



Transnational exchange regarding voluntary return

International exchange to improve reintegration
measures in countries of origin

12th – 14th November 2013
Exerzitienhaus St. Ottilien



European Union
European Return Fund



Caritasverband
für die Diözese
Augsburg e.V.

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Welcome speeches by Mr. Priesterath (Federal Ministry of the Interior) and Ms. Scheer (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) (on the right)



Abstract

After the first conference on transnational exchange between repatriation counseling centres in Europe took place in September 2011 in Augsburg/Germany, the need for further exchange and networking was expressed clearly.

The first conference focused on exchange concerning the different models of return counseling in different European countries. The second conference has widened the perspective and included the cooperation between return counseling in the host countries and reintegration projects in the countries of return (CoR).

In the process of returning to one's CoR, sometimes a broad spectrum of measures is taken by different actors in the EU as well as in the returning country. The conference offered a platform for exchange between return counsel offices in the European Union, reintegration projects from the countries of return, state actors and national and European network organisations.

Different work approaches, framework conditions, needs and expectations were introduced to explore necessary steps and preconditions for a smooth and further cooperation.



**Transnational
exchange regarding
voluntary return**

Agenda

This chapter outlines the agenda of the conference and the work process, whereas the following chapters will describe the content as well as the conclusions of the presentations and discussions. Results and conclusions from group works, discussion rounds and panel discussions will be included in every chapter.

The three conference days offered a range of topics and discussions. On the first day, the conference focused on monitoring mechanisms, sustainable return and post-return monitoring with two speeches by experts and a discussion round.

The topic of the second day was already introduced in the evening by presentations of three reintegration projects from Kosovo, Nigeria and Iraq. Two more reintegration projects and their partnership with organisations in the host countries were presented the following day.



Waiting for the participants: Dirk van den Boom (moderator), Verena Hinze and Anita Werner (ZRB Südbayern)

After the introduction of the reintegration projects, the attendants discussed necessary factors and steps for a smooth cooperation of counsel offices in the EU with reintegration projects. The group works covered different topics as the clarification of roles and tasks of the actors involved, expectations regarding support in the countries of return as well as in the EU countries, ways to successfully communicate between networks, counsel offices and reintegration projects as well as follow-up and after-care in the countries of return.

Networking has been the issue of the third conference day. After the introduction of the German network project IntegPlan and European network projects like VREN and ERSO, the experts were discussing the utilisation and interlinkage of network platforms. The guiding questions for this discussion were

- How to find a partner project in the country of return? What are useful first steps?
- How can resources of other organisations be used best? Is the information accessible for anyone or restricted to members of the network only?
- What do the counselors expect from network platforms?

Welcome speeches



By Mr Friedel (Head of the Division, 'Migration and foreign aid'– Caritas Augsburg)

Being the host of the conference, Mr Friedel heartily welcomed all participants. He addressed a special welcome to Ms Scheer from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and to Mr Priesterath from the Federal Ministry of the Interior and thanked them for making this event for exchange possible.

Mr Friedel expressed his great pleasure to host the second event for transnational exchange on 'International exchange to improve reintegration measures in countries of return'. He also referred to the next transnational conference on return, which will focus on return under special conditions for people from especially vulnerable groups such as sick or elderly people, minorities, minors or single women.

In the following, Mr Friedel highlighted the importance of international exchange on return to ensure a thorough support for returnees and their smooth reintegration and repatriation in their countries of return.

By Mr Priesterath (division MI2, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Berlin)

Markus Priesterath addressed the participants with words about the importance of reintegration and the national and international exchange of experiences in this field.

For Germany, voluntary return always takes priority over forced return. Therefore Germany established an **AVR** (Assisted Voluntary Return)-programme in 1979 and was therewith a pioneer in this field.

In Germany, assistance for voluntary return rests on four pillars:

1. The main pillar is the joint Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum-Seekers in Germany and the Government-Assisted Repatriation Programme (REAG/GARP), which has been existing for more than 30 years now and has been implemented by the IOM from the very beginning. Since the programme was launched, return assistance has been provided to nearly 550,000 individuals.
2. Second, the REAG/GARP-programme is complemented by the Information Centre for Voluntary Return (ZIRF) which provides information crucial to a returnee before their return.
3. The third pillar is the European Return Fund (from 2014 as part of the Asylum and Migration Fund AMF), which was installed in 2008. The European Return Fund is a financial programme by the European Commission and allocates financial means to EU member states to support their efforts in improving their return management.
4. The last pillar consists of projects of federal states (the Länder) and municipalities as well as NGOs. In Germany, counselling for returnees is usually provided by non-governmental, religious and charitable organisations, often with support from the federal state in question; some districts or local governments also offer counselling services.

Return trends of the last year:

Increasing immigration (in particular of people without the right to stay permanently) means that later more people will leave the country.

- Reintegration programmes can reduce assumed and actual obstacles more effectively and therefore encourage voluntary return.
- Financial incentives for a new start (in particular aid to start a new business) usually increase the willingness to return.
- Community projects save time and money because tasks can be divided without affecting national return policies (reintegration packages).
- Forced returns require a lot of time and money, and they can only be carried out under certain conditions.

Reasons for states to operate AVR-programmes and to spend millions of Euros on assisted voluntary returns and the importance of reintegration:

1. Voluntary return is the more humane and less intrusive measure compared to forced return.
2. Assisted voluntary returns save the public purse a lot of money because they are not only the more humane but also the less expensive alternative to forced returns. Compared to the money needed to sustain a person in Germany, who is actually required to leave the country, the savings are even bigger.
3. Greater willingness to cooperate on part of both returnees and the authorities of the countries of return.
4. Reintegration projects are also a political signal to consider the entire process of migration and to strengthen cooperation with the countries of return.
5. For specific countries of return, the assistance granted by the regular REAG/GARP programmes is not always sufficient to motivate returnees to leave voluntarily.
6. In case of a high number of people required to return to difficult countries (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, certain African and Asian countries), returnees need special assistance to start over in their country of return.
7. Local partners can support returnees better due to their connections to authorities, employers and other institutions.
8. Helping returnees to make a new start creates better conditions for permanent reintegration.



Welcome speech by Mr. Wolfgang Friedel (Caritas Augsburg)



Verena Hinze presented the results of the preliminary assessment

In addition to assistance for voluntary return, support for **reintegration** is more and more asked for by returnees and influences the decision to return positively.

Reintegration in the country of return, both economically and socially, is becoming increasingly important. Counselling services for returnees help them to prepare themselves already in Germany for economic and social **reintegration** in their countries of return.

The guiding principle of German reintegration assistance is to help returnees to help themselves.



Thereby, reintegration measures can be divided into two main groups:

1. **First, short-term assistance** measures, like social counselling services, rent subsidies or medication allowance.
2. Second, **long-term assistance** measures, like job training, job placement and wage subsidies or helping returnees to set up a business.

The aims of the project, **Transnational exchange, return counseling in the European dialogue on the subject of return** (August 2013 – May 2015) are:

- Establishing contacts with organisations in countries of return where conditions for return and reintegration are difficult
- Improving the experts' practical work by benefiting from existing contacts on an international level
- Improving the quality standards of return consultation
- Organising expert meetings and information exchange of return advisers and third-country organisations
- Creating a network (including guidelines) to improve reintegration through exchange and participation in existing return systems

Further considerations:

1. Services for reintegration can include: Counseling services, psychological care, rent allowance, medication reimbursement, business start-ups, employment, education and training, wage subsidies, special language courses, school equipment for children and appropriate tutoring.
2. For the assistance to the returnees during the arrival in the country of return, some counseling centres have set up their own offices in major countries of return or are collaborating with local partners.
3. Importance of employment and assistance through collaboration with local businesses, low-threshold training programmes are offered by the counseling offices in Germany.
4. Successful reintegration as part of a coherent migration policy requires interlinkage with the development cooperation, labour migration and international security interests.

by Ms Scheer (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)

Ms Scheer presented the conclusions of the GDISC (General Directors of Immigration Services Conference) Return Conference <http://www.gdisc.org>:

- The conference took place in Zurich from 23 to 25 October 2013.
- The purpose of the conference was to approach the subject of return critically by seeing the bigger picture of returns, not only as a part of the national asylum procedure ending with a positive or negative decision. The aim was also to take into consideration preconditions, preparations and the implementation of returns as well as reintegration possibilities, cooperation with countries of origin, the civil society and other member states.
- The overall consensus was that voluntary return is better for all parties than forced return and that it should therefore be encouraged. In many discussion groups, clear communication with the returnee and a closer cooperation with countries of return, NGOs and diaspora was underlined as essential to increase the numbers and the quality of voluntary returns. When addressing cooperation between member states and countries of return, a wish reoccurred in many workshops to harmonise the implementation of returns and AVR programmes. However, a reservation to total harmonisation was expressed, motivated by the fact that member states have different national policies and to some extent face different challenges in migration and return issues.



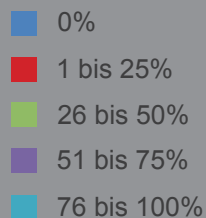
Summarised results of the preliminary assessment

Before the conference, a preliminary assessment was conducted and questionnaires regarding assisted voluntary return were sent to counsel offices all over Europe.

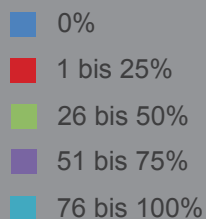
Out of the over 100 addressees only 16 counsel offices participated in the assessment. It can be assumed that mainly the most active and engaged counsel offices participated. Therefore, the results cannot provide a general picture of the average situation in return counsel offices in Europe.

Nevertheless valid points, information and suggestions could be collected and are summarised in the following.

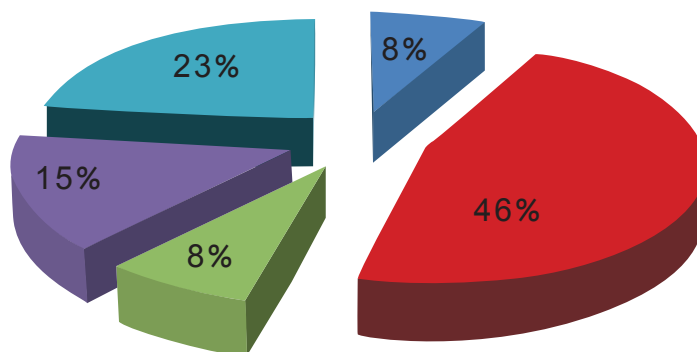
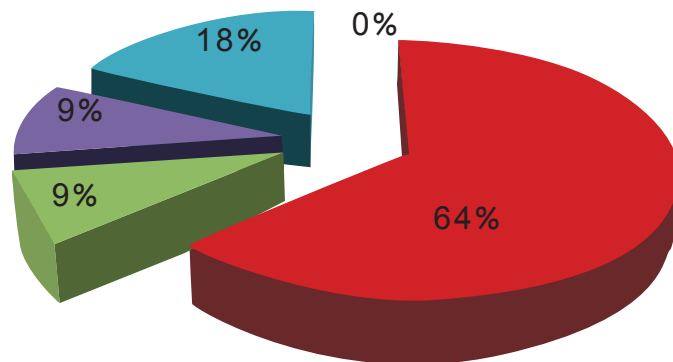
Returned through state-funded reintegration programmes



Returned in cooperation with other contacts in country of return

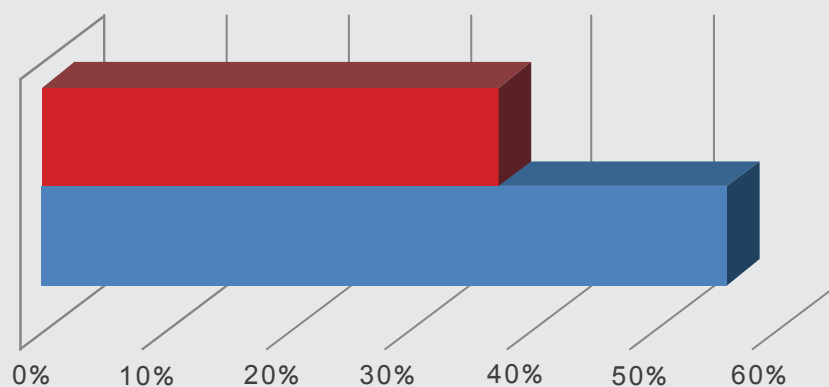


Number of returns in 2012



In most organisations between 1% and 25% of the clients in 2012 have returned with reintegration projects situated in the country of return, either through state-funded programmes or in cooperation with other contacts.

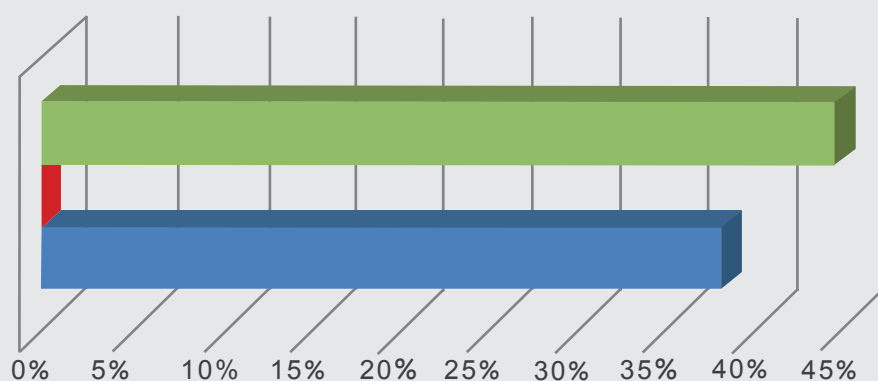
Access to reintegration projects



More than 50% of the organisations do already have contact to reintegration projects in different countries worldwide which are not part of state-funded programmes.

Contact to reintegration projects

- no contact
- contact to reintegration projects



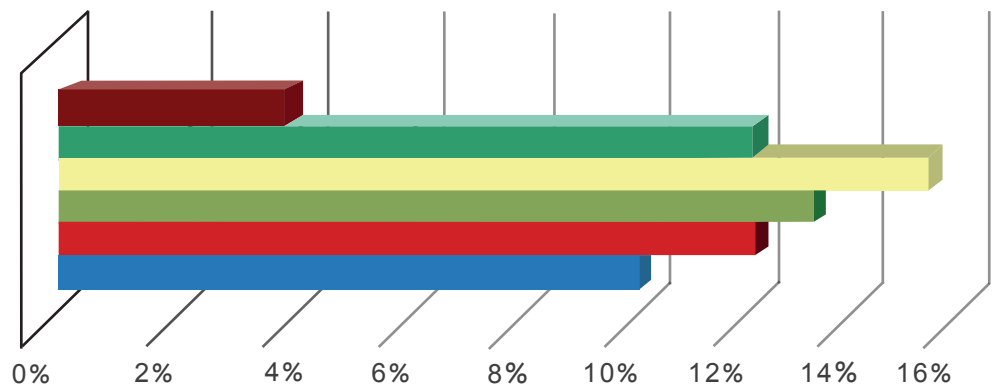
Most organisations would grant access to their contacts depending on the individual case.

Making contacts of reintegration projects accessible

- depends no individual case
- no
- yes

Sources of information about reintegration projects

- other sources
- other return counsel offices
- networks
- own reserach
- personal contacts
- coordination section



Networks are an important source of information for most of the organisations.

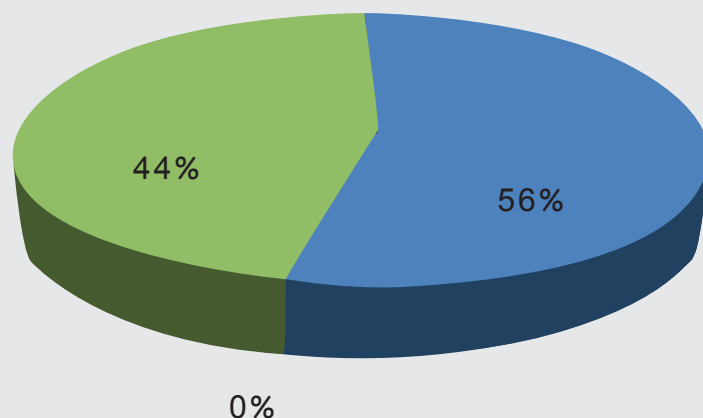
Other sources:

- IntegPlan
- Newsletters and information from project coordinators and focal points at service providers.

Reintegration projects contribute to a sustainable return

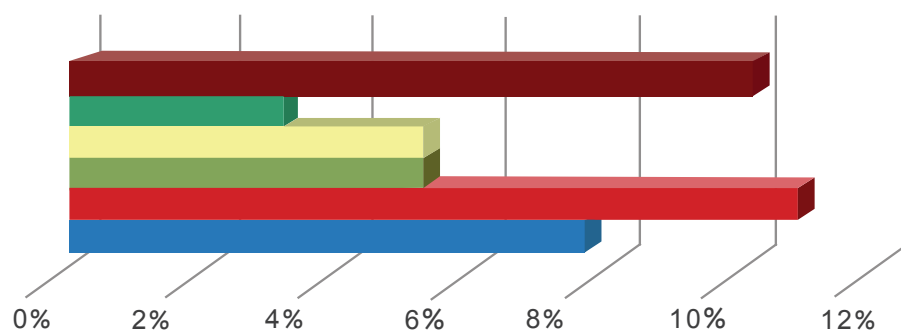
- yes
- no
- conditioned

Sustainable return through RI projects



Sustainability depends on:

- economic situation in the country of return and the level of financial support in relation to the costs of living
- purpose of the financial support / regulations
- duration of support
- flexibility of the reintegration project



- other reasons
- too extensive bureaucratic
- application duration too long
- organizing of financial means
- access criteria are too specific
- not knowing that they exist

Other reasons:

- lack of trust of the clients in the local organisation
- limited preparation time
- confidentiality concerns, increased security risk
- high costs
- different region in the country of return
- eligibility criteria

Reasons against
organizing return
through RI projects

Monitoring and sustainable return

Why we need Independent Monitoring Mechanisms

(presented by Frans Bastiaens, Director of HIT Foundation)



HIT Foundation, The Netherlands

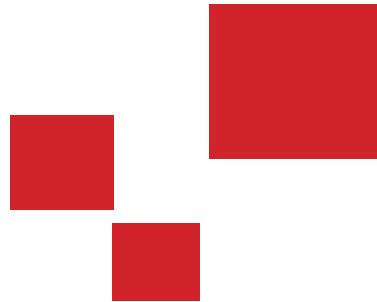
Action research and practical experiments in the fields of reintegration and return, labour migration and integration to provide new input to advance policy and practice, based in the Netherlands. <http://hitfoundation.eu/>

Need for **independent** monitoring

- There is a need to know the impact of the return policies and practices. Monitoring means to learn what is going on in practice.
- Monitoring should be independent: being independent from the sending organisation / the organisation which is involved in the returning process and using independent methodology (independent from host country factors).

New monitoring **method** for minors

- HIT foundation developed a methodology which is based on the UN Children's Right Convention. Since this Convention is ratified by the member states, it offers an accepted basis for further discussion. Based on the Convention 14 conditions were chosen and the definition of the conditions was established in discussion with locals. Therefore the definition takes the local circumstances into account.
- 24 questions on the 14 conditions in the so-called BIC model (Best Interest of the Child) were developed.



Best Interest of the Child (BIC) model

FAMILY	SOCIETY
1. Adequate physical care	8. Safe wider physical environment
2. Safe direct physical environment	9. Respect
3. Affective atmosphere	10. Social network
4. Supporting, flexible childrearing structure	11. Education
5. Adequate examples by parents	12. Contact with peers
6. Interest	13. Adequate examples in society
7. Continuity and stability in upbringing conditions, a future perspective	14. Stability in life circumstances, future perspective

- Based on the questionnaire, it is possible to give an indication of the alternative that gives children the best developmental prospects (in the best interest of the child). The judgement is about three situations: Current situation in the host country, future perspective in the host country, future perspective in the country of return.
- There will be a 'monitoring package' which can be a blue print for independent monitoring. Advising organisations cannot do the monitoring themselves, but they can hand it over to independent persons.
- The package can be used to assess returnees to Kosovo and Albania. It will be available in February 2014 and include methodology description, questionnaires, baseline for Kosovo & Albania based on 150 cases and analysis support by the University of Groningen.

Points of discussion:

- A methodology for the monitoring of adults should be developed as well
- Age of the children should be indicated and cases should be divided into different age groups (12-15 and 15-18 years), but the impact of return also depends on the duration of stay in the host country
- Roma as a specific target group should be considered separately

Sustainable return and post-return monitoring

(presented by Saskia Garner, Refugee Action UK)



Refugee Action UK

Refugee action is an independent national charity founded in 1981 that provides advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers in several cities in Britain.

<http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

Sustainable Return

Definition of sustainable return

- little consensus on what constitutes sustainable return and reintegration
- evaluating the effectiveness of the program in securing sustainable returns is problematic
- drawing on existing research, the experiences of the clients and the opinions of their partners Refugee Action developed the following definition:

Sustainable return is when an individual (and their family)

- are able to engage in income generation sufficiently to meet the accommodation and subsistence needs of their family
- has successfully re-established family and social ties and feels a sense of belonging to the community they return to
- do not suffer persecution or violence as a result of the political or security situation in the country of return
- do not need to re-migrate except via safe and regulated migration routes

Eight key contextual requirements that will lead to appropriate, successful and sustainable returns:

1. The decision to leave through an AVR programme must be voluntary – people must:

- Have adequate resources while considering return.
- Not be detained or destitute – this stops people from being able to make the decision whether to return.
- Have confidential, impartial and non-directive advice to consider whether AVR is right for them.
- Have access to legal advice given by persons with suitable legal training.
- Not be persuaded or coerced to apply for AVR – this erodes trust in the programme.

2. AVR programmes have to exist within a fair, efficient and accountable asylum or immigration process in the host country:

- Improving the quality of asylum and immigration, decision making will increase voluntary and therefore more sustainable engagement with AVR.
- The AVR application process itself should be fair, transparent and consistent.

3. AVR programmes should be tailored to meet the needs of people in vulnerable situations:

- Families, people with mental and physical health problems, detainees, people facing risks on returns, young adults, victims of violence, children, single parents and elderly people need an individualised, tailored approach.
- Urgent care needs must be addressed first, before AVR can be considered.

4. People who have returned need sufficient support and resources to build a sustainable future

- Financial resources for all voluntary returnees that cover initial living costs, and enable the returnee to generate a sustainable source of income
- Support in-country from independent, local expert organisations

5. AVR programmes' success must be measured by sustainability of return:

- Sustainability should be the primary measurement of success of AVR programmes.
- A common definition of sustainable return is needed, including:
 - socio-economic sustainability (ability to meet economic needs – housing, subsistence, health and education)
 - safety and security
 - no desire to re-migrate (except via legal routes)

6. Voluntary return must be driven by its ability to increase sustainable development

- If development goals (rather than enforcement goals) drive the AVR service it will be:
 - more trusted
 - more aligned with needs in countries of return
 - more sustainable
 - a better programme for returnees

7. AVR is not an appropriate solution for everyone – an alternative solution is needed for those:

- with denied status:
- with protection needs
- who are stateless
- who are physically unable to travel
- for whom there is no safe route of return
- who cannot obtain travel documents

8. Civil society organisations are best placed to run AVR programmes, linking support

- Their primary beneficiary is the client (not profit or government)
- They are trusted by the communities the AVR programme is intended to serve
- The link between support pre- and post-return is key, enabling people to take advantage of training, support and information that increases sustainability and take up of AVR. Independence from governments is a requirement for many people when considering return.



Factors likely to increase the sustainability for those who are returning

- High quality, independent advice and information: Information on both the process and the conditions in the country of return are important.
- Sustainable business ventures: this requires up to date local information (local economic conditions, viability of different business types) and business skills (provision of vocational training in financial and administrative skills, starting in the host country with further follow up and support provided in the country of return)
- Psychological/emotional support
- Social capital: facilitating access to networks and contacts post return

Support of persons in vulnerable situations to obtain a sustainable solution

- Choices commissions risk assessments from an independent, social work trained organisation when working with unaccompanied children, to ensure that the best interests of the child are identified and pursued (includes assessment of the situation the child will return to, any risks they face either in the host country or when returning, recommendation specifying whether return or remaining in the host country is in the child's best interest and additional steps that should be taken to support the young person e.g. identification of alternative support sources in the host country/ referral to social services).
- Choices carries out risk assessments for trafficked people considering return, to ensure that people have considered how to mitigate risks and to try to reduce the risk of re-trafficking.
- Where Choices identifies that an individual may not have capacity to make an informed decision about return due to mental health problems, links are made with mental health services to ensure that mental health care is obtained. This enables people to access suitable services to support their health needs both pre- and post-return, and ensures that the decision to return is made when people are able to think through the consequences of their actions.



Discussions continued during break time

Broader policy and advocacy work

NGOs do not simply process applications, but work within a broader context to improve the situation for their clients. As a result, NGOs are motivated to suggest improvements to the programme, to analyse both their own delivery of the service but also the broader policy agenda – whether this is the asylum and immigration process in the host country, or the development agenda in the country of return. This approach not only leads to constant programme improvements but also increases trust and credibility in the programme amongst the communities accessing it and the organisations referring to it.

Duration of monitoring

- Duration of monitoring for measuring sustainable outcomes should be a long time period – at least up to 18 months post-return and preferably 2 - 3 years post-return
- Follow-up is done by phone calls from the return counsellor 2 - 6 months after return to check whether the arrival was successful
- Post-return monitoring includes an annual analysis after the first and the second year: psychosocial well-being, economic support: how many clients are still supported by their families?



Further points of discussion concerning monitoring

When does a returnee stop being a returnee?

- What is meant by ‚reintegration support‘ and how can this be distinguished from further support? How can a handover to support structures which are locally accessible be ensured?
- What kind of achievements can be originated in the reintegration support? What influence does it really have on the long term process of establishing a sustainable life?
- Aim of evaluation: Which aims are communicated for example by the policy makers? In what are they interested?
- When is the reintegration process finished?
- How can long-term monitoring be put into practice? Capacity, budget available?
- Definition of long-term perspective: policy makers refer to sustainability after a period of 6 months

The clients‘ expectations concerning monitoring

- Decision of the client to participate or not, participation of the clients can't be taken for granted. But the organisation might have an obligation to evaluate and record
- Clients are willing to share their experience if:
 - They intend to help others
 - Willingness to share experience
 - Contact/relationship is still kept: informal contact, greetings, email, interest to know how they are doing
 - Interest of the clients: What is in for me? Consideration, something in return for time and effort e.g. for interviews
- Clients who already returned some time ago might offer a wider perspective: reflection on the return, reflective understanding of the process, but can also be distorting/views have changed --> need of a strategy in the empiric research
- Relationship between client and organisation might have strengthened through the use of other activities or support by the organisation
- Selection of the clients who are still in contact with the organisation could lead to a negative bias, since these might be clients who still are in need of support
- Cultural patterns of keeping contact / kind of relationship: it is important to consider the cultural context in which the monitoring is taking place. This includes the definition of a relationship and how it is valued.

Reintegration Projects and Partnerships

Diakonie Kosova

Location	Kosovo (Mitrovica)
Website and contact	http://www.diakonie-kosova.org Mr Nysret Krasniqi email: info@diakonie-kosava.org
Introduction	Established in 2007 by Diakonie Trier with aiming at the support of returned migrants from Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, the Diakonie Kosova offers a wide range of services in different social fields according to the needs of underprivileged people in Kosovo.
Main programmes and activities	Diakonie Trainings Center (DTC) Offering educational courses for young people in the region of Mitrovica (teachers are chosen out of the target group/ minorities) • Construction (central heating, water installation, carpentering, floor tiling etc.) • English classes • Cooperation with German company ‚Kanuf‘, incl. intern ships • Short training periods (3-4 months) • Vocational training enables people either to be self-employed or to find a job • Training in agriculture (if land is available) Psychosocial Centre - training for trauma-therapists: • Qualifying trauma-therapists in cooperation with the Department of Health • Therapy for traumatised clients • Working with local trainers (sometimes supported by a trainer from Germany) • Developed a two years training program for trauma therapists, participants were chosen out of the target groups (e.g. women working in the field of domestic violence) • 1/5 of the population has a trauma Environmental Awareness • Building up an information centre and projects to increase awareness for environmental protection and ecological agriculture • Biological Chicken Farm Integrative approach: 14 workers with disability, 4 workers without disability Multi-Ethnic Youth Centre Office for Voluntary Return • Providing ‚Meet and Greet‘ services at the airport, transfer to home town, support for start-up business, counselling and referring to other social services

Services of office for voluntary return	• Pre-return counselling of welfare organisations, municipalities etc. in Germany by Diakonie Trier • Assessment about: - security - medical support - education - work - living costs - transport • Sustainable care • Transport • Housing • Help and special support for people with disabilities • Help to get/ find documents in Kosovo and Germany • Trauma therapy in the psycho social centre in Mitrovica and in villages • Trauma therapy in cooperation with other therapists in whole Kosovo • sustainable care
Target group	• Especially people from minorities (particularly difficult unemployment situation – 90% of minorities are unemployed)
Costs of modules/ services	• Personnel costs 7.00 € hrs., 10 hrs. = 70.00 €, km 0.25 €/Km • Running costs for office, telephone, copies 40.00 € per case. • For one assessment 120.00 € • Sustainable care/ looking after, 3 months 180.00 € • 6 months 360.00 € additional travel costs
Partners in Germany	• In Rhineland Palatinate with all its municipalities/ we council the municipalities • NGOs that work with refugees
Partners in Kosovo	• Ministry of Internal Affairs • Municipalities/ Integration Offices • Churches, NGOs • Safe houses
Challenges	• Language barrier: different languages depending on the region of return lead to difficulties in writing and reading
Recommendations	• Good assessment and the investment of time and money leads to a sustainable return
Further points regarding work in reintegration field	• Careful assessment of possibilities and capacities: Assessment sometimes means "to destroy dreams" if reality and vision are not matching. • Corruption: Up to now Diakonie Kosova stayed clear and transparent. Also the mayor of Mitrovica is very eager to fight the issue of corruption in Kosovo • How do people finance themselves during the trainings? Often they receive support from their families

Idia Renaissance

Location	Nigeria
Website and contact	http://www.idia-renaissance.org Mr Nwoha Roland email: idiarenaissance@yahoo.co.uk
Introduction	Established in 1999 to respond to the problem of human trafficking and officially registered in 2003, Idia Renaissance is now addressing a wide range of social problems. Through research, advocacy, education, enlightenment and training, Idia Renaissance especially works with children, adolescents, women and vulnerable groups. Nationwide geographic coverage: Offices in Benin City and Lagos and networking/coalitions with other civil society organisations (CSOs) across Nigeria Strong existing partnership with government MDAs including NAPTIP
Main programmes and activities	Anti-Human Trafficking Programmes Community outreaches, legislative frameworks, skill training, etc. Youth Resource Centre Empowering adolescents and children by providing information, life skills and services as well as offering vocational training - library - reintegration - vocational training (hotel management, hair dressing, cosmetic training, video- photography, computer training). - most trainings run for a time period of 6 months Edo Underprivileged Children Scholarship Trust Fund (EUCSTF) Seeking to enable underprivileged children to finish basic education and offering continuous sponsorship for children with an academic performance above average. HIV/ Aids programme 'Heart to heart' support group Voluntary return
Services of return programme	- airport pick-up (meet and greet) - family tracing / reunification - housing (temporary / long term) - assistance with business start-ups (business counselling/monitoring) - providing assistance to access the labour market - giving information on job offers / vacancies if the client has any kind of education / qualification - education and vocational training - If a client stays far from the office location, Idia tries to link the client to local trainers / institutions offering vocational trainings - personal (tailor made) need - social, legal and medical assistance
Target group	- Pre-return counselling of welfare organisations, municipalities etc. children, adolescents and adults (males and females) - victims of human trafficking



	• children on the Move (UAMs) • undocumented/overstayed migrants • ex-asylum seekers • potential migrants (vulnerable persons)
National partners	• NAPTIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters) • Immigration • family units in the Nigerian police; anti-trafficking unit in Nigeria • ENCATIP/NACTAL/CSOs
International partners	• ERI Nigeria project: Maatwerk bij Terugkeer, the Netherlands • Micado Migration • International Social Service, Switzerland • Maatwerk bij Terugkeer • American Bar Association, TAMPEP, Caritas, UN Agencies
Best practices - with returnees	• Voluntary returnees experience a more sustainable return than forced returnees • Prior visit/contact to client's home/family based on the returnee's request before arrival will help to prepare the returnee and the family for the arrival (family counselling) • Social networks of the returnees play a very important role in stabilising the return • Contact between returnee and service provider (Idia Renaissance) prior to return should be encouraged to establish a good and friendly relation and understanding of our both roles • Involvement of a family member with a strong relationship in the returnee's project
- with partners in EU	• One coordination point from Europe (ERI) • NGO networks work better in assisting people to return voluntary (trust relation) • Twinning: Exchanging experiences among service providers within/outside the region
Challenges	• Low self-esteem of returnees • Stigmatisation from family and community • 'Noting works in Nigeria' negative view especially from diaspora • Insecurity regarding health care (mental/ chronic illness) • Fear of ill-treatment by immigration officials on arrival in the country • Changing economic policies

Recommendations

- A minimum of €3,000 is recommended as reintegration fee
- Victims of human trafficking should be properly put into consideration (prevention and protection services).
- Advances should be made to bring traffickers based in Europe to justice
- Practical skills/training relevant to clients who return can be provided with e.g. a starter pack or tool box
- Importance of exchange (within and outside the region):
 - o shared experience and impressions help to understand conditions and situation in CoR and the host country
- Capacity building is also needed for the service providers (e.g. could also be done via skype or other means of communication)

Further points regarding work in reintegration field

- Living expenses in Nigeria vary a lot depending on the location. In a not highly expensive area, the monthly expenses come up to about 120 €. Rent costs in Lagos are only about 50€ per month for one person, but sometimes need to be paid for three years in advance.
- Time period of support after return – formally 1 year, but informally Idia Renaissance stays in contact longer and advises if needed



ETTC Iraq

European Technology and Training Centre

Location	Iraq (Iraqi Kurdish Region), facilities in Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah
Website and Contact	http://www.ettc-iraq.net Mr Hajjaj Mustafa email: drei@ettc-iraq.net
Introduction	Inaugurated in 2009 and registered as an NGO with the Regional Kurdish Government in 2011 of Iraq, the ETTC offers a wide range of trainings, seminars and other events in cooperation with European partner countries. Besides aiming at capacity building of public sector employees, the ETTC organises and implements measures to promote employment and to support the development of enterprises and business start-ups.
Programmes and activities	Reintegration Programme in Iraq (RPI): training and job-placement programme for returnees, aiming at improving the returnees' employability and finding a job which matches their professional profile Vocational Training Course (VTC): Offering professional qualification in the fields of car mechanic, welding, metal works and electricity Computer and language courses: Offering courses in the field of IT/Computers as well as English and German language courses with a duration from 4 weeks to 3 months Leadership Training programme (LTP): Targeting decision makers in Government, Parliament and Local administration trainings focusing on Good Governance are offered Good governance in Public Administration programme (GGPA) The programme provides different trainings and thematic seminars for Kurdistan local government employees like • IT courses • thematic seminars • language courses



Services of return programme	• airport pick up • counselling and registration • orientation seminar and skill counselling (including the topic of social reintegration) • trainings • job placement - booming in the fields of construction, oil/ gas, hospitality, transportation, - lack of skilled labours – skilled people are even being brought from abroad (e.g.no maintenance persons available) - good chances to open own small businesses - rare chances in the government sector: 72% of government budget goes to salaries of public servants -> not very high employment chances due to high competition • business start up • monitoring for one year - pre-monitoring: before signing paper e.g. for jobs, business etc. - after one month for general follow-up - after 3 months - after 6 months
Target group	• very different target groups: partly high skilled people with high level of education
Best Practices	• Better practice when there is flexibility in packages and a variety of options for the returnees in order to get good outcomes and sustainable reintegration • Communication with prime focus on EU countries • Workshops and meetings on developing programmes
Challenges	• A lot of documentation • Different forms and requirements for the four countries • Exchange rates differ from local rates • Family's perception/ expectation regarding life in Europe: o Returnees don't accept all types of jobs (pride and expectations of the returnee).
Recommendations	• More workshops and meetings with partners and counsellors in host countries • Enhancing focus of the communication • Less documentation and harmonised formats • Thorough preparation and agreements before starting projects • Information needed before return: Clear information about the project before return, information about project details and also the differences between the projects in different EU countries • Increased counselling and more information before departure

Partnership on side of reintegration	Swedish Immigration Board, Sweden Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK German Federal Foreign Office (GGPA) Caritas, Belgium Caritas Austria Hero, Norway Micado, Germany Maatwerk bij Terugkeer, the Netherlands Women Empowerment Organization, Iraq OFFII, France
Further questions and information regarding work in the reintegration field	• There are high numbers (about 300) of returnees to Iraq – why are there only seven returnees from Germany who return with ETTC? • The German Embassy as well as the Iraqi government are collecting information on different projects in the region to later make it accessible (Ms Scheer, BAMF Germany) • The majority of returnees are men, but there are also chances for women. For instance there is ERSO- SURE for returnees with special needs. • If a client finds a job, the support from the package can still be paid additionally to the salary. • The EU countries and packages differ in the way the funds are made available, e.g. in kind or in cash. Payments are settled by the service provider, if the money is sent to the account instead of the client doing the payments him or herself.

reintegration

Refugee Action – General Introduction and Choices Programme

Location	Eight regions across the UK
Website and contact	http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/ email: info@refugee-action.org.uk
Introduction	Refugee action is an independent national charity founded in 1981 that provides advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers in several cities in Britain
Main programmes and activities	Campaigning and rising awareness on asylum issues through media and public work Support for asylum seekers in the UK by asylum advice services and volunteer mentors to help refugees to understand employment in the UK, identify their skills, make a plan to find work and to build up a new life. Gateway Protection Programme – Providing resettlement support to refugees who are brought to the UK as part of the UNHCR Gateway Protection Programme. Choices - Assisted voluntary return service Since 2011 the programme is providing information, advice and support for people returning to their home countries. It is divided into AVRIM (Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants), AVRFC (Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children) and VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme)
Services of return programme	Choices has partner organisations providing reintegration services for AVRFC (Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children) and VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) in the following countries: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Malawi, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zimbabwe.



Choices Programme:

- Refugee Action has contacts in 70% of the countries people return to from the UK
- Identifying partners in countries of return:
 - scoping work was carried out looking at NGO context
 - consulted with ERSO and other networks
 - tender process involving detailed assessment
 - subcontracts
 - partner selection process happens according to rough framework criteria like reputation, references and capacities => specific selection follows

Pre- and post-departure links:

- case by case advice
- country information
- establishing early contact enables early advice and intervention
- establishing confidence and trust with returnees
- partners' key actors in monitoring: case by case feedback, general feedback and 'feedback loop'

NGO partnership model - Benefits:

- Choices partners work to the same principles of impartial advice and confidentiality.
- Local organisations have the socio-cultural expertise needed for complex and sensitive work.
- They have a wider development focus and are engaged in relevant issues affecting local communities such as income generation and business development.
- Working with well-established partners with regional office bases and national networks increases access to local support.
- Partner in India works in partnership with 164 organisations
- Partnership with local NGOs and CBOs gives flexibility and allows reacting according to migration patterns: these organisations are in contact with other local organisations and are therefore able to support returnees to different parts / regions of the country.
- Levels of satisfaction with the partners overseas is extremely high ranging from 89.2% to 100%.

AGREDS Ghana

Location	Ghana (Accra)
Website and contact	http://www.agreds.org email: agredsggh@agreds.org
Introduction	The Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS) is a church- based non-profit development NGO that coordinates all the development and relief programmes of the assemblies of God Church, Ghana. AGREDS is working in different fields like health care, education, community development and conflict resolution
Main programmes and activities	Health services and HIV/AIDS awareness, education Health services providing community based preventive and curative health care in 113 outreach communities and different programmes on HIV /AIDS like trainings, advocacy and support groups. Community development and education Focusing on infrastructural development with emphasis on education, health and sanitation, these programmes include the construction of school buildings, sponsorship for basic education with emphasis in Northern Ghana where poverty is endemic. Livelihood enhancement programme Focusing mainly on poverty reduction by empowering people, particularly women, in deprived communities through vocational skills training, community awareness raising and provision of microcredit support. Human trafficking Refugees and asylum seekers programme Health care (2 hospitals and one health centre) Gender
Services of return programme	• Need-based meet, greet and linked support services • Facilitation of reintegration support services - psychological counselling - health care (support in registering for health care insurances – 70%-80% of health care services are covered through that) - skills, education and business start ups - peer review (effective way of creating a feeling of understanding, social rehabilitation) • Field and monitoring visits (monitoring for one year, but ,informal' follow-up continues after formal support ends) • Review reintegration plans with clients • Prevention of migration: Awareness through workshops in course of the campaign ,Surprising Europe' in cooperation with Maatwerk. This also helps to lower expectations and rise sympathy for clients after their return
Best practices	• Approach reintegration as a process and not an event • Treat each returnee as a unique person • Social rehabilitation is as important as educational, technical and business & entrepreneurial development • Empowerment for sustainable problem solving and coping mechanisms • Create opportunities/platforms for returnees to meet and share experiences • Provide supportive field monitoring visits

Challenges	• Relatively small amount of reintegration support for returnees, therefore difficulties in transforming their life so profoundly that the results are sustainable • Inadequate funding for effective networking with other NGOs in raising awareness creation etc. • Limited resources for partners to build staff capacity to keep up with current trends in returnees service provision and service given in a globalised world as well as skills for lobby and advocacy
Recommendations	• Advocate for the review of reintegration assistance allocated to clients upon return in their home countries • Quarterly meetings with clients should be encouraged • Provide a sponsored vocational skills training based on pre-returning/reintegration plans of the clients. The skills training scheme should be an additional support not funded by the funds available to returnees • Rents have to be paid at least 2 years in advance (for businesses even 2-10 years). Therefore only a small amount is available to be invested in the start-up; funds should include the costs of training and qualifications to have enough money available to invest afterwards • Establishment of a microcredit fund to assist clients with additional funds to properly set up business instead of borrowing from institutions with high interest rates • Increase frequency of field /home visits particularly to the elderly/ those with health issues and/or those returning from detention centres • Network with local organisations to provide training in required areas of interest to clients • Raise awareness on the situation of migrants in Europe in families and communities as a preventive measure
Partnership on side of reintegration	Refugee Action in the UK and Maatwerk bij Terugkeer in the Netherlands Numbers of returnees: • 25 people with Maatwerk in 1,5 years • 56 people with Refugee Action in 1 year



Caritas International Belgium

Location	Belgium, Brussels
Website and contact	http://www.caritas-int.be
Introduction	Caritas International Belgium is part of the international network, Caritas Internationalis. Caritas International Belgium is offering support to migrants in Belgium by working on a small scale and giving social support for asylum seekers, integration of recognised refugees, assist with reunification of families, guardianship of unaccompanied minors, visits in detention centers and others.
Main programmes and activities	Voluntary return programme Since 1984, Caritas International works with IOM as part of the REAB (Return and Emigration of Asylum seekers in Belgium) programme providing migrants who wish to return voluntarily with assistance before departure and airfare. Reintegration program Started as a pilot project in 2004 and 2005 to return to Bulgaria and Ukraine, Caritas International's reintegration programme has since extended and now covers most countries around the world. Complementing the REAB programme, it includes the development of a reintegration scheme and support by local partners. Enhanced Reintegration program Designed especially for those identified as vulnerable, this programme offers a more intense and personalised support in 14 target countries as part of STAVR (Strengthening Tailor-made Assisted Voluntary Return) programme.
Partnership on side of reintegration	ERSO CRI Belgium (Country of Return Information)
Further information regarding the work in the reintegration field	• There are two service providers for return in Belgium: Caritas International and IOM; they do not see each other as competitors, but completion and they are working closely together; there is a need for reintegration packages, since just returning is not enough • The majority of returnees to Russia return with the support of reintegration projects



Caritas Russia (Moscow)

Location	Russia, Moscow
Website and contact	http://www.caritas.ru +7(499) 976 24 38, email: cepr@caritas.ru
Introduction	Caritas European Part of Russia is part of the international network, Caritas Internationalis. Caritas in Russia participates in the making and development of the civil society in the name of the Catholic Church. The official structures of Caritas began to be created from 1991.
Main programmes and activities	Migration project: This project started in 2011 and includes individual help for returnees to Cuba and Africa, assistance for voluntary return to Kaliningrad, Vladimir region, Nizhny Novgorod and other cities of the European part of Russia, as well as in the southern part of Russia, Siberia and the Caucasus region. Homeless people and AIDS-HIV Working with homeless people in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and with people affected by HIV/AIDS. Children and youth Home for orphans and children living in dysfunctional families in Kaliningrad, charity events, youth project for the village, daytime entertainment centre for children and adolescents, a home for persons with disabilities in St. Petersburg. Patronage Shelter for single persons with disabilities in St. Petersburg and home care and individual counselling in other regions. Prison ministry Individual management of people, emerged from prison, letters and parcels for the prisoners, working with governmental services, legal support, rehabilitation support groups.
Services of return programme	• services • clarification of the returnee's situation, identifying needs, explaining the conditions • help in guiding them in the current environment of economic and political situation in the country of return • assistance in preparing a business plan, assistance in implementing a business plan • assistance in obtaining medical services • assistance in the acquisition of goods equipment, etc. • assistance with job training • financial support • free legal advice
Important steps before and after return	Before returning: • Client and Caritas Belgium sign contract to build up trust • The reintegration plans are very flexible • Maximum budget for business start-up is 2200 € • Information: from very general to very detailed • Contact with the local partner : skype = important to build up trust

	• After the decision is made : preparing the return and the re-integration = important for the local partner in the CoO • Sign the contract with Caritas Belgium • Inform the CoO about the person and the re-integration After return: • Caritas Moscow has different partners in different parts of Russia, but monitoring and follow-up in some areas is difficult due to security constrains. Office in Moscow eases access to other regions which are not easily accessible by other local organisations - organisations from Moscow have a better reputation • Exchange and networking as important factors: field visits, twinning and getting to know each other
Challenges	• Difficulties with the financial status of the returnees • The unstable political situation in some parts of Russia • Difficulties with the translation of medical documents
Recommendations	• Organise study visits • Opportunity for returnees to receive in Belgium certificate of the most popular specialties (hairdresser, mechanic, manicurist, driver, etc.). This will allow returnees faster and with fewer financial losses to open a business • Informing returnees about the most sought after professions in Russia. • Increase the term of the contract to 15 months for cases of medical assistance • Business implementation: building up on already existing businesses (e.g. from family members) improves chances of success
Partnership on side of reintegration	CIB (Caritas International Belgium) Maatwerk bij Terugkeer UNHCR Red Cross (Russia) Local NGOs (such as the Sintern), Migration Service of Russia, Local authorities, Department of Health



IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) Programme

Location	Main Office: Brussels More than 20 regular AVR programmes worldwide
Website and contact	http://www.iom.int email: preyntjens@iom.int
Introduction	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of return.
Steps of AVVR	■ Pre-departure assistance • Outreach 1. Profiling/spreading information 2. Implemented/targeted through diasporas, NGOs, migrant associations, mobile counselling teams, regular newsletters, specific websites • Return Information & Counselling 1. Provision of general country of return, information for return and reintegration purposes (country fact sheets, stories of return) 2. Information on individual queries • Application processing/health assessments • Travel preparation (documentation assistance/ escorts/ temp. shelter) ■ Return/ transit assistance • Travel arrangements 1. Ticketing/luggage allowance 2. Embarkation assistance • Transfer assistance to the airport • Payment of installation grant/ • Pocket money (if applicable) • Transit assistance 1. Medical or non-medical escorts for vulnerable cases • Temporary accommodation (if necessary) ■ Post- return reception support • Information & counselling • Identification of special needs • Preparation of re-integration phase • Onward transportation to family/community • Temporary accommodation/shelter • Health assistance/referrals (if applicable) ■ Reintegration support • Reintegration allowances • Temporary reception arrangements • Micro/ small business development (credits, grants) • Community assistance (construction of schools, training facilities etc.) • Promotion of self-employment/ on the job training • Socio-economic assistance (assistance in-kind) • Impact on the local community • Link to local development • Link of pre-departure counselling with reintegration assistance • Tailored to individual needs ■ Monitoring

Benefits of return programme	• Takes into account migrant's decision • Room for preparation to return • Ensures respect for human rights • Avoids stigma of forced return and negative repercussions for reintegration • Provides counseling, financial and/or logistical as well as reintegration support
Target group	• Individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn • Stranded migrants • Victims of trafficking • Other vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied children, or persons with health-related needs. - Need for specialised protection frameworks with: - Child friendly/appropriate processes - Gender sensitive/appropriate processes - Specialised accommodation facilities - Need for community based programmes outside of institutional detention frameworks • Need for closely coordinated return, reception and reintegration frameworks • 30.000 returns through IOM per year
Challenges	• Engagement of migrants and self-entrepreneurship (lack of training); • Socio-economic situation in the countries of return; • Personal problems and vulnerabilities (medical cases, divorces etc.); • Understanding procedures and implementation of project, obtaining relevant documents • Follow-up of cases in remote areas. • Different financial budgets for returnees from different host countries • Need for harmonisation on funds and duration of support in EU countries • Medical support is sometimes needed for a longer time (i.e. chronic illnesses) and medical reintegration support have always long time frames • Dealing with large numbers of returnees while being able to manage individual approaches





Recommendations

- Reintegration of returnees should go along with development of local communities => new and current development tendencies
- It's important to avoid wrong messages and conflicts with local development like: "Returning migrants receive preferential treatment in comparison with people who stayed in their countries". => returnees should partner up with local communities and partners
- Recognition of local 'know-how' and partnerships with local CSOs and governments are very important. => There is a need to further develop partnerships and joint processes.
- Capacity building is not only needed on side of the civil society, but also on side of administration or local government to make them ready to receive the returnees
- Transparency of information and pre-departure counselling is needed: not only success stories, but also difficulties and problems in terms of follow-up: personal visits might not be possible in certain remote areas.

Further points and questions regarding work in reintegration field

- Support of local actors instead of global players covering all activities: According to IOM partnership is the key, but capacity building takes time and IOM can offer the expertise and experience in that field.
- IOM has the mandate to collect and give information on the CoR, but they do not take part in the analysis and the decision on a political level

Conclusions from the presentations, group works and discussions

Partnership and Cooperation

Based on the summarised results of the presentations and the discussions, the following main conclusions regarding partnership and cooperation can be drawn. Additionally, the next paragraphs will focus on the expectations of the involved actors, as well as on their communication.

- Partners in CoR are key actors in monitoring and follow-up on the cases informally even beyond the planned time frame.
- The already existing contacts and links to partner organisations should be used frequently to ensure a permanent use and therefore an ongoing funding of the projects.
- For partners in the CoR, as well as for return counsellors, focal points in Europe are of prime importance. Every side should work towards enhanced communication with the focal points.
- The reintegration projects wish for less documentation and harmonised formats.
- High importance of capacity building of local partner organisations as well as local government bodies in countries of return.
- 'Peer exchange' (between local partners and returnees) is seen as a good chance to exchange experiences and lessons learned.
- A 'critical mass' of returnees is needed to sustain the projects' long-term perspective and to improve the measures of reintegration.
- There should be as much information and transparent counselling prior to departure as possible. Return counsellors as well as local partners and returnees should be fully aware of procedures, steps and possibilities.
- Working with well-established partners, regional office bases and national networks increases access to local support.



- Need of a shared overall goal (e.g. according to EU directive)
 - Roles, responsibilities and resources need to be clearly defined.
- Terms and understanding of mental health should be clarified (e.g. Africa vs. EU)

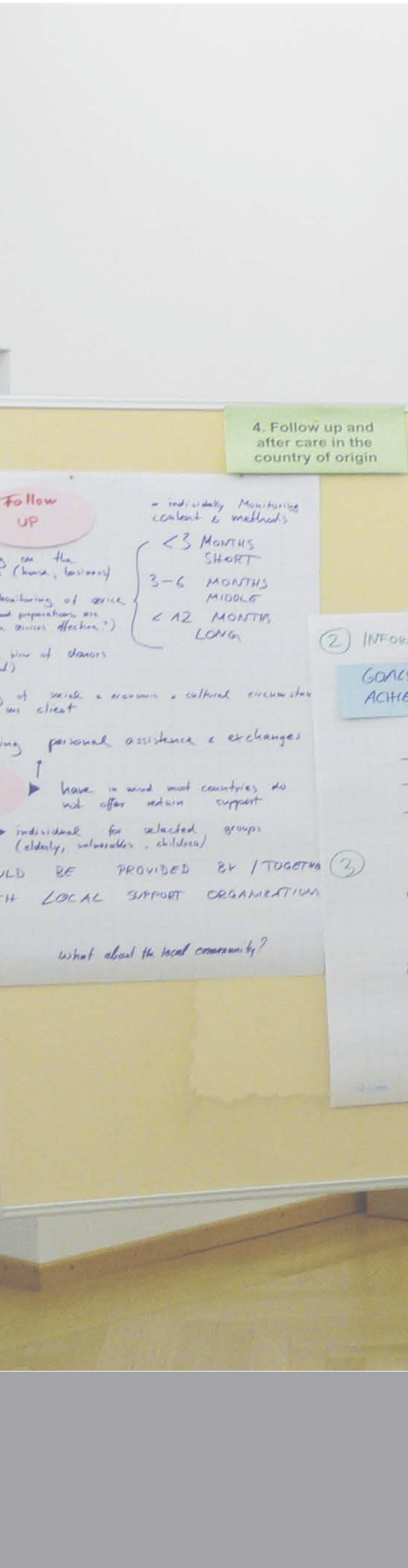
Sustainability of return and reintegration

One of the main questions that related to all topics of this conference was: “What is necessary for a sustainable reintegration of a returnee in their country of return?”

Some answers to this question could be:

- Sustainability in mid-term and long-term integration is a key question, e.g. in cases of medical needs: How can a long-term support be guaranteed in a system which is based on a limited time-period of support (e.g. people who need lifelong medical treatment)?
- Sustainable reintegration has several aspects like getting a job, training, medical needs, housing and financial benefits
- Social networks of the returnees play a very important role in stabilising the return process. Family members should also be involved by the local partners from the very beginning.
- A higher flexibility in terms of amount and content of reintegration packages would ease the work in CoRs and could lead to good outcomes, satisfaction of returnees and their sustainable reintegration. The returnees should be able to choose from different options regarding the possibilities after their return.
- Raise awareness in families and communities as preventive measure on the situation of migrants in Europe





Actors Mapping for return process (group work 1)

What is needed for a successful closure and a new start? In group work no. 1, the participants discussed and documented which actors need to be involved at which stage of the return process. The following list gives an overview of the results:

Actors involved in the host country

- social network
- family of return
- medical institutions in host country and country of return
- policy makers

Process of return counsel service provision

- returnee
- return counsel office
- NGOs/ CSOs
- local government
- counsellor
- lawyer

Travel assistance

- embassy of country of return
- DT&V (Netherlands)

Actors involved in the country of return

Reintegration process

- family
- local partner
- management
 - counsellor
 - embassy of host country
- government of country of return
- local community

Expectations regarding support in the country of return and the EU country (group work no. 2)

- trust and credibility
- a well prepared client
- two-way partnership and support
- clear administrative process

Counsellor

- decision after a tailor-made advice and administration
- contract with partner
- feedback pre- and post-departure (ideally with partner organisation)

Client

- trustful, non-directive and realistic information about the country of return in their native language and about the partner organisation and the provisions of the support
- support according to the individual needs and vulnerability
- trust in counsellor and in partner

Partner organisation

- information about the client and the support scheme
- capacity to provide support

Family/ community

- a financially independent member
- realistic information about the returnee
- mediation by partner
- information about the support and perhaps the benefit from it

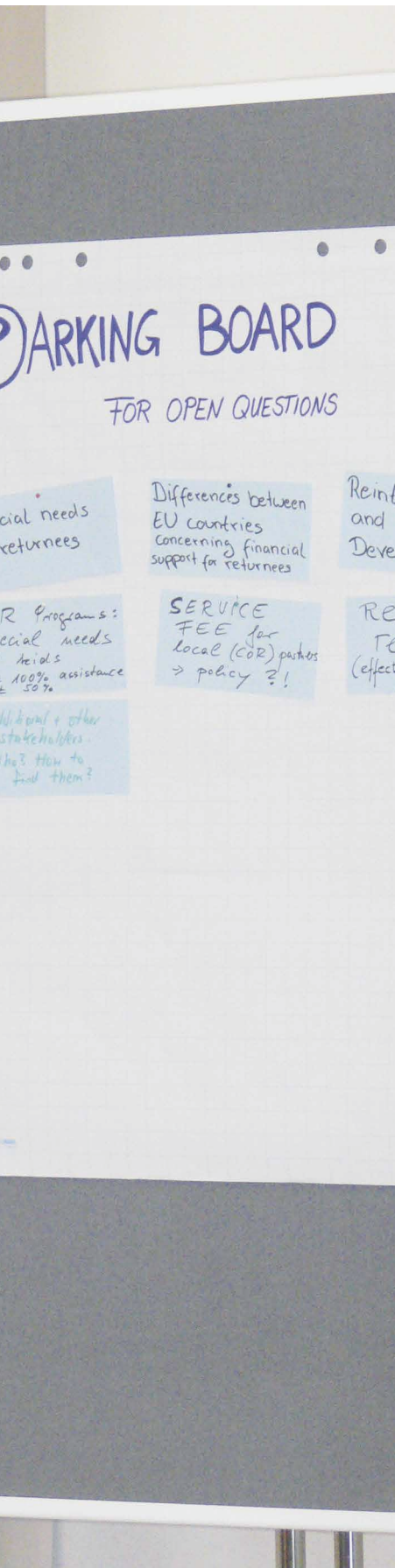
Government

- no illegal re-migration
- increased voluntary returns
- sustainable returns

What are the expectations concerning the cooperation with the reintegration projects from the counsel offices in the EU?

- application of agreed procedure related to integration support
- updated information of CoR
- situation and feedback mechanisms on (previous) returnees – generic and specific
- support from partner in organising visit to/ in their country. Also exchange and study visits
- open communication about working process
- being informed about situation in host country





What are the expectations concerning the cooperation with the counsel offices in the EU on the side of the reintegration projects?

- information and face to face contact
- ready-to-use (already translated) documents
- well prepared client
- transparent procedure about handing over data about the client
- mid- and long-term perspective
- being able to modify and adapt procedures to situation in CoR

What are the expectations from the clients?

- smooth, trustful and continuous cooperation of all actors

Communication before, during and after the return (group work 3)

Group work no. 3 focused on the detailed communication steps and channels during the return process. The group elaborated the following results:

What are the challenges within the communication chain?

- different expectations of different actors
- wording clarification: definition of counselling
- language barrier
- cultural differences
- time pressure
- different programmes/ lack of different funding/ overview
- too many players with overlapping roles

How can the communication be improved?

- contact between host country counsellor and local partner as early in the process as possible
- requirements and responsibilities should be made clear to all actors involved
- ongoing and continuous monitoring
- building communication channels (exchange info => trust)
- giving the returnee the possibility to choose (e.g. what kind of support, what kind of partner)

What kind of communication (e.g. documentation, short information) is needed before, during and after the return? Which aspects have to be covered concerning the communication?

Documentation before the return:

- proof of identity
- country profile
- project info
- info about partner and contact info
- case description
- travel details and documents
- skills they developed in EU and educational level of the children

Before, during & after the return:

- business plan
- medical records
- details of arrival

After the return:

- monitoring sheets and reports
- payment receipts
- contract between returnee and local partner
- registration forms



Networks

Integ Plan (Germany)

Location	Main office: Saarbrücken Germany
Website and contact	http://www.integplan.de Mr Hermann Schönemeier email: h.schoenmeier@micado-migration.de
Introduction	IntegPlan is funded by the European Return Fund and a cooperation project of Micado Migration, Coming Home München and the states of Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden Württemberg, Hesse and Lower Saxony. Promotion of integrated return planning means: Counsellors in Germany and their counterpart counsellors in the country of return are planning the return and reintegration process in cooperation with the returnee prior to and after the return
Main activities	Interlinkage of institutions & counselors - web-based exchange forum - national conferences - STG-Meetings Strengthening professional competence of individual counselors by further training Providing technical solutions like - CCM RETURN TOOL - RETURN NET
Target group	Return counsellors and thereby returnees
Return Net	- Is an internet data base to make information accessible to counsellors - Contains information on countries of return, including link lists to more relevant information - Is currently also being developed in English - One has to register to have access to most information. It is open to anybody from the return field (except the forum which is only accessible for the German return counsellors) - There are 171 registered users - There are no criteria for partners which are published on the website - Most partner organisations in CoRs can be contacted via a focal point in Germany/ Europe
Challenges	- There have been efforts to try to align financial systems for reintegration between different countries => so far not very successful - Often information is not made public/ by the counsellors due to time factor. Willingness to share information also depends on time and technical skills



European Reintegration Support Organisations – ERSO Network

Website	http://www.erso-project.eu
Introduction	ERSO Network started in 2007 and is a network of non-governmental return counseling and reintegration support organisations working and closely cooperating in the field of migration and development. Reintegration delivery activities built as a network of civil society organisations in Europe together with the partners overseas.
Network partners in Europe	ACCEM (Spain) Caritas Austria Caritas Europe Caritas International (Belgium) France Terre d'Asile Maatwerk bij Terugkeer Raphaels Werk (Germany) Refugee Action (UK)
Programmes	Latam • 2013- april 2014 • return fund • migrants, rejected asylum seekers • 4 partners in Europe (focal point) • partners in Latin America : Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador ERSO West • 2011-2013 • Europe Aid • linking return, reintegration and development • migrants, rejected asylum seekers, forced returnees • 7 partners in Europe – 5 focal points • 5 partners in Africa : Morocco, Sierra Leone, Togo, Cameroun and Senegal ERSO Sure • 2013- April 2014 • return fund • vulnerable groups • migrants, rejected asylum seekers • 5 partners in Europe – 3 focal points • 3 partners in Asia : Iraq, Mongolia, Pakistan ■ All reintegration projects are open for returnees from all countries ■ The respective contact person of ERSO members can be found online
Activities	• Impartial counseling and/or assistance to (rejected) asylum seekers and migrants in an irregular situation regarding their voluntary return and reintegration • Reintegration measures after the return in partnership with civil societies in the countries of return; in order to contribute to the development of the local society the migrant returns to. Tailor-made reintegration packages are designed to apply to a community based approach. • Capacity building measures such as information and awareness raising campaigns aiming at informing potential migrants about migration laws and policies and implications of irregular migration. • Sharing of each others' partner network, best practices and lessons learned. • Arrange contacts with local partners in CoR upon request. (Raphaelswerk's back office in Hamburg assists caseworkers in Germany with information regarding currently running ERSO projects, local partners in CoR, existing AVR programs, projects, and networks.)

Challenges	Provision of a service fee for the local partner
Recommendations	Invite CoO partners to EU: - exchange within the EU and with counsellors - express their concern to state department - field visits The EU partner: Monitoring visits and support of the local partner: - monitoring the returnees : during different time periods - evaluating the services - learn about the weak and strong points of reintegration - assistance , use it for recommendations on national and EU level
Sustainability	- Focus at the moment is to establish the programme / network also after the project period - There is a policy that contacts to partner organisation should always go via the European Partner; accessibility vs. protection of the partner in the CoR



VREN

Location	Main office: IOM Rome
Website	http://www.vren-community.org/
Introduction	The Voluntary Return European Network was funded by the European Return Fund Community Actions in 2010. The aim is to facilitate and promote coherent and harmonised voluntary return policy in Europe through improved cooperation among stakeholders in the field operating across the EU, Norway and Switzerland, as well as major countries of transit and origin.
Partnering countries	Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Rep., Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Partnering networks	• EMN (European Migration Network) • Mediterranean Migration Network • RIRVA (RETE ITALIANA PER IL RITORNO VOLONTARIO ASSISTITO) • ECRE (European Council on Refugees and Exiles)
Main activities	• Stimulating discussion forums on return • Engaging stakeholders on return related matters • Identifying common challenges and best practices on return • Conducting country surveys • Delivering information on countries of return
Future Outlook	• Final conference will take place mid of November 2013 in Brussels • focus on harmonised policies • outcome and next steps are not yet clarified • VREN streamlined into EU bodies and agencies dealing with AVR • Greater day-to-day involvement of all users • Having VREN become the go-to resource for all stakeholders involved • Thorough assessment and possibly modification of modalities of VREN network • From a repository of information to a fully functioning, dynamic platform • VREN as a network for policy makers and advocacy organisations • Bottom-up approach and the possibility to influence policy makers even by day to day work is meant to be included in the platform • It is planned to have assisted voluntary return as an additional part of the European Migration Network as a centralised information platform
Checklist on return	• Clear information should be provided so that the individual is aware of all options • Information should be tailored to the needs of the individual; each and every person has different circumstances and these should be taken into account • Information should be factual and not descriptive • Ensure that consent is given both by the source of the information as well as by the individual • Provide realistic time frames in terms of answering queries or gathering information • Ensure a participatory approach with other partner agencies, community diasporas, the individual returning • Do not guarantee that information can be provided - external circumstances can prevent this

Conclusions from presentations and discussions

Utilization and Inter-linking of networks - Points for discussion:

- *Networking needs investment in terms of time and money: Can that be considered in project proposals?*
- *What kind of information do organisations want to make accessible and how do they want to do it?*
- *Centralisation of information: duplication vs. completion*
- As there are identical sources of funding, there is a need of centralisation and cooperation
- Links to networks in 'developing countries' need to be established and used more effectively
- European Migration Network should consult initiatives that are already working in that field and are funded by the EU Commission, as well as the focal points in every member state

What demands do counsellors have for a network platform?

- Network on assisted voluntary return should be a one-stop-shop at least to have a European entrance gate for different other networks
- One address to get information from: by choosing the host country and the country of return, results for available partners/ focal points and support should be shown
- The former ERICO network was close to that idea; VREN would like to offer a similar approach
- It is difficult to put the types of information needed for different purposes in one framework – lots of information are available
- Specialised information for vulnerable groups or specific measures available for these groups
- Country fact sheets should include specific information needed for the return and should not repeat information which is freely accessible on any other website (no general country information); the collection of information should be truly relevant for the returnee, like first steps in the country, where to register, labour market('returnpedia')
- Sustainability of a network: It should work on lower costs to make it sustainable. Therefore it can be funded by own funds as well and therefore it could work more independently from other financial sources. In case these sources are not available any longer, the network can still continue with its work.
- Linkage to job opportunities or offers in the CoR could be included in a platform, as long as a formal labour market is available in the CoR
- Results of researches should be made available on platforms like the VREN database. Research should be on the one hand academic, on the other hand there is a need for proactive research with value for policy makers.

Farther related topics

Access to labour market for returnees

During the fish- bowl-, as well as other discussions, one main topic was the reintegration of returnees into employment. The results can be seen in the next paragraph:

- There is a need of harmonisation of trainings (in host countries and countries of return) and job placement opportunities in the CoR.
- Contact to other sources like the chamber of commerce or companies in the private sector might open up options for jobs and work for the returnee.
- Returnees bring certain competences with them, e.g. language skills but might be in need for a short additional training in the host country to get a formal certificate.
- The private sector needs to be convinced of the added value brought along with a cooperation.
- Challenge: Since companies are focusing on high-skilled labours, there is a limited access for returnees to the labour market in the private sector. There might be a trend that middle-skilled workers are getting better access as well, since the private sector is requesting workers in that section (e.g. Iraq). But the majority of the target group, who are either 'unskilled' or being deskilled in the process of asylum seeking intend to work in the informal sector.
- Sustainability of business openings and business plans in the long-term perspective causes a need for long-term monitoring. The businesses depend on the economic situation in the CoR, for example if most activities are taking place in trading.



Development and return

Utilization and Inter-linking of networks - Points for discussion:

The link between development and return was discussed during several presentations and the main thoughts on this are stated in the following. During this conference, this question could not be elaborated in detail. Nevertheless it would be a very relevant and suitable topic for further networking events.

- Sustainability – development approach: there is a need for more research in that field: it can't be assumed that assisted voluntary return has a positive impact on local communities; if a returnee is not doing well, it can even put more pressure on the local community
- Development aid focuses on the community as a target group and not on individuals, but so does the assisted return. Nevertheless, the individual is returning to a community and therefore can't be regarded as an isolated issue.
- The returnee might contribute to the development in the community, but could also be a burden for the community if he or she has to rely on the support of community members to reintegrate.
- Programmes like the CIM (Center for International Migration) programme are focusing on returnees who are seen as an added value to their communities and therefore receive a certain support from the programme.
- Diaspora communities and organisations might as well be a partner to work with in the field of reintegration due to links and ties to the CoR; in addition they are often connected to governments in the CoR.
- Linking development aid to reintegration projects can lead to problems once the country of return is not on the list of developing countries any longer and therefore funds and projects in that sector are no longer available.



Future Outlook

After the fruitful results of this conference and the increasing need for further co-operation and exchange we are planning to implement more projects in this field. You will be informed in time on our homepage <http://www.zrb-suedbayern.de/>. There you can find further information and downloads concerning the past and future transnational exchange conferences.



Appendix

Agenda

MONDAY 11th November

From 2 pm onwards	Arrival and registration
6 pm – 8 pm	Evening reception and dinner

TUESDAY 12th November

7 am – 8 am	Breakfast
9 am – 9.30 am	Welcome by Mr. Wolfgang Friedel, Head of Division – Migration and Foreign Aid
9.30 am – 10 am	Introduction speeches: Recent developments and trends in reintegration and return (Mr. Markus Prieserath (BMI)/ Mrs. Bettina Scheer (BAMF))
10 am – 10.30 am	Coffee Break
10.30 am – 11.15 am	Introduction by the moderator (Dr. Dirk van den Boom) Presentation of the summarized results of the preliminary assessment (Mrs. Verena Hinze – ZRB Südbayern)
11.15 am – 11.45 pm	Monitoring mechanisms to ensure quality in the reintegration process (Mr. Frans Bastiaens - HIT-Foundation)
11.45 am – 1.15 pm	Lunch Break
1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Sustainable return and post return monitoring (Mrs. Saskia Garner - Refugee Action)
1.45 pm – 2.30 pm	Introduction of the reintegration project: Diakonie Kosova (Mr. Bernd Baumgarten and Mr. Nusret Krasniqi)
2.30 pm – 3 pm	Coffee Break
3 pm – 4.30 pm	Introduction of the reintegration projects: Idia Renaissance – Nigeria (Mr. Roland Nwoha) ETTC – Iraq (Mr. Jihad Zero)
4.30 pm – 5.30 pm	Question round on the reintegration projects



WEDNESDAY 13th November

7 am – 8 am

Breakfast

8.30 am – 9.15 am



Introduction of the reintegration project AGREDS Ghana

and its partnership with Refugee Action UK (Mrs. Grace Kombian - AGREDS Ghana and Mrs. Catherine Lennox - Refugee Action)

- Overview of Choices Partnership model between organisations in host country and in country of return
- Examples of how the relationship works in practice
 - o Role of NGO in host country preparing returnees prior to departure
 - o Role of NGO in country of return prior to and after departure
 - o Examples of how AGREDS support returnees with their reintegration process after they have returned
 - o Challenges/issues experienced in country of return

09.15 am – 10.00 am

„Introduction of the reintegration project from Caritas Moscow and its partnership with Caritas International Belgium (Mrs. Yeliena Poslanichik - Caritas Moscow and Mrs. Anne Dussart –Caritas International)”

10 am – 10.30 am

Coffee Break

10.30 am – 11.00 am

Introduction of IOM reintegration projects (Mr. Pascal Reyntjens – IOM Brussels)

11 am – 12 am

Question round on the reintegration projects

12 pm – 1.30 pm

Lunch Break

1.30 pm – 3.30 pm

Group work: Necessary factors and steps for a smooth cooperation between counsel offices in the EU and reintegration projects to ensure sustainable reintegration

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm

Coffee Break

4.00 pm – 5.00 pm

'World Café' Presentation of the results

6.30pm

Departure for Kloster Andechs, dinner

THURSDAY 14th November

7 am – 8 am	Breakfast
8.30 am – 9.15 am	'World Café' Discussion
9.15 am – 9.45 am	Introduction of the German network project IntegPlan (Mr. Hermann Schönmeier and Mrs. Nina Hoferichter – Micado Migration)
9.45 am – 10.15 am	Coffee Break
10.15 am – 11.15 am	Introduction of the European network projects: "Voluntary Return European Network – VREN" (Mr. Pascal Reyntjens – IOM Brussels) ERSO Network (Mrs. Lenie van Goor – Maatwerk bij Terugkeer)
11.15 am – 12 pm	Question round concerning network projects
12 pm – 1 pm	Lunch Break
1 pm – 2 pm	"Fish Bowl" Discussion on utilization and interlink of network platforms
2 pm – 2.30 pm	Open questions and remaining topics for further discussion
2.30 pm - 3 pm	Coffee Break
3 pm – 4 pm	The way forward: "How to coordinate for increased use and improvement of reintegration measures?" (Summary and Action plan)
4 pm – 4.30 pm	Official closure

FRIDAY 15th November

7 am – 8 am	Breakfast
Until 12 pm	Check-out and return individually



Impressions



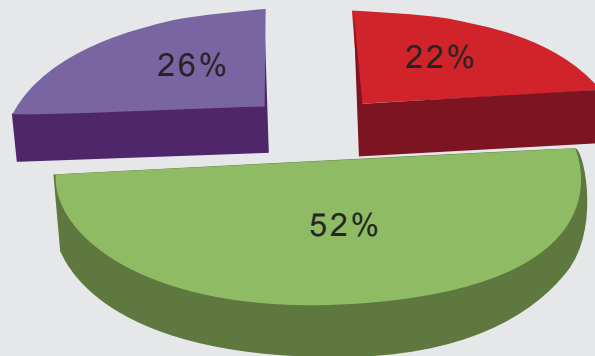
Results of the evaluation of the conference

1. Content of the conference

A. Post return monitoring and relevant research results

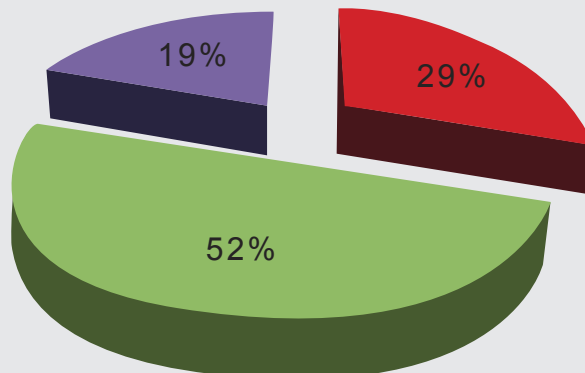
Post return monitoring: new information

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



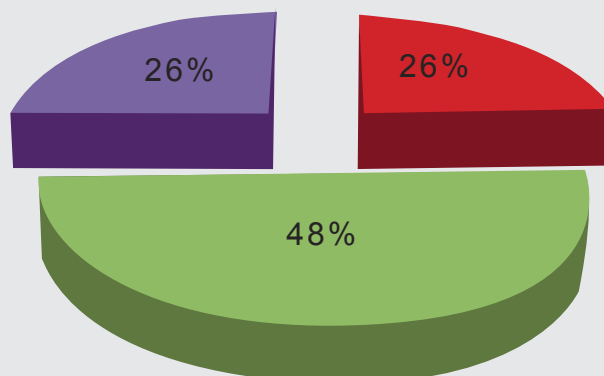
Post return monitoring: aspects and preparation

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



Post return monitoring: applicability

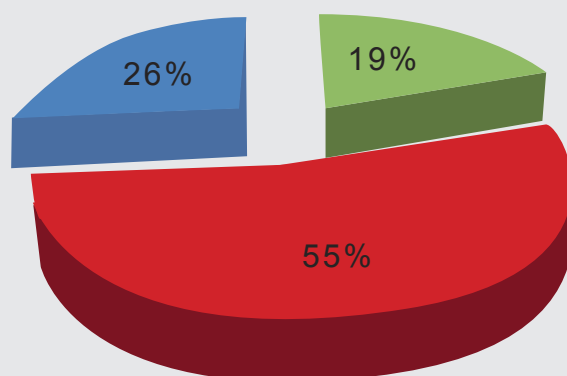
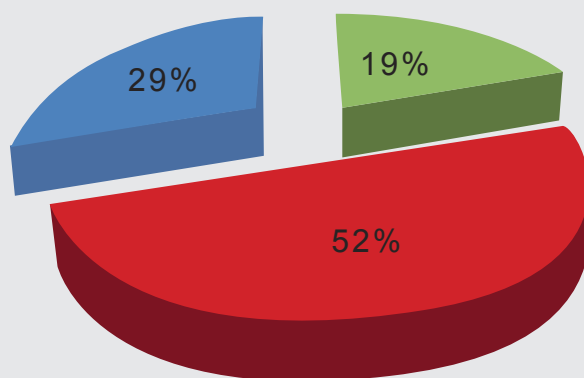
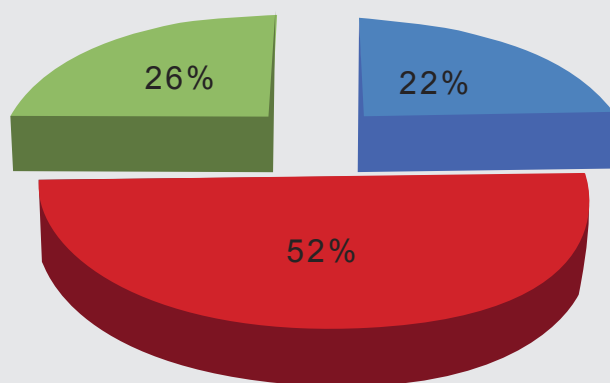
- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



The majority of the participants partly agreed that the speakers gave new information and ideas on the mentioned topic. 26% disagreed and therefore have not gained new information out of the presentations.

A similar result can be seen for the presentation of relevant aspects of the topic. 81% of the participants agreed or partly agreed that relevant aspects were presented by well-prepared speakers. 26% of the participants couldn't see the applicability of the discussed issues for their own work, but 74% at least partly agreed that the aspects are applicable. their own work, but 74% at least partly agreed that the aspects are applicable.

B. Cooperation between counsel offices in the EU and reintegration projects in the country of origin



Cooperation: new information

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Cooperation: relevant aspects and preparation

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Cooperation: applicability

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Networks: new information

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

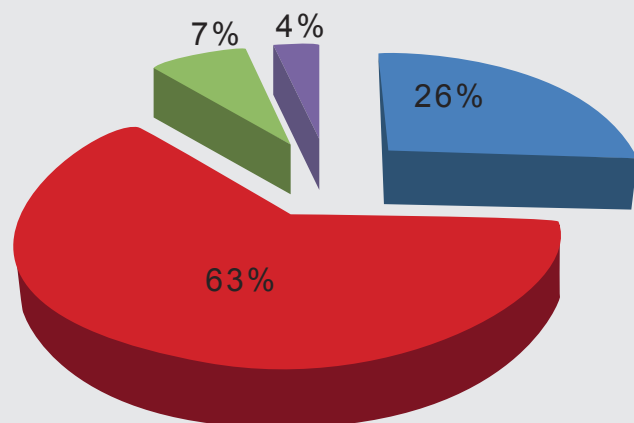
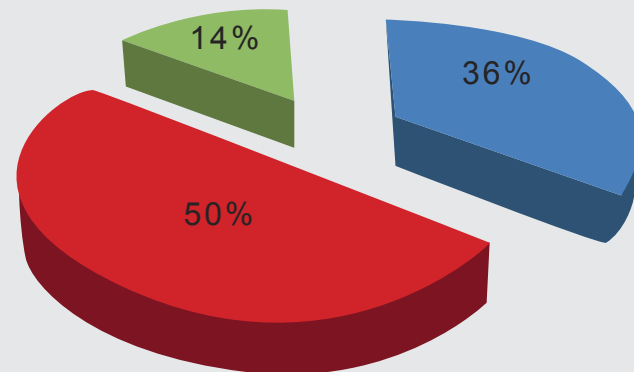
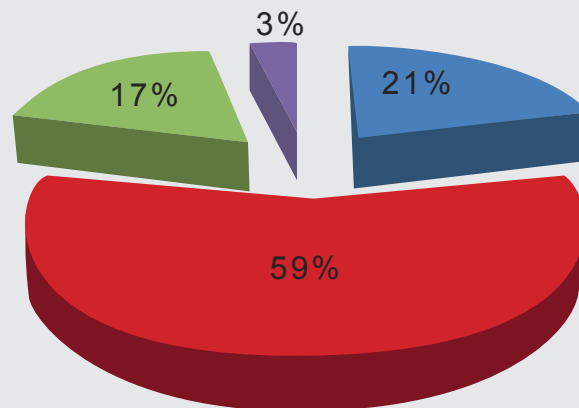
Networks: aspects and preparation

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Networks: applicability

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

C. Networks



The speakers gave new ideas and information on networks for 80% of the participants. 17% partly agreed. More than one third of the participants strongly agreed that the aspects presented were relevant and presented by well-prepared speakers.

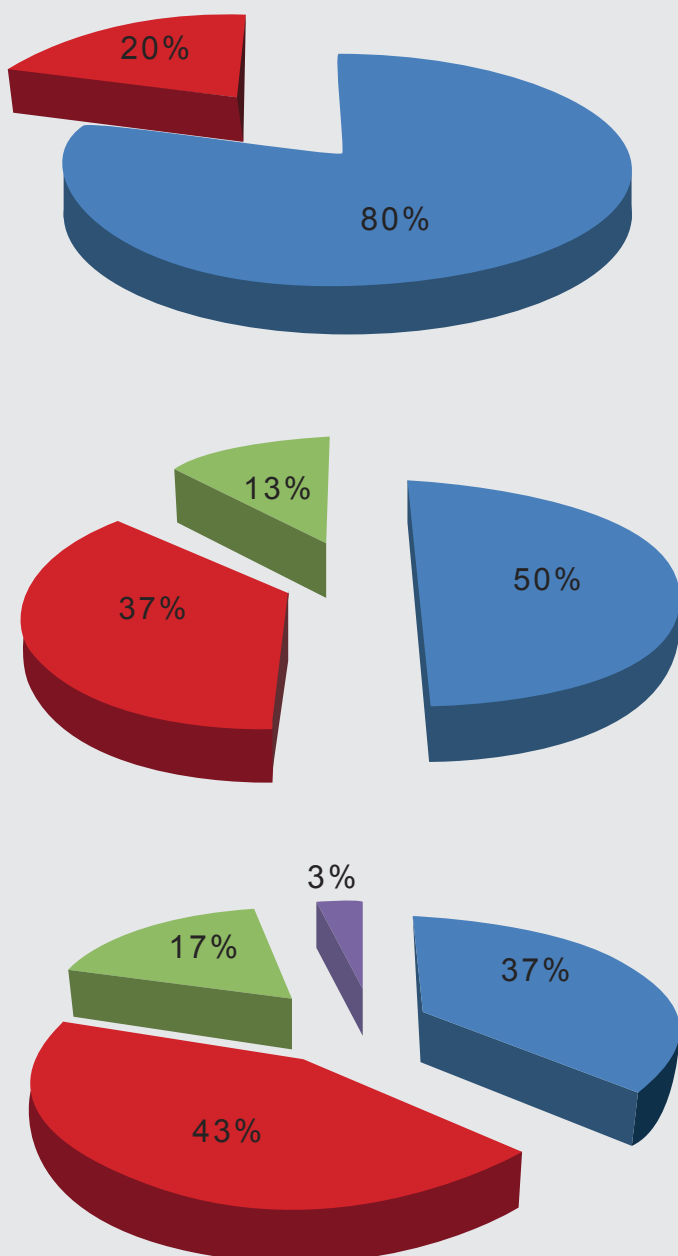
Most participants think that they can apply the content to their work, 11% do not fully see the applicability or disagree with that.

General remarks:

The presentations should be more focused and less descriptive, pictures were missing. Also a map of the state and places of work would have been regarded as helpful.

Learning between projects, evaluation mechanisms of the reintegration schemes and the research component could have been expanded and more detailed. Improving of cooperation and networks and concrete actions for an enhanced networking were missed.

2. Environment and logistics



Moderation

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Accommodation

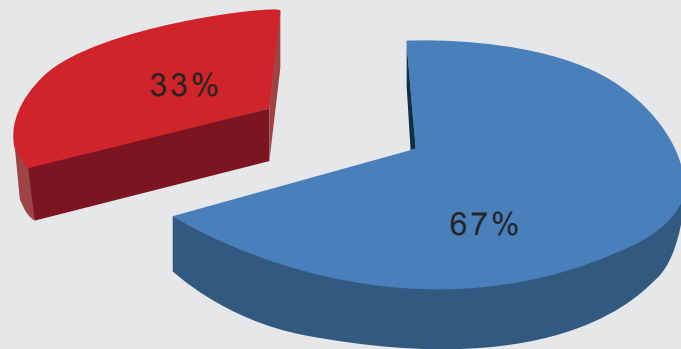
- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Food and catering

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

Evening's program

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree

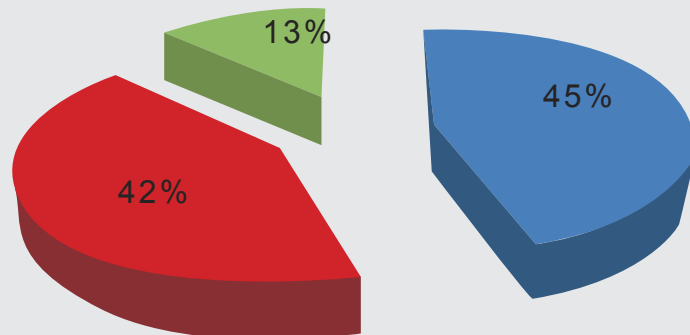


All participants agreed that the moderator was well prepared and led through the agenda successfully. The accommodation was seen as appropriate and comfortable for most of the participants, 13% partly agreed. Food and catering was regarded as tasty and appropriate for two third of the participants and nearly 70% of the participants strongly agreed that the evening's program gave a good opportunity to talk to the others, the remaining 30% also agreed.

3. Methods and utilization

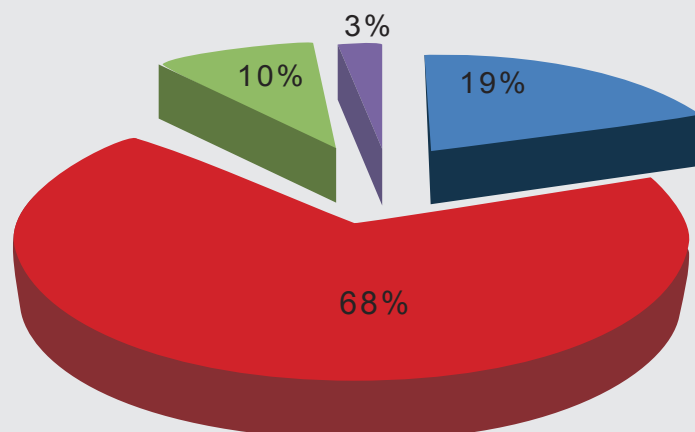
Enough space for exchange was provided

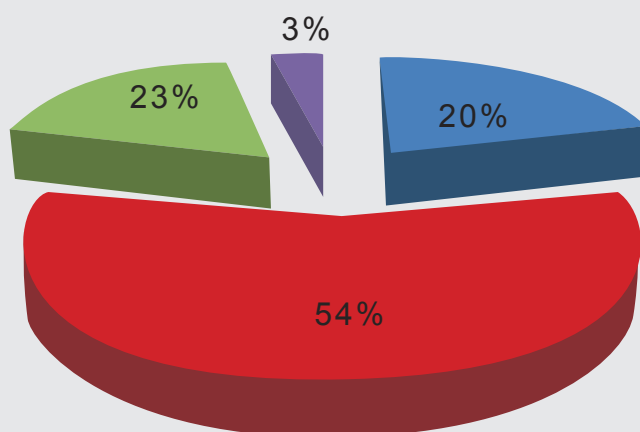
- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



Results of conference will help to improve own work

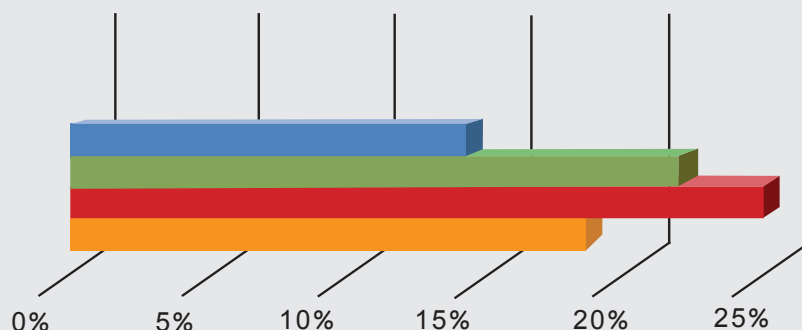
- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree





Expedience of used methods

- strongly agree
- agree
- partly agree
- disagree
- strongly disagree



Most important aspects of the conference

- get feedback
- exchange experience
- new contacts
- gain expertise
- others

87% agreed that the timetable and the agenda of the conference provided enough space for exchange with other attendants. The results of the conference will help 87% of the participants to improve their work, for additional 10% the results are partly helpful.

The used methods were regarded as appropriate and expedient by the majority of the participants (74%). 23% partly agreed and 3% disagreed with the expedience of the methods.

Exchanging experiences and establishing new contacts were seen as the most important aspects of the conference. Gaining expertise and getting feedback on one's own way of work were also seen as important aspects. Providing a space to develop new ideas for increased cooperation and networking were also mentioned as aspects of the conference.

Remaining questions and critics or suggestion to improve:

A clearer desired outcome for work e.g. a common action plan for future information sharing, collaboration and conclusions drawn by the moderator as well as a picture of the day are requested.

The choice of participants was mostly seen as a fruitful mix of professionals, institutions etc., but a wider range of organisations and more governmental stakeholders or decision makers of EU level are suggested.

The methods used could include other methods on group and plenary work.

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