



Return assistance – in practice

Afghanistan, Herat

Ms. H. and her children returned to Afghanistan in November 2017 with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) had granted them financial assistance to start a professional project and find a suitable housing solution. IOM was responsible for coordinating the project in Afghanistan.



As a professional project, Ms. H. chose to open a carpet company (carpet making and selling) because she had 12 years of experience in this field. She presented a professional permit, a lease agreement for the store, as well as a list of items to be purchased. The reintegration assistance was thus used to pay the rent for the store and the equipment for weaving the carpets.

Regarding housing, Ms. H. was living in a shared accommodation with other family members in a situation, that the IOM Herat employee found very negative. Therefore, she submitted a purchase request for furniture, including a traditional carpet for the common area of the house, blankets, pillows, mattresses and two pairs of curtains. IOM directly paid the vendor.

During the monitoring visit, Ms. H. explained that she was satisfied with her current situation. She had the opportunity to take up with her old job and she was able to support herself and her children.

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.