



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



# Voluntary return and reintegration – with prospects

The returnee programme “Returning to New Opportunities”



## BACKGROUND

Since 2015, more than a million people have fled to Germany in a bid to escape desperate situations or difficult conditions in their home countries. Not all of them will be able to remain in Germany permanently. Many of them are already thinking about returning to their home country. But often they do not know how and when a return will be possible or how they can get back on their feet after they return home.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) assists people who want to return to their country of origin voluntarily and make a new start there. The BMZ is helping to create chances for a new start in a selected number of countries.

In March 2017, the BMZ launched its returnee programme “Returning to New Opportunities”, which is now taking shape and is already assisting with the reintegration of people who wish to return to Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana or Senegal. The programme will also target Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Egypt.



## CHANCES FOR A NEW START BACK HOME

We are already financing many projects in our partner countries that reach out to returnees, too. They include programmes that offer advice about starting a business or applying for a job, and vocational training programmes. However, the existing programmes are not always sufficient to meet the demand for assistance and advice. Often, people are not aware of the options they have in their home countries.

In order to be able to offer returnees as well as locals a chance for a new start in their home country, the BMZ is expanding existing development cooperation programmes and broadening their scope.

## VOLUNTARY RETURN COUNSELLING IN GERMANY

Someone who wants to return to their home country has to plan this well. Individually tailored advice can be crucial for a successful new start. Many people who want to return to their home countries are turning to the returnee counselling centres in Germany. On behalf of the BMZ, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is carrying out various programmes to assist these centres.

### 1. Reintegration scouts

The reintegration scouts form a link between counselling for potential returnees in Germany and German development cooperation projects in migrants' countries of origin. For example, they provide important information about job prospects in the countries concerned, put people in touch with the migration advice centres and other points of contact in their countries of origin, pass on information about existing and envisaged programmes aimed at giving people a chance for a new start, and explore funding options available for in-country projects that are operated by German organisations. Scouts can be deployed to interested municipal agencies, social security agencies and non-governmental organisations.



## 2. Online information

The website [www.build-your-future.net](http://www.build-your-future.net) provides information about voluntary return and reintegration options in migrants' home countries. It has been linked to the information provided online by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and by the country office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Germany. There will also be other digital information, including a multi-country online platform for the migration advice centres (virtual centre).

## 3. Returnee hotline of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)

The hotline can be reached at **+49 911 943-0**. It is available for people who want to return to their home country voluntarily and want to find out about support programmes. Hotline staff answer questions about the return process. In future, they will also provide information on reintegration programmes in the country of origin. People interested in returning home can also use the hotline to find their nearest counselling centre.

## MIGRATION ADVICE CENTRES IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

In addition, we will further improve the provision of information for people in our partner countries about German development cooperation programmes. To that end, we are currently setting up migration advice centres in various countries. They will provide tailored advice on the options available to returnees. However, they also offer advice for local people who seek information on job opportunities in their country and to people interested in migration via regular channels. The migration advice centres are the first point of contact for returnees and form a link between pre-departure counselling in Germany and reintegration programmes in the country of origin. GIZ – acting in cooperation with the International Placement Services of the Federal Employment Agency (ZAV/BA) and with national employment agencies – already operates such centres on behalf of the BMZ in the Western Balkans, in Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana and Senegal. Efforts are under way to prepare the establishment of such centres in further countries.

## FROM COUNSELLING IN GERMANY TO REINTEGRATION IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

1. A person interested in returning home can use online information or the hotline in order to find out about the various programmes available to support people who return voluntarily. The person can also learn where to find the nearest counselling centre.
2. The returnee can contact the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), a non-profit organisation or a social security agency to schedule a meeting to receive advice on the pre-departure and post-arrival programmes available to assist voluntary returnees.

The centres provide the following services:



### Access to training



### Job hunting and job placement

- Tailored advice
- Careers advice and information days
- Job and career fairs



### Advice on how to access support to start a business (for example small loans)



### Advice on options for regular migration to Germany



### Mobile and virtual information points



### Training for employment agency staff



### Advice on how to get in touch with projects run under bilateral development cooperation with Germany

## HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

We also need the assistance of civil society, clubs and associations, churches and the private sector in our work of supporting returnees. In the area of psychosocial support, in particular, we are looking for projects that can complement official measures. We want to be able to inform returnees about suitable projects in our migration advice centres. To this end, we are looking for experienced partners in the field of displacement/migration/return/reintegration. If you have been active in this field for at least three years and are interested in working with us, please contact us. For more information, send an e-mail to:

[flexfin-migration@giz.de](mailto:flexfin-migration@giz.de).

**3.** The returnee then leaves Germany with support from the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) and the BAMF.



**4.** A migration advice centre in the country of origin is the first point of contact for the person to find out about the various reintegration programmes.



**5.** The returnee can benefit from programmes to give people a chance for a new start, such as training, assistance with regard to job hunting and job placement, and support for business start-ups.

## EXAMPLES ...

### ... OF COUNSELLING FOR RETURNEES IN GERMANY: THE “SOLWODI” ASSOCIATION

The “SOLWODI” association has a return and reintegration programme for women migrants who want to return to their country of origin. The programme, which is supported financially by the BMZ, provides individually tailored support for reintegration, for example in the form of training scholarships, job induction subsidies, and loans for people who want to start their own business. Since the end

of 2015, the association has noted a significant increase in the number of women applying for assistance for their return home. For 2017, the BMZ is increasing its support for the association in order to help it meet the growing need for counselling on return and reintegration issues.

### ... THE STORY OF ONE RETURNEE – EURESA BAJRAMI, KOSOVO

“Together with my family, I came to Germany in early 2015. I was seventeen at the time. We lived in north-west Germany, where I attended vocational school and took a course in restaurant and food services. I particularly liked baking cakes, so I became interested in making pastries. When we returned to Kosovo in mid-2016, I wanted to pursue this interest, but I didn’t know about the options I would have for doing this back home. So I turned to the migration advice centre in Kosovo for advice. At their suggestion, I took a course in pastry baking at a recognised vocational training centre. Then I took the plunge and started my own business. Together with my mother, I launched a small pastry baking operation in Pristina. So far, we’ve been baking cakes at home and selling them through

the internet. But we soon want to start a real shop. The centre also gave me advice on training opportunities in Germany, as I would like to train in restaurant services there. I want to use the skills I gain there to further expand our family business. Maybe we will be able to hire some staff later on, thus creating jobs for other people in our home country.”



## CONTACT DATA IN GERMANY

### **Federal Office for Migration and Refugees**

Returnee hotline: +49 911 943-0

Website:

[www.returningfromgermany.de](http://www.returningfromgermany.de)

### **IntegPlan – integrated return planning (for multiple countries)**

Contact database on returnee counseling points in Germany, by federal state

Website: [www.integplan.de](http://www.integplan.de)

### **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**

E-mail: [reintegration@giz.de](mailto:reintegration@giz.de)

Website: [www.build-your-future.net](http://www.build-your-future.net)

Point of contact for further support programmes:

E-mail: [flexfin-migration@giz.de](mailto:flexfin-migration@giz.de)

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Further centres will be opened in the future, among others in Nigeria and Iraq.

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