over a long period of time. Many customers want to buy on credit but sometimes disappear afterwards. He also has to find a better location for a bigger turnover and more appropriate storage facilities to avoid the rice stock from being attacked by rice weevil and fungus. Ideally, he would like to lease a vehicle to be able to improve the distribution, avoid delays and the risk of damaging the rice bags and distribute to more distant locations. He feels happy with IOM's assistance, commenting *"as promised they have given me a good opportunity to start a business and I am really very happy to be with my family and running this business. I would say that for anyone returning through IOM like me, this is a golden opportunity."* He got married recently and is enjoying his new life and business.

Vietnam, Hai Phong
Wholesale and retail of plastic household products



Mr. M returned to Vietnam in early 2005. With IOM's assistance, he decided to open a stall selling plastic household products outside his house. Located in a small and quiet street, it did not attract enough customers. As a consequence, he could not generate enough income to cover the needs of his family. As a shareholder he joined the business of a relative who wholesales and retails various plastic products and construction materials. Now, Mr. M works for the People's Committee of his residence ward as a member of staff of the housing and construction division. The new job brings a good monthly salary and other benefits as well as new contacts. He is not involved in the daily management of the business any more, but still gets some of the benefit as a shareholder. *"I would like to thank IOM for their assistance."*



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