



Return assistance: a change of perspective

Return assistance - in practice

Nigeria, Abuja



In early 2019, after more than five years abroad, Mr. U. decided to voluntarily return to Nigeria to live with his family again. He was initially uncertain, despite the information given to him. However, a phone call was arranged with IOM Nigeria to clarify specific questions concerning his reintegration. The informative conversation with IOM Nigeria convinced Mr. U. and, together with the return counsellor, he immediately developed his business plan. He planned to open a grocery shop in Abuja. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) granted him financial support for this project.

Mr. U. returned to Abuja in February 2019. After his arrival, he contacted IOM Nigeria and submitted first receipts. However, before the reintegration assistance could be paid out, Mr. U. needed to obtain a recognized Nigerian identity card. IOM supported him in the acquisition process and was able to eventually pay the reintegration

assistance directly to the vendor in March. Mr. U. then purchased products for his grocery shop, with the funds he received, and opened his business in an existing shop.

Almost a year later, IOM Nigeria contacted him by phone, as Mr. U. had meanwhile settled far away in Kano. He was satisfied with IOM and the reintegration assistance. He stated that the reintegration assistance improved his life after his return and that he saw a future in the place of return. However, at this point, he was no longer running the grocery shop. He independently changed his job and has since been working as a taxi driver (Tricycle). With the income, he earned enough to support the living of two to three people. For his future, he wishes to build a house, get married and start a family.



As a humanitarian and, at the same time, reasonably-priced solution, the concept of Return Assistance has proved itself and gained acceptance in many European countries. The object of Return Assistance is to harmonize the justified interests of migrants with those of Switzerland and the countries of origin. Return Assistance makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable and successful return. It is conceived so as to rule out undesired pull factors in the direction of Switzerland.