

TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE III

Repatriation Counselling in European Dialogue

2015 – 2018

DOCUMENTATION OF
CONFERENCE I:
Traumatized & Mentally
Ill Returnees
- November 2016 -



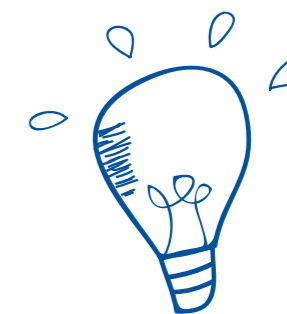
Europäische Union



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Caritasverband für die
Diözese Augsburg e.V.





CONTENT



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Picture 1: Wolfgang Friedel, Head of department Migration and Foreign Aid, Canon Dr. Andreas Magg, director of Caritas Augsburg, welcome the participants of the Transnational Exchange III Conference

1. INTRODUCTION

The Transnational Exchange III Project (2015 – 2018) with a focus on vulnerable returnees follows its two predecessor projects Transnational Exchange I (2011) and Transnational Exchange II (2013) with the aspiration to connect repatriation counsellors on a European level.

Further goals include making information and helpful counselling tools available, striving for an all-encompassing counselling, which requires a close consultation with reintegration partners, and working towards a greater European harmonization in the field of voluntary return. This project is implemented by the Caritas Association of the Diocese Augsburg in cooperation with the Red Cross Augsburg, the Diakonia Augsburg and the Government of Swabia and is predominantly funded by the European Asylum-, Migration- and Integration fund and the Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family and Integration.

The first Transnational Exchange III Conference took place in Augsburg from the 22nd – 24th of November 2016. 82 participants (staff and speakers included) from 16 countries congregated to discuss the topic of assisting traumatized and mentally ill returnees thoroughly. The agenda of the conference comprised an overview of the current repatriation counselling structures in ten European countries, an exchange with four reintegration partners, a training for dealing with traumatized and mentally ill returnees in the pre-departure process and an exchange with government representatives with regard to

assisted voluntary return counselling standards taking into account the vulnerable groups (see Annex I).

The conference was framed with welcome speeches by Caritas-internal staff – Canon Dr. Andreas Magg, the director of the Caritas Association for the Diocese Augsburg, Wolfgang Friedel, the head of department Migration and Foreign Aid, and Sarah Dillmann, Transnational Exchange III project manager – as well as external office representatives linked to this project – Heiko Zindl, responsible for the EU-Fond AMIF controlling within the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and Henning Schüttel, a Government Council of the Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family and Integration.

The nature of this brochure is an informative overview of the content addressed throughout the conference. However, the authors do not aspire to publish a written protocol of the conference but rather a rendering of the main content-related aspects. For the study of this brochure, the reader needs to be aware that in a European context the terminology for voluntary return assistance is not yet unified and standardized. With the aim to not get caught up in a discussion of the necessity of a universally accepted terminology, the following terms were used interchangeably unless further specified in the respective chapters: assisted voluntary return (AVR) counselling, assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) counselling, repatriation counselling, return counselling, reintegration counselling. The next chapter will define a basis of discussion when talking about vulnerable returnees.

2. DEFINITION OF VULNERABILITY

The Transnational Exchange III project aims to gather European AVR counsellors to discuss the best possible assistance for vulnerable returnees. The difficulty to return is exponentially higher for vulnerable people than for regular returnees. Who can be defined as vulnerable? The English Oxford Dictionary points out that the word “vulnerable” derives from the Latin word “vulnus” meaning wound (1). It defines vulnerable as being “exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physical or emotionally”. Vulnerable people are “in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect”. In the Decision No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council Article 5 (2) of 23rd of May 2007, the following people were mentioned as vulnerable in the context of return assistance: “minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence” (2). A further itemization can be taken from the manual “Reintegration of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable persons in Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq”, which is also known as the ERSO Sure manual (3):

- Children
- Unaccompanied children (UAC)
- Single parents with children
- Elderly people
- Pregnant women
- People with physical disabilities or learning difficulties
- People with physical or mental health problems or illnesses
- People who are expected to face major challenges in reintegrating and finding a sustainable solution due to their individual background (e.g. illiteracy, little education and lack of a social network)
- Traumatized people

Read about the standard compilation of vulnerability criteria which serves as a basis of discussion for this brochure!

- Victims of violence (e.g. persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence)
- Members of specific communities facing repression, prejudice or other forms of discrimination or discriminatory violence in their country of origin
- Women (and men) who are in danger of becoming victims of forced marriages, genital mutilation or trafficking for sex, domestic servitude and/or labour purposes
- Single women/female headed households returning without any family support (to certain countries)

The authors of the ERSO Sure manual pointed out that each returnee should be assessed individually. It is also stated that vulnerability criteria can be country-specific and that the mentioned items should not be regarded as final. A close cooperation with the reintegration partners is, therefore, recommended. Further explanations on country-specific vulnerability criteria can be found in chapter 5.b. of this brochure.

Having defined a basis for discussion, the next chapter shall shed light on the current repatriation counselling structures in several European countries. Since vulnerable clients are the focus of this project, information on how special assistance for vulnerable returnees is offered in the respective countries is also given.

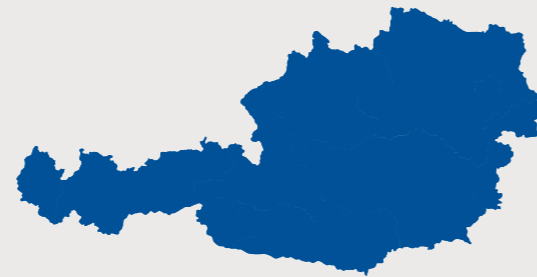
SOURCE:
 (1) <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/vulnerable>
 (2) www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/575_2007_EC.pdf
 (3) Caritas Austria, 2014, Manual Reintegration of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable persons in Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq

AVR SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

Giving the participants an overview of the different AVR systems in Europe was necessary to create an understanding for the different counselling methods and procedures. The different availability of time, finances, reintegration projects and the predefined government structure lead to a great variety of AVR counselling systems. The respective national AVR structure posters which were displayed during the conference are not attached to this brochure but can be found on the Transnational Homepage:

www.caritas-augsburg.de/transnational

In the following seven European AVR structures shall be presented.



a. AVR IN AUSTRIA



Learn about the AVR system in Austria mainly provided by two non-governmental organizations!

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

The mandate to provide Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) counselling has been assigned to two non-governmental organizations named Caritas Austria (1) and the Human Rights Association of Austria (Verein Menschenrechte Österreich) by the Federal Ministry of Interior (Bundesministerium für Inneres) (2). Within the nine existing Austrian federal states Caritas Austria offers integrated return management (IRMA) in seven federal states and the Human Rights Association of Austria return counselling in eight federal states – in most federal states two counselling providers are present. A switch from one counselling provider to another is possible but delays the departure process (3).

LEGAL BASIS:

The AVR counselling was stipulated in the Law on Federal Social Care (Bundesbetreuungsgesetz) in 1991. Additional rules and regulations can be found in the § 52a BFA-Verfahrensgesetz and the §12 Abs.2 Grundversorgungsgesetz-Bund 2005. They define the target group for AVR, the right to counselling and the



Picture 2: Representatives of seven European countries explain the AVR system in their country

provision of a return ticket. In general, all people whose asylum applications are being processed as well as those having received a final decision are permitted to AVR counselling. If a rejection of the asylum application is likely or has been issued, the asylum seeker is obliged to participate in an AVR counselling appointment (4). The Austrian Federal Office and the Federal Administrative Court have reserved the right to acquire information on the result of the AVR counselling sessions and its outcome (5).

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

Since the AVR counselling is centralized and overseen by the Asylum Authorities (Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl), the same counselling and financial support is offered to voluntary returnees all over Austria. The AVR counselling includes counselling on the future perspectives in the host and home country, assistance with the organization of travel documents, arrangement of the flight ticket in cooperation with IOM Austria, application for financial assistance to the asylum authorities, organization of medical care and registration of returnee in a special reintegration program, etc. In most cases the travel assistance and flight ticket is handed out to the returnee at the airport right before the departure.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The cash travel assistance ranges between 50€ and 370€. The amount gets determined by the Asylum Authorities. The reintegration assistance of ERIN or IRMA Plus can amount to 3,000€ per client. In March 2016, the graded voluntary return project "Rückkehrhilfe – Ein Neustart mit Perspektiven" (6) was launched for asylum seekers from Nigeria, Morocco and Afghanistan by the BFA. The return support within this program is graded according to the length of stay in Austria:

- Return within the first three months of arrival -> 500 €
- Return between 3rd and 6th month -> 250 €
- Return after 6 months -> only 50 €

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS:

The new reintegration assistance by Caritas Austria was launched in January 2017. Aside from the standard IRMA,

Caritas Austria offers IRMA plus. The reintegration assistance is not limited to a few countries of return with existing reintegration projects from the Austrian government anymore but it is rather available in almost all countries of return with the help of reintegration partners. Since Caritas Austria is a member of the European Reintegration Support Organizations network (ERSO), it can utilize all contacts of ERSO reintegration partners.

IOM Austria offers a traditional reintegration project "Restart" which comprises reintegration projects for voluntary returnees in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Russian Federation/ The Chechen Republic with a special focus on education (7).

The Austrian Asylum Authorities offer reintegration programmes through the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) to returnees to Afghanistan, Nigeria and Morocco. ERIN has reintegration projects in several countries of return. Depending on the Austrian government reintegration assistance in other countries of return will also be financed (8).

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

The Asylum Authorities provide additional 1,000 € for travel escorts (usually the AVR counsellor or a close relative), when a mortally ill returnee wants to live in the country of origin for the remaining life time. A medical travel escort is also financed for severely mentally ill returnees.

In case the return of a family does not seem to be a uniform decision within the family, single family members aged above 14 years may receive individual counselling (in order to provide a space to voice possible fears of professional or educational disadvantages, forced marriage, prostitution, etc.). This procedure, however, occurs only in exceptional cases.

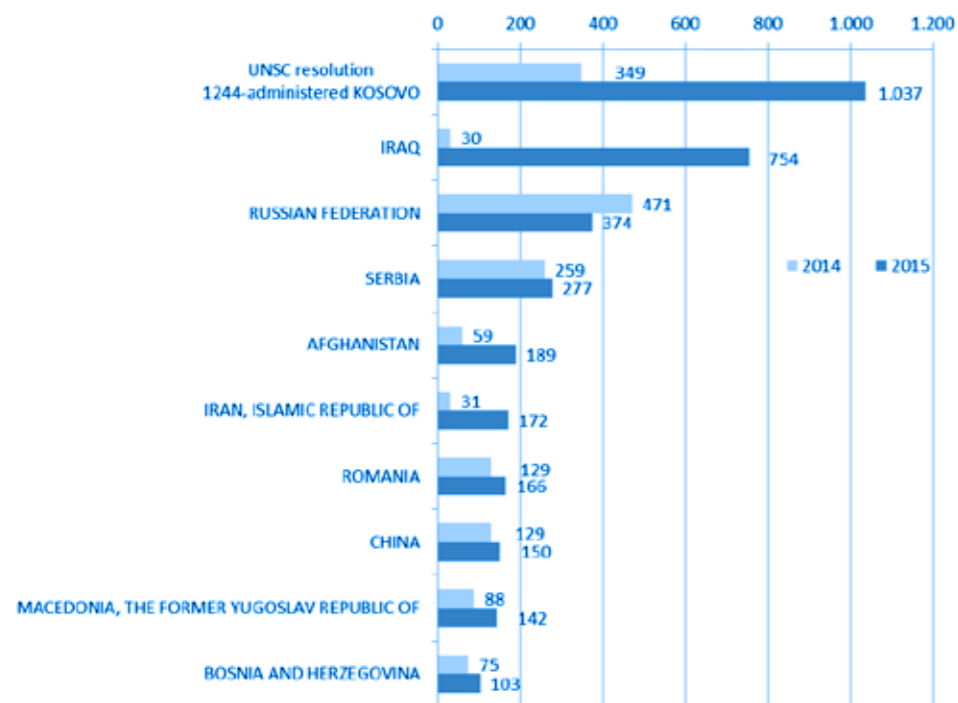
RETURN NUMBERS:

The Austrian population amounted to 8.7 million (9) people on the 01.01.2016. In 2015, the Austrian government accepted 88,340 (10) asylum applications. In the following, two charts which show the voluntary return numbers from IOM Austria will be displayed (11):

Voluntary Returnees Assisted by IOM Austria 2000-2015



Top 10 Countries of Return 2015



SOURCE:

- (1) www.caritas.at/hilfe-beratung/migrantinnen-fluechtlinge/beratung-vertretung/rueckkehrhilfe-reintegration/irma-rueckkehrberatung/
- (2) www.verein-menschenrechte.at/rueck.html
- (3) www.bfa.gv.at/files/return/2016_04%20FAQ%20Freiwillige%20Ausreise%20und%20Rueckkehrhilfe.pdf
- (4) www.bfa.gv.at/files/return/2016_04%20FAQ%20Freiwillige%20Ausreise%20und%20Rueckkehrhilfe.pdf
- (5) § 52a Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl-Verfahrensgesetz
- (6) www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160413_OTS0221
- (7) IOM Austria, 2016, AVRR Newsletter Spring 2016
- (8) www.bfa.gv.at/return/programme/start.aspx#faq08
- (9) <http://www.migration.gv.at/de/leben-und-arbeiten-in-oesterreich/oesterreich-stellt-sich-vor/geografie-und-bevoelkerung/>
- (10) <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/293189/umfrage/asylantraege-in-oesterreich/>
- (11) IOM Austria, 2015, Statistical Overview 2015

b. AVR IN BELGIUM



Learn about the AVR system in Belgium and the best practice regarding a close cooperation of the government and the welfare organizations!

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

The Belgian AVR system is divided into two stages. During the first stage, a client interested in return receives return counselling which is offered by numerous providers all over Belgium. In the first counselling session, the client is informed about his/her legal options and the financial support, after the client has been ranked in eligibility for reintegration support according to his/her legal status. Irregular migrants as well as people who overstayed their visa-free time in Belgium will only be assisted with the organization of the flight ticket and the travel money.

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

AVR counselling is provided by several key actors in Belgium. The state counselling is provided, on the one hand, by the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (FEDASIL) and covers approximately 50% of the voluntary return assistance in Belgium. On the other hand, social welfare associations such as Caritas International Belgium (CIB), the Belgian Red Cross and social centers (CAW) as well as the inter-governmental organization IOM cover the other 50%.

LEGAL BASIS:

The legal basis for assisted voluntary return programmes was laid in the "law governing the Public Centre of Social Assistance, (Loi organique sur les Centres publics pour l'Aide sociale – CPAS) of 8 July 1976. According to Art 57 (2) (paragraph 2.2) of this law, persons who have asked for return assistance through IOM are entitled to receive benefits from CPAS" (1). In 1984, the Belgian government made an agreement with IOM, funding the Return and Emigration of Asylum-seekers from Belgium (REAB) programme in order to provide pre-departure counselling, to organize the return travel and to disburse financial aid. Further details with regards to assisted voluntary return were stipulated in the Asylum Reception Act 2007 ensuring the organization, the structure and the accessibility of the AVR programme (2).

In case the client is a (rejected) asylum seeker, the return counsellor forwards the client to the reintegration counsellor who works with the client on a reintegration plan, establishes contact between the returnee and the reintegration organization in the country of return, organizes follow-up assistance after return and occasionally executes monitoring. The reintegration counselling is only offered by IOM with five counsellors and CIB with four counsellors in Belgium. The reintegration counsellors are in touch with the reintegration partners on a regular basis. This enables the counsellors to inform the client accurately about the status quo in the client's home country and to work on a realistic reintegration plan. It also establishes trust when the client is directly connected to the reintegration partner through phone or skype before the departure.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

According to the legal status returnees are eligible for different amounts of financial support. Group A (asylum-seekers) is entitled to 250€ return money (REAB), 700€ reintegration assistance per adult and additional 1,500€ per case for setting

up a micro business or finding a job; children receive 350 € in-kind assistance. Group B (people with a rejection of their asylum request or a rejection of the family reunification) receives the return and reintegration assistance but not the 1,500 € business start-up money. Group C (Irregular migrants) only receives 250 € return money (REAB). People without visa requirements to enter Belgium and who overstayed their time in Belgium can legally obtain a flight ticket (no cash assistance) to return. Vulnerable clients may receive extra funding.

REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE:

There are two reintegration programmes, which can be used by the counsellors equally (no superiority). The National Programme, which is funded through the European Asylum-Migration-Integration Fund and FEDASIL, provides financial reintegration assistance to all countries of return. The second programme is the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) which offers reintegration packages in Russia, Morocco, Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria and Pakistan.

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

In general, vulnerable clients receive more counselling as well as more preparation time. The reintegration counsellors may apply for 500€ add-ons reintegration assistance for returnees with a vulnerable profile directly with FEDASIL regardless of the administrative status. Unaccompanied minors (UAM) receive 2,200€ also regardless of their administrative status. The parents or relatives who are receive the unaccompanied minors after return are supported with 700€ once in order to help

the family adjust to the new financial situation. The support in the beginning is supposed to cover the extra expenses the returnee may cause.

For chronically ill returnees or returnees who need expensive surgeries a new project with the name Assisted Medical Assistance After Return (AMAAR) was created in 2015 in order to make a higher budget available for the assistance of highly vulnerable groups. In this case, the financial support for medical care may amount to up to 5,000€ which is supposed to cover medical expenses within the first six months after return.

RETURN NUMBERS:

The Belgian population holds approximately 11.43 million inhabitants (2016) (3). In 2015, 35,476 asylum requests were filed which corresponds to 44,760 people since one file can correspond to more than one person (4). The following chart is taken from the FEDASIL Review 2015 (5).



Picture 3: City Manager Koen van Rompeay from FEDASIL

In the following, the table with the main countries of return is displayed. The information was taken from the homepage of FEDASIL (6).

	JAN - DEC 2015		JAN - SEP 2016	
1.	Iraq	1023	Iraq	898
2.	Ukraine	542	Ukraine	460
3.	Romania	536	Romania	432
4.	Russia	257	Brazil	165
5.	Brazil	187	Afghanistan	150

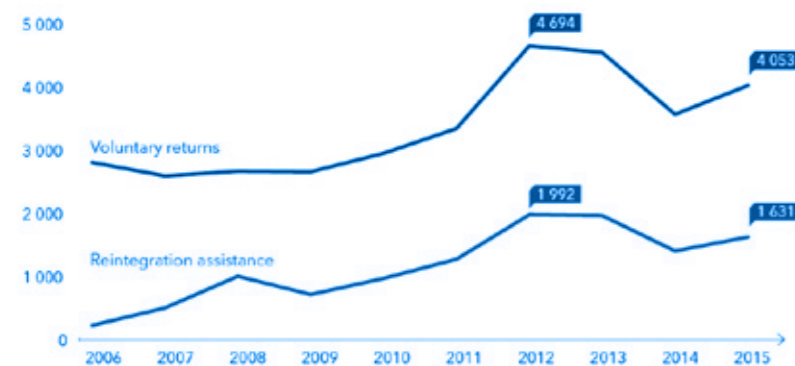
Table 1: FEDASIL's objective with regards to the voluntary return program according to Koen Van Rompeay

FEDASIL:

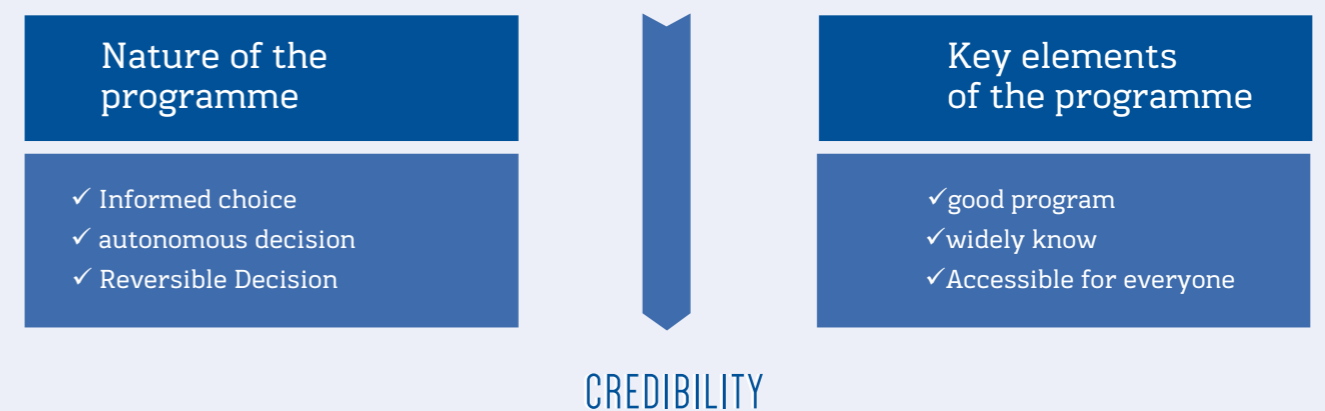
City project manager Koen van Rompeay, representative of FEDASIL, held a presentation on the allocation of responsibilities (NGO & State) with regard to the assistance of vulnerable groups throughout the voluntary return process. He pointed out that the pre-departure assistance for voluntary returnees is of social nature. The decision to return should be made on a basis of accurate and current information, autonomously and reversible if necessary. The voluntary return programme aims at providing necessary facilities and financial means to support the voluntary return decision. The objective of FEDASIL is to execute the best possible voluntary return programme which implies a good structure, a high awareness level and an easy accessibility for interested returnees (key elements of the programme). Therefore, it "is essential to the VR program to develop a structural partnership with non- and intergovernmental organisations for the credibility of the social nature of the program and as a communication outreach" (7). Especially for the assistance

of vulnerable returnees trust and credibility needs to be ensured – hence the involvement of non-governmental organisations is seen as significant. In reality, however, there has been a change in AVR provision. It used to be mainly the responsibility of NGOs (IOM & Caritas 75 %, 25 % state return desks). By now the allocations have been reversed. According to the NGOs, the state return desks were contacted by larger numbers of returnees to Eastern Europe with short duration of stay and the clear wish for a quick return, leading to higher numbers in the counselling at. The question for FEDASIL is how to "valorize the involvement of the [NGO] partners" (8) now. The long partnership between the government and the NGOs resulted in structural support for the non-governmental partners as well as a strong participation of the NGOs in the Belgian policy building, which is unique in Europe. On this basis, new ways of ensuring an anti-fragile, credible and diversified AVR programme need to be found together.

Evolution on voluntary returns from Belgium 2006 - 2015 (number of people)



Comment: Since 2013, the figures also include the voluntary returns organised by the Immigration Office (205 in 2013, 141 in 2014 and 67 in 2015). These figures do not include voluntary returns carried out within the framework of the Dublin Convention to the European countries where migrants have already applied for asylum, and which are organised by the Immigration Office.



SOURCE:
 (1) IOM, 2004, Return Migration: Policies & Practices in Europe
 (2) European Migration Network (EMN), 2009, Programmes and strategies in Belgium fostering assisted voluntary return and reintegration in third countries
 (3) www.auswaertigesamt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01Nodes_Uebersichtsseiten/Belgien_node.html

(4) FEDASIL, 2015, REVIEW 2015: Reception of asylum seekers and Voluntary return
 (5) FEDASIL, 2015, REVIEW 2015: Reception of asylum seekers and Voluntary return
 (6) FEDASIL, 2016, Vrijwillige terugkeer - September 2016
 (7) Koen Van Rompeay (FEDASIL), 24.11.2016, PowerPoint
 (8) See above

C. AVR IN DENMARK



Learn more about the AVR counselling system in Denmark and the role of repatriation counseling compared to other EU countries!

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

The assisted voluntary return is divided into two areas of responsibility. The return counselling for (former) asylum seekers is provided by the Danish Refugee Council as well as the Danish Red Cross. The repatriation counselling for refugees with residence permit in Denmark is carried out solely by the Danish Refugee Council. The practical pre-departure preparations are not included in the counselling offer.

LEGAL BASIS:

The Danish government passed the Danish Repatriation Act on 1 January 2000 pursuing the goal to facilitate humane and orderly returns. With offering high incentives such as counselling and financial support, the government seeks refugees to consider voluntary return. Even the option to reverse the decision of repatriation is given to the refugees within the first twelve months after return (right to regret). "A statute on the voluntary return of rejected asylum seekers came into effect in May 2003" (1).

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

Hereafter, the parallel structure of assisted voluntary return in Denmark shall be introduced. On the one hand, the return counselling for (rejected) asylum seekers consists of legal counselling, during which the implications of a rejection of the asylum appeal, the remaining legal options and the possibility of AVR are explained. In most cases the return counselling is carried out in asylum centers. Aside from the legal counselling, psychosocial aspects such as expectation management after return, reestablishment of lost family connections (tracing of relatives) and profiling of personal competences in order to broaden the perspectives after return are addressed. In some centers the return counselling is executed in group sessions. After having made a decision to return, the returnee receives the flight ticket from IOM or from the police. The police offers practical and financial support to the returnees.

On the other hand, repatriation counselling targets recognized refugees and migrants with a residence permit. Since the Dutch Refugee Council is the only provider with around four to five repatriation counsellors responsible for clients all over Denmark, the counselling is offered in the office, through skype and on the phone. The clients receive information on the repatriation support and help in the decision making process. The practical departure (plane ticket, paper work, etc.) is organized by the clients themselves. The municipalities disburse the repatriation support as well as the expenses for the organization of the departure to the client.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The financial assistance differs immensely depending on the legal status. For (former) asylum seekers the travel assistance can range per person between 100€ and 500€ depending on the state regulations each year and the country of origin. Additional reintegration assistance is offered by the Danish Immigration Service in cycles (not constantly) hoping to avoid "return shopping". This support can amount to 4,000€ (30,000DKK – exchange rate from November 2016). For refugees and migrants with residence permit the repatriation support includes the travel expenses, the transport of personal belongings, the help with re-establishment in the country of return (17,400€ = 129,430DKK per adult or 5300€ = 39,473DKK for children; disbursement in two installments) and for certain nationalities also the support for a business start-up (2,000€ = 14,984DKK). Also the coverage of health insurance for a year and of vaccination costs as well as of relevant health care related issues is included (2).

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS:

Established government funded reintegration projects do not exist. However, the Red Cross is able to offer psychosocial support to (former) asylum seekers after return through partners in the country of return through the international network of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Close relations exist



between the Danish Red Cross and the Red Cross in Russia, Serbia and Kosovo. A reintegration programme for returnees to Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia is in the planning phase.

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

The Danish government pays for the travel escort for severely mentally or physically ill returnees – either for family members or for repatriation counsellors. Elderly people are also considered vulnerable. If the returnee is aged above 55 years with a longer length of stay than five years in Denmark and with a residence permit and fulfills certain criteria from Group 3, he/she has the option to receive a monthly subsidy up to circa 600€ (4,500 DKK)

for 5 years or up to 480€ (3,600 DKK) as a lifetime monthly benefit (3).

RETURN NUMBERS:

As of November 2016, the Danish population held approximately 5.6 million (4). "In 2015, a total of 21.225 asylum seekers arrived in Denmark but some were sent back to other European countries via the Dublin Regulation. Thus, only 10,573 asylum seekers got their case considered in Denmark and 10,856 were granted asylum (including 591 quota refugees)" (5). The following tables were compiled with information from IOM Denmark regarding the (former) asylum seekers (6) and from the Danish Refugee Council regarding returnees with residence permit (7).

	Voluntary return numbers of (former) asylum seekers	Voluntary return numbers of refugees and migrants with residence permit	total
2013	219	393	612
2017	110	320	430
2015	243	323	566
2016 (Jan - Sep)	453	251	704

	Countries of return of (former) asylum seekers 2015	Countries of return of refugees and migrants with residence permit 2015
1.	Russia (59)	Turkey (75)
2.	Armenia (26)	Bosnia and Herzegovina (59)
3.	Georgia (20)	Serbia (20)
4.	Afghanistan (18)	Thailand (15)
5.	Ukraine (18)	Colombia (14)

SOURCE:
 (1) IOM, 2004, Return Migration: Policies & Practices in Europe
 (2) www.flygtning.dk/danmark/om-at-vende-hjem/for-flygtninge/for-refugees-engelsk
 (3) www.flygtning.dk/danmark/om-at-vende-hjem/for-flygtninge/for-refugees-engelsk
 (4) www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01Laender/Daenemark.html
 (5) www.refugees.dk/en/facts/numbers-and-statistics/how-many-are-coming-and-from-where/
 (6) IOM Denmark, 2016, Frivillige hjemrejser med IOM fra Danmark (indtil 30. september 2016)
 (7) Sara Maria Sörensson Gade (Danish Refugee Council), Return Numbers 2015

d. AVR IN GERMANY



Learn more about the AVR counselling offer in Germany and the differences due to a non-centralized system in the different federal states!

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

AVR counselling is not centralized in Germany. In every federal state the employees of the foreigners' authorities (Ausländerbehörde) can fill out the application for the flight ticket and some travel money (REAG/GARP). Depending on the federal state, the AVR counselling offered by government employees ranges from little to highly qualified (including working on reintegration assistance). In ten federal states (Länder), welfare organisations such as Caritas, Red Cross, Diakonia, AWO, etc. offer assisted voluntary return counselling – however, with differing reintegration budgets for the returning clients. IOM, which is mostly processing the REAG/GARP applications in Germany, offers AVR counselling itself in two federal states.

LEGAL BASIS:

The Return and Emigration of Asylum Seekers (REAG) Programme was launched in 1979 by order of the German Federal Government in cooperation with the Länder. IOM was commissioned with the implementation of the REAG programme. In 1989, an additional reintegration support programme GARP was introduced. Despite the long existing return assistance programmes and the increasing importance of return assistance, assisted voluntary return counselling and the financial support have never been legally consolidated. Aside from assigning the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) the duty to grant “payment of the funds approved under the schemes to promote voluntary return” (1), no law has been passed which enforces voluntary return support, even though asylum seekers are preferred to return voluntarily after the rejection of the asylum request (2). The grounds for a possible legal anchoring of mandatory voluntary return counselling, however, have been laid with the paper “Guidelines for nationwide repatriation counselling” in April 2015. The Coordination Agency for Integrated Return Management (Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsstelle integriertes Rückkehrmanagement) published this paper identifying the central aspects of voluntary return counselling taking into

account the EU return directive 2008/113/EG which gives priority to voluntary return over forced return (3).

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

As mentioned above the AVR counselling is offered in great variation. In most of the welfare organisations, the AVR counselling includes an analysis of perspectives in the host and home country, arrangements with public authorities, the application for the flight ticket and the travel & reintegration money (REAG/GARP), possibly assistance with a business start-up (development of a business plan), the registration in reintegration projects when applicable and the handing out of the flight ticket and part of the travel money.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The nationwide financial return assistance programme (REAG/GARP) consisted in 2016 of 200 € travel assistance per adult and 100 € per child as well as of 300 € or 500 € reintegration assistance depending on the country of return (excluding the Western Balkans). Additional reintegration assistance can be provided up to 3,000 € only in certain federal states and only by certain AVR counselling providers. The respective AVR providers need to apply for additional funding either with the respective Länder governments or with the Asylum-Migration-Integration fund. In the majority of the Länder the additional reintegration assistance is not available.

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (BMI):

During the Transnational Exchange Conference Stephan Schmidt, representative of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) from the Department R 2 - Voluntary Return, Reintegration and Communication, announced the new federal incentives programme „Starthilfe+“ which was launched two months later in February 2017. The additional financial support on top of the REAG/GARP shall be graded from a higher amount for people who decide

to return before the asylum notification from the BAMF has been issued (1200 €) to a lower amount for people who decide to return within the voluntary departure deadline after the rejection of the asylum application (800 €).

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS

Returnees can be registered in the nationwide government-funded ERIN project which offers reintegration assistance in Afghanistan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somaliland and Iran. Aside from ERIN, returnees to Iraq can be registered in the reintegration project “Integrated Reintegration Iraq Kurdistan”. URA 2 and the Kosovo project help returnees to Kosovo with their reintegration. On a Länder and municipality level, single reintegration projects such as Ghana Bridge in Hamburg are funded also.

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

With the growing numbers of returnees due to the high influx of refugees in Germany the government emphasizes the need to especially support the vulnerable returnees. The welfare organizations try to cover this task, however, with a limited financial leeway. In case of severely physically or mentally ill returnees the medical logistics network (Melonet) can be commissioned to provide medical flight escorts (only an option for AVR providers with additional financial support from the Länder or the AMIF). The NGO Solwodi (solidarity for women in distress) offers financial assistance to single returning women and establishes connections with women's shelter in the country of return. In 2017, IOM Germany will offer a limited budget for physically ill returnees.

IntegPlan is a cooperation network in the field of voluntary return counselling. It offers trainings with regards to traumatized and vulnerable people to AVR counsellors (in seven federal states).

RETURN NUMBERS:

The German population had a total of 82.2 million people in 2015 (4). “In the reporting period 2015, 476,649 asylum applications (first and follow-up applications) were registered (compared to 202,834 in 2014)” (5). In the following, two charts are listed which show the voluntary return numbers and the main countries of return.



Picture 4: Stephan Schmidt from the Federal Ministry of Interior

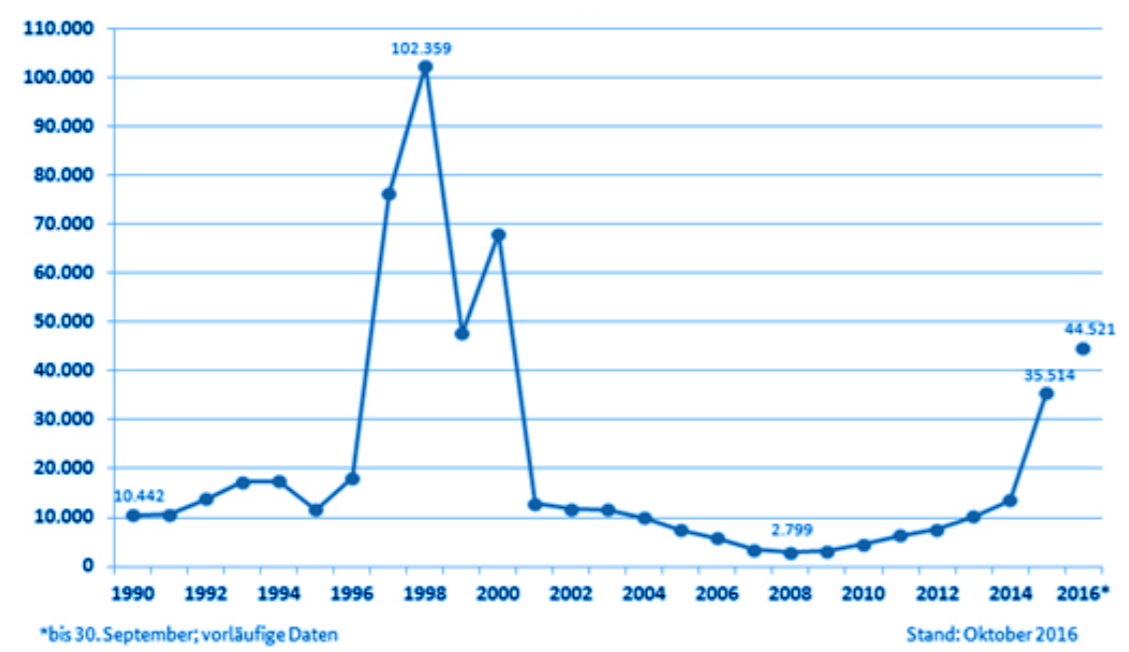




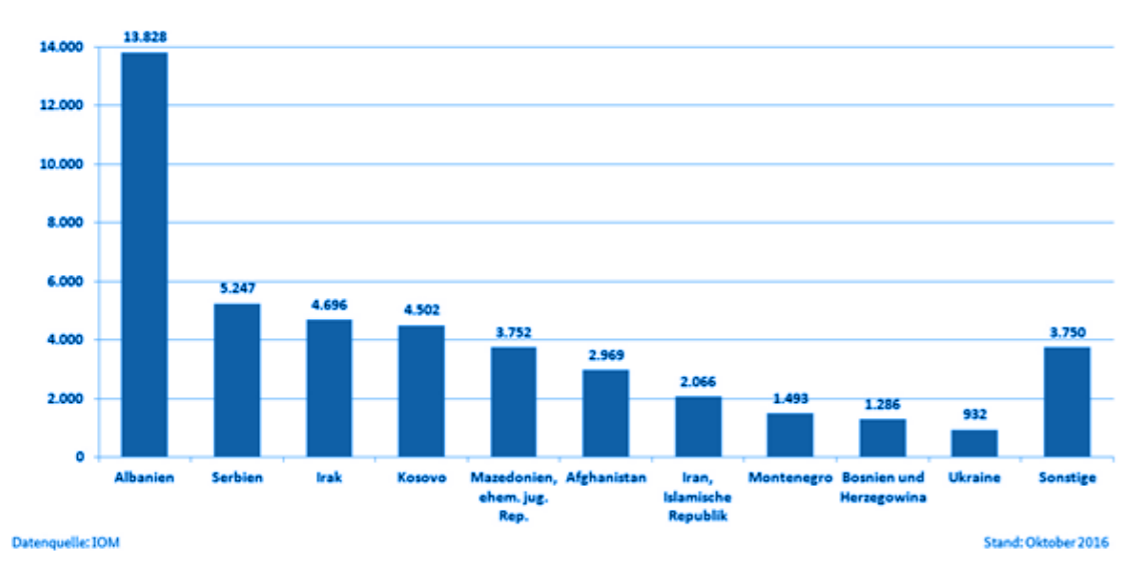
e. AVR IN NETHERLANDS

Learn more about AVR counselling in the Netherlands!

Number of voluntary returnees with the financial support of REAG/ GARP (6) 1990 - 30.09.2016



The ten most frequent REAG/GARP countries of return (7) 01.2016 - 09.2016



SOURCE:
 (1) Bundestag, 2002, Act to Control and Restrict Immigration and to Regulate the Residence and Integration of EU Citizens and Foreigners (Immigration Act) Article 1, Section 75
 (2) IOM, 2004, Return Migration: Policies & Practices in Europe
 (3) Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsstelle Integriertes Rückkehrmanagement, 2015, Leitlinien für eine bundes-weite Rückkehrberatung Version: 2.0 Stand: 09.04.2015 (nach BLK-Tagung)
 (4) Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016, Pressemitteilung vom 26. August 2016 - 295/16
 (5) BAMF, 2015, Migration Report 2015: Central Conclusion
 (6) www.bamf.de/DE/Infothek/Statistiken/FreiwilligeR%C3%BCckkehr/freiwillige-rueckkehr-node.html
 (7) www.bamf.de/DE/Infothek/Statistiken/FreiwilligeR%C3%BCckkehr/freiwillige-rueckkehr-node.html

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

The AVR counselling landscape is highly diversified in the Netherlands. The state department has assigned case managers to guide voluntary returnees through the pre-departure preparations. IOM also offers AVR throughout the country. Several NGOs offer AVR with an own specialty. The Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland) provides assistance to refugees throughout the entire asylum procedure with the help of approximately 13,000 volunteers. Even the AVR counselling is carried out by trained volunteers who are overseen by professional social workers. In this way the volunteer is able to offer a more personal, less timely limited and motivated assistance to the returnee. NGOs such as Wereldwijd, Bridge to Better or Solid Road offer mainly professional trainings to refugees and (former) asylum seekers. While equipping participants with professional skills, interested people in return receive AVR counselling alongside and receive support with planning a solid business start-up after return. The foundation ROS is specialized in supporting undocumented or illegal migrants in voluntary return process. This list of NGOs involved in AVR is not exhaustive.

LEGAL BASIS:

"The legal basis for forced and independent departure is the Aliens Act 2000, which provides for the admission and removal of foreign nationals" (1). Foreign nationals who are obliged to leave within a period of four weeks after their lawful or free residence period has expired are supposed to leave the Netherlands voluntarily. Financial incentives and organizational support are stipulated in the implementation guidelines (A4/5) of the Aliens Act.

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

The pre-departure counselling includes information about AVR and psychological assistance in the decision making process. Occasionally, returnees can be registered in vocational training programmes. IOM and the Dutch Council for

Refugees are specialized in reintegration counselling. The counsellor works with the client on a reintegration plan which needs to comply with the rules and regulations of the HRT fund. Only in-kind assistance is being funded by the HRT fund. A first contact between the returnee and the reintegration partner is established prior to the departure. Each organization uses for this purpose its own network of reintegration partners in the countries of origin. Independent from the AVR counselling provider a visit to an IOM office, where the client applies for a flight ticket and the travel assistance (REAN) as well as for reintegration assistance (HRT), is necessary for a return.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The financial assistance includes not only the travel money of 200 € per adult and 40 € per child (REAN) in cash but also reintegration assistance with a maximum of 1,750 € per adult and 880 € per child (HRT) for (former) asylum seekers. In addition, 1,500 € specifically assigned to in-kind reintegration assistance for former asylum seekers are provided (SVT/AMIF). In case illegal migrants would like to return voluntarily, the OZV fund offers 1,500 € reintegration assistance. 50 % of the OZV support needs to be spent prior to the departure, though.



Picture 5: Martijn Tubbergen from DT&V

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS:

Until the end of 2016, the reintegration programme provided by the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) in 17 countries of return was reserved only for forced returnees. NGOs as mentioned above use existing networks such as the European Reintegration Support Organizations network (ERSO) to organize psychosocial follow-up care after return.

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

Counsellors may apply for up to 3,000 € financial support for medical care for returnees with health issues, which is granted by IOM. With regards to the dealing with vulnerable clients in the counselling, several manuals such as ERSO Sure or Facing Return are available to the AVR counsellors.

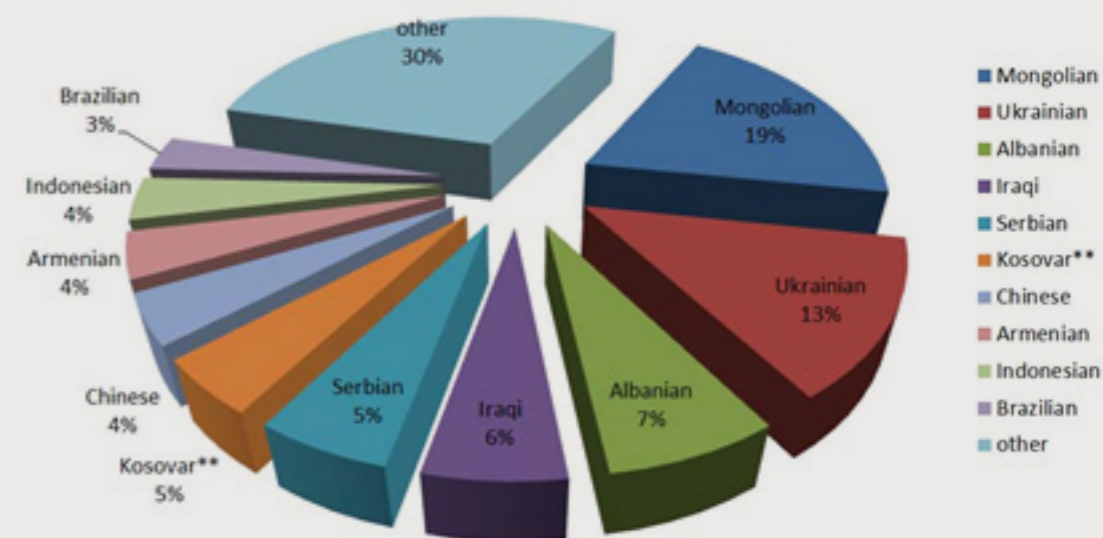
RETURN NUMBERS:

The Dutch population held approximately 17.012 million inhabitants in May 2016 (2). From January through September 2015, 34,958 people applied for asylum (3). The following figures and the chart are taken from the homepage of IOM Nederland (4).

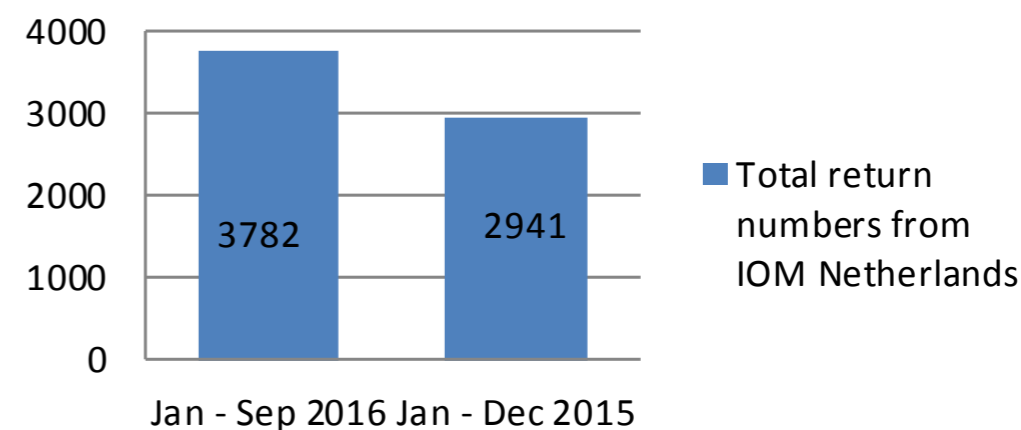
REPATRIATION AND DEPARTURE SERVICE

Ms. Tubbergen, the Director of Supervision and Measures Directorate of the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) of the Ministry of Security and Justice Netherlands, represented the position of the Dutch State regarding voluntary return of vulnerable people. The government aligns itself with the EU Return Directive preferring voluntary return over forced return. If this offer is not seized by the rejected asylum seekers, a strict implementation of deportation needs to be carried out. While elaborating on the support for voluntary returnees, one vulnerable group stood out especially with regards to special treatment – unaccompanied minors. Independent from their legal status unaccompanied minors may receive up to 1,750 € cash assistance or up to 4,000 € in-kind assistance which exceeds the financial support for adults or families by far (5). A specific project was designed to reach this target group, trying to involve relatives in the country of return, family courts and legal guardians.

Top 10 countries of voluntary return 2015 from the Netherlands



Voluntary return 2015 & 2016 in the Netherlands



SOURCE:

- (1) EMN (Dutch National Contact Point), 2006, Research Study III: Return, p.37
- (2) www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Laender/Niederlande.html
- (3) www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/netherlands/statistics
- (4) www.iom-nederland.nl/en/voluntary-return/statistics-voluntary-return
- (5) Martijn Tubbergen (DT&V), 24.11.2016, PowerPoint

f. AVR IN SWEDEN



Learn more about the AVR situation in Sweden!

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

The Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) is in charge of the asylum procedure as well as for the return of rejected asylum seekers. The counsellors of the Swedish Migration Agency are, therefore, not only in charge of the asylum case before the decision but also of the pre-departure assistance after the rejection. However, some NGOs have identified the need to provide counselling and guidance separately from the Swedish Migration Agency. Even though there are no agreements between the state authorities and the NGOs to provide AVR counselling, the Swedish Red Cross counsellors for example offer information on return, counselling and reintegration support independent from the state. Other NGOs provide AVR counselling more on an ad hoc basis.

LEGAL BASIS:

In the government Bill 1996/97:25, – Swedish Migration Policy in a Global Perspective (Svensk migrationspolitik iett globalt perspektiv), a legal framework for the need to offer a comprehensive and well-structured voluntary repatriation program was first set (1).

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

The AVR counselling by the state counsellors includes legal counselling for rejected asylum seekers, information about AVR providers (in this case the Swedish Prison and Probation Service) and offer reintegration support to same nationalities. The returnee is mainly in charge of organizing the return him/herself. The counsellor hands out the form to request

assistance with the travel arrangements of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service which the client needs to fill out him/herself. If possible, the state counsellor registers the returnee in a reintegration programme (ERIN). If the client wants to receive reestablishment support, he/she needs to fill out a form and hand it in to the counsellor. The client receives the flight ticket and the travel money shortly before departure. The counselling of the NGOs focuses more on informing clients about the conditions in the country of return, offers psychosocial support and establishes a first contact between the returnee and the reintegration partner.

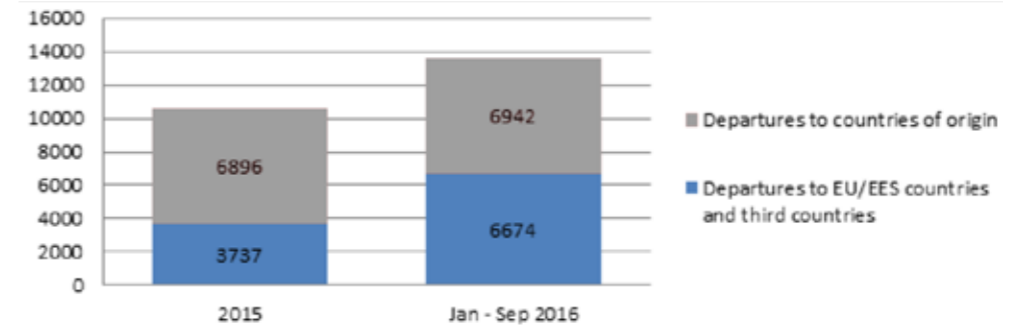
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

A fixed amount for travel money does not exist. Depending on the municipality the returnee may receive a little cash assistance. The expenses for the onwards travel after arrival at the main airport in the country of return are usually paid for by the municipalities. If a returnee applies for reestablishment support, he/she may receive approximately 3,000 € per adult (30,000 SEK) or 1,500 € per child (15,000 SEK), only if the country of return is considered to be challenging with regards to reintegration. The maximum support for a family is around 7,500 € (75,000 SEK).

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS:

ERIN: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Russia and Morocco

Voluntary departures 2015 & 2016



VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

Vulnerable returnees receive special, practical support from the staff of the Swedish Red Cross like the provision of a wheel chair for the return trip. The Swedish Red Cross tries to connect vulnerable returnees with reintegration organizations in the country or return in order to continuously provide psychosocial support. In this case the partner organization is briefed thoroughly about the condition of the returnee. More and more NGOs are interested in offering AVR counselling or support activities.

RETURN NUMBERS:

In 2016, Sweden counted 10.3 million inhabitants (2). 162,877 asylum applications were handed in to the Swedish Migration Agency in 2015 (3). In the following, two tables are listed which show the voluntary return numbers and the main countries of return. These figures were provided by Ewa Jonsson from the Swedish Red Cross (4).

Main Countries of Return

	2015	2016
1.	Iraq	Iraq
2.	Serbia	Afghanistan
3.	Albania	Albania

SOURCE:

- (1) IOM, 2004, Return Migration: Policies & Practices in Europe
- (2) <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/19316/umfrage/gesamtbevoelkerung-von-schweden/>
- (3) www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-/Statistics.html
- (4) Ewa Jonsson (Swedish Red Cross), 2016, Voluntary Departures from Sweden 2015 & 2016

g. AVR IN SWITZERLAND

Learn more about the AVR system in Switzerland!

COUNSELLING PROVIDER:

In Switzerland the State Secretary for Migration (SEM) oversees and manages the entire field of voluntary return. It assigns the AVR counselling mandates to providers and ensures thereby an implementation of the counselling by centralized standards. The field of AVR providers displays great diversity: state counsellors, counsellors from welfare organisations such as Caritas or the Swiss Red Cross and IOM counsellors (mainly in the initial reception centers).

LEGAL BASIS:

AVR counselling is anchored in the Asylum Law (Asylgesetz) Article 93 (1) which states that counselling positions, financial return programmes as well as reintegration assistance for ill returnees need to be available at all times to ensure the option of voluntary return (Rückkehrfähigkeit).

COUNSELLING SYSTEM:

The Swiss AVR counselling can be described as a one-stop-shop assistance. At first, interested clients receive a counselling on perspectives in the home and host country. In case a voluntary return is desired, the case manager (counsellor) assists with the organisation of travel documents, the withdrawal of the asylum request and creates a reintegration plan. The concrete departure arrangements and reintegration assistance are then organised in close cooperation with IOM, SEM and the local authorities. IOM is in charge of the realization of return (flight ticket,

approval of reintegration plan and contact with local partner) and SEM is the responsible authority to grant any type of financial return support. The flight ticket, the travel money and travel documents are only handed out at the airport.

What is unique about the AVR assistance in Switzerland is that almost every returnee receives not only travel money but also a four digit reintegration support. Switzerland is mostly known to be the forerunner of a consequent and strict forced return method – the opposite side of a generous AVR method. The trend to make AVR counselling compulsory for rejected asylum seekers seems to interest several European governments now. In Switzerland this was established several years ago. All asylum seekers need to see an AVR counsellor at least once. This practice, however, interferes strongly with one of the main principle of most European welfare organizations offering AVR: the free choice (even for the counselling).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

A returnee who has stayed less than 3 months in Switzerland is entitled to 500 CHF cash allowance, children 250 CHF. In some cases reintegration project assistance for returnees with a short time of staying in Switzerland up to 3,000 CHF is possible. With a longer stay than three months in Switzerland the returnee will receive 1,000 CHF start-up support and in most cases 3,000 CHF reintegration support. In case the client exhibits certain vulnerability criteria up to 2,000 CHF can be applied for at the SEM in addition. People returning to the home country who are subject to the Dublin procedure receive 500 CHF financial support. (exchange rate: 1 € ≈ 1 CHF; Nov 2016)

REINTEGRATION PROJECTS:

The reintegration plan is usually tailor-made for each returnee. Since IOM is in charge of offering the reintegration counselling/assistance after return and IOM having a branch office in almost all countries of return, the implementation of the reintegration plan as well as monitoring is intended to be ensured in most countries of return. The SEM also offers 'country projects' in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DEZA) and IOM. They aim at assisting returnees with their social, professional and educational reintegration country as

well as structural development within the country. Currently two country projects in Nigeria and Guinea are carried out.

VULNERABLE RETURNEES:

Whenever the client is being assessed as vulnerable in the AVR counselling, the counsellor contacts the staff of the IOM Bern office which is specialized in arranging the necessary travel and reintegration assistance for vulnerable groups. The counsellor continues the counselling in close consultation with the IOM staff.

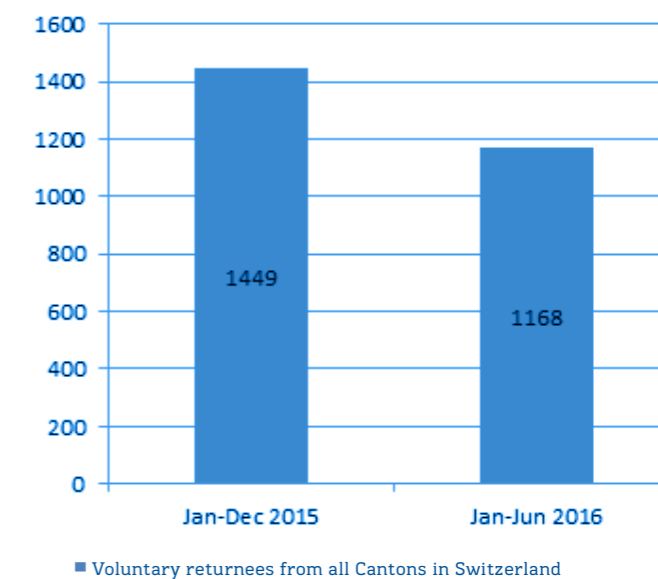
Usually medical supplies are provided for the first three months after return. If the returnee needs to have surgery, it can be arranged and paid for after return (when possible). In all cases of mentally and physically ill people returning, the local Swiss doctor needs to assess the returnee's travel fitness as well as an IOM travel doctor from the region of return. When necessary, social or medical travel escorts can be arranged and are paid for. In case elderly people return, IOM offers the possibility of "cash for care" to the family members in the country of return. IOM Bern published a revised version of the manual for vulnerable returnees (Rückkehr und Reintegration von vulnerablen Personen) (2) in September 2016 which advises counsellors with concrete tips how to organize the departure and reintegration of vulnerable returnees.



RETURN NUMBERS:

The Swiss population size was in 2015 8.3 million (3). For the purpose of comparability the number of arrived asylum seekers shall be mentioned also. 39,523 (4) people asked requested asylum in Switzerland in 2015. In the following the voluntary return numbers, which were provided by the SEM (5), shall be displayed:

Assisted Voluntary Returns 2015 & 2016



Main Countries of Return

	Jan-Dec 2015	Jan-Jun 2016
1.	Kosovo (207)	Iraq (254)
2.	Georgia (118)	Afghanistan (126)
3.	Iraq (106)	Senegal (72)
4.	Senegal (106)	Algeria 50
5.	Ukraine (68)	Kosovo (42)

SOURCE:

- (1) www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/19995092/index.html#a93
- (2) Heuschmann, Muhamudo & Sauter (IOM Bern), 2016, Rückkehr und Reintegration von vulnerablen Personen Handbuch
- (3) www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bevoelkerung.html
- (4) www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/aktuell/news/2016/2016-01-28.html
- (5) SEM, Statistik Rückkehrhilfe nach Nationen 2004 - 06/2016

FINAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE:

This was a first overview of seven AVR counselling structures in Europe. During the conference Norway, Estonia and Poland were also introduced – however, only briefly. A representative of each country spoke for five minutes about the current situation in their country. In these cases AVR counselling is still in its infancy shoes.



4.

PRESENTATION OF UNIQUE IMPLEMENTATIONS OF AVR

Throughout the introduction of the AVR structures in Europe unique approaches to AVR were mentioned. Three approaches shall be presented in the following: volunteers as repatriation counsellors, a broader approach to address return against the background of the future and a combination of professional training and AVR.

a. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM VLUCHTELINGEN WERK

Learn more about how volunteers can benefit the voluntary return assistance!

The Dutch Council for Refugees offers support during the asylum seeking process as well as the integration process and beyond. With the objective to assist refugees in the best possible way the Dutch Council for Refugees established a first cooperation with volunteers in 1979 right after its foundation. The volunteer coordination began small with 300 volunteers but grew into one of the main pillars of the Dutch Council for Refugees in the Netherlands and shapes now its public face immensely. With 11,000 volunteers in 295 municipalities the volunteer numbers have increased around forty-fold until 2015.

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERING

The basic idea behind working with volunteers is to benefit from the higher quantity of workers, the greater availability and flexibility of time for the close assistance of refugees and the emotional bonding far beyond a professional relationship. In this way the volunteer is greatly committed to the case. By now, the volunteer work has been professionalized. The volunteers, who sign up, need to commit to a certain amount of time and receive intensive training before assisting the first refugee. Many volunteers have been working with the organization for many years. Especially (unemployed) elderly people have found their way of contributing to society in volunteering (55 % of the volunteers were aged above 56 years in 2005).

REPATRIATION COUNSELLING OFFERED BY VOLUNTEERS

Amongst many other services within the Dutch Council for Refugees, the return project is offered in order to assist voluntary returnees. As soon as a request

for assistance is processed, the returnee gets assigned to a volunteer, who is trained and overseen by a professional social worker of the Dutch Council for Refugees. The volunteer offers legal and psycho-social counseling, assists the returnee during visits to public authorities and is the main point of contact throughout the entire pre-departure process. The case is referred back to the professional worker, if difficulties or vulnerabilities appear. Mrs Ijff from the Dutch Council for Refugees shared within the context of the Transnational Exchange III Conference, "During a monitoring visit to Guinea, I visited one of our assisted returnees. He was still in contact with a volunteer from the Dutch Council for Refugees. He told us that the assistance of the volunteer was very important for him in a difficult time of his life and that he still felt connected to the Netherlands because of this relationship."

CHALLENGES

Nevertheless, the volunteer work presents some challenges. On the one hand, the field

DEBATE:

- > How can a certain level of professionalism be maintained and offered at all times?
- > Can a volunteer offer a similar counselling like a professional social worker after an intensive training?
- > What is more important: the frequent and personal support of a volunteer or the occasional counselling session with a professional counsellor?



SOURCE:

- Talk with Annett Ijff from the Dutch Council for Refugees
- www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/persoonlijke-verhalen/vrijwilligers

of repatriation counselling is one of the less attractive fields of involvement for volunteers who prefer supporting refugees in the integration and family reunification process. On the other hand, the diversity of commitment and skills of the volunteers hampers a smooth and steady work flow. Therefore, an immediate back-up support of the professional counsellors is needed in case volunteers drop out on a short notice.

b. FUTURE ORIENTATION BELGIUM



Read more about a broader approach to return – a future perspective counselling!

Future Orientation is a counselling method to empower people with a precarious residence status to take active steps towards their future. In 2010, the “de8”, the integration center for the Belgian city of Antwerp, offered the first future orientation group counselling. Ever since then, it has been applied in other Belgian cities and was published by Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering in June 2015.

Future Orientation is aimed at people with a provisional, temporary, conditional or no residence entitlement. The counselling method can be applied in group settings as well as in individual counselling sessions. The goal of the counselling is to shift the focus from the stalling process of the asylum request or the hopelessness and lack of perspective after a rejection of the asylum request towards the original motivation for migration. Why did the client choose to migrate? Is it possible to realize the personal goals of migration in a different way aside from

waiting for the paperwork to be completed? The counsellor tries to empower the client by finding and reminding the client of his/her strengths, wishes, passions and goals in life. Ultimately, the counsellor strives to explore with the client all future options taking into consideration the past and presence.

Four aspects shall be highlighted during the counselling in order to empower the client (1):

1. RECOGNITION:

During the counselling session the client shall be recognized and be shown appreciation. The counsellor should address the fact that the asylum seekers often do not have the same rights as the local population and acknowledge the pain and frustration which accompanies such unequal treatment. Aside from the legal recognition, the counsellor should recognize the strenuous efforts which had been undertaken by the client to come to Europe. The counsellor could acknowledge the challenging living circumstances

in a reception center and praise the perseverance and inner strength of the client to endure the uncertainty and the not-belonging. Next to the social recognition, the recognition of existence entails showing respect to the client for the mere fact that he/she is a human being.

2. INSIGHT:

This counselling aspect includes explanations with regards to the ONLY four existing legal options which are: staying legally or illegally in the host country, migrating to a third country or returning to the home country. Sometimes asylum seekers suspect that there are loopholes in the legal system, which are hidden from them and only need to be found in order to achieve a positive outcome of their asylum request. They are often not aware of the full scope of the governmental and legal systems in the respective European countries. In this case, the counsellor may apply an exercise to visualize the client's four future options (p. 19). After having lined up four chairs next to each other and putting a sign for each future option on a chair, the client is asked to sit on the chair with his/her preferred option. The counsellor and the client then discuss the consequences of this choice taking into consideration the rights, the benefits, the risks and challenges. While also exploring the different options, the counsellor asks questions which try to connect the original motivation and needs for the migration with a realistic option. In order to reduce the frustration level with the administrative and legal challenges in the host country, the future orientation method brochure recommends giving further general information about the government's policy on migration, the role of bureaucracy and the social welfare system in the respective country.

3. REFLECTION:

Most clients put their lives on hold during the asylum seeking process. While doing so, the original life goals, wishes and dreams fade into the background. The counsellor shall offer a space to the client to reconnect with his past identity and ideas. Continuing the thought process from the counselling aspect “Insight”, the emotional and idealistic views shall be reflected upon. The counsellor can help to readjust the client's self-awareness with regard to strengths, talents and skills. In the waiting process people often feel useless due to the ban on employment or the impossibility to find work and forget their own competences. In

this case, an exercise called “the lifeline” (p.22) is recommended. The counsellor draws a timeline on a piece of paper, marking the birth, the current age, the time spent in the host country and the estimated personal life expectancy. The counsellor continues to ask questions such as “How do you see your life in 5 years, in 10 years, in 20 years? What is your current dream and what is that dream like?” (p.22). Two further exercises are presented in the “reflection” counselling aspect. The reflection exercise on talents involves the client choosing some cards from a plethora of cards, which show different activities covering the professional, social and leisure realm. The client then explains his/her selection of cards and what he/she could do in order to carry out these activities in the future. A third exercise “the Tree of Life” (p.23) touches on the creative side of the client and opens up new channels for understanding and reflecting through visualization. The counsellor prompts the client to paint a tree, which signifies life. The client is asked to write down key words next the roots describing talents, he/she has had in the past. The trunk symbolizes the presence, around which keywords for the internal and external drive to survive the asylum seeking process and life in the host country shall be listed. The branches and fruits represent the future. The client should write down dreams, goals and future options there.

4. TAKING CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES

After having reflected on the future options, the client now needs to take active steps, regain control by following a newly created action plan including concrete next steps. The client is the architect of his own fortune. The counsellor can only assist.

Even though the future orientation counselling is conceptualized for a counselling period of three days to a maximum of two weeks, counsellors may apply certain aspects in a much shorter counselling session also. In the manual several questions, recommendations for the group counselling as well as recommendations for organizations, which would like to offer a future orientation counselling, are given.

SOURCE:

- (1) Deboscher & Goovaerts (Kruispunt Migratie-Integratie), 2015, Future orientation: Working on meaningful prospects for those with a precarious residence status

C. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ORGANISATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS



Read more about a combination of AVR counselling and professional training!

A general compilation of the most important aspects of assisted voluntary return includes counselling in order to help the client make an informed choice about whether to return or not, assistance in the pre-departure preparation, preparing a reintegration plan and offering qualification measures either in the host or home country. Depending on the AVR counselling provider in different European countries only some of the four aspects are offered in the AVR counselling sessions.

In the Netherlands, the qualification measures have been outsourced from the general AVR providers to independent organisations such as Wereldwijd, Bridge to Better or Solid Road which are specialized in training potential returnees.

Wereldwijd: www.stichtingwereldwijd.nl/

Solid Road: www.solidroad.nl/

Bridge to Better: www.bridgetobetter.org/nl/

In the following the work of Solid Road shall be presented:

Solid Road is a Dutch foundation which equips (former) asylum seekers and undocumented migrants with professional skills, which they can make use of after return, by offering vocational trainings, coaching and business-trainings. The participants receive a proper certificate after the completion of the course. The skills which were acquired in Europe are often highly in demand in the countries of return.

The objective of Solid Road is to empower returnees with a profession in order to be able to start a business in their home

countries and to be self-sufficient. The training period ranges from four to twelve weeks depending on the profession. The following enumeration of trainings was either implemented in a group setting or on an individual basis: graphic designer, web designer, cook, baker, hairdresser, tailor, fashion designer, florist, car mechanic, welder, plumber, electrician, mason, carpenter, farmer and more.

PROCEDURE

1. Interview: During a first meeting with Solid Road, staff members assess the talents and experience of the potential participants. In the course of the conversation a tentative business idea is developed or enhanced. If the applicant does not hold any identity document, next necessary steps towards getting them are explained.

2. Vocational training courses: The vocational training equips the potential returnees with a skill which will allow them to make a living in the country of origin.

3. Business Training: In order to run any successful business the owner needs to be trained in business administration. The training is conceptualized with the objective for the participants to be proficient in filling out a format business plan taking into consideration a realistic supply and demand, revenues and expenses.

4. Coaching: Personal counselling sessions provide a framework for potential returnees to discuss open and personal questions and concerns.



5. Referral: The reintegration plan (accommodation, social network, etc.) and especially the business plan will be discussed with local partner organizations in the countries of origin which will be assisting the returnee in the set-up of the business after return. Upon completion of the training the participant receives 1,500 € in-kind reintegration assistance, of which 750 € need to be spent in the Netherlands. Usually the graduates spend the reintegration assistance on tools or equipment which they will need for the business set-up. Solid Road supports the returnee with the shipping of newly purchased

goods to the country of return. The partner organizations execute three monitoring visits in the first six months.

SPECIALTY: COOPERATION TOOL BOX

Since a number of Solid Road participants wanted to open a repair shop or craft shop, the idea was developed to recycle old tools and equipment – the foundation Saved Tools. Dutch citizens donate their old tools, which then are repaired and cleaned when needed, and sorted into special toolboxes for carpenters, bricklayers, car mechanics, seamstresses and more. These boxes are shipped to the country of origin.


SOURCE:

- Solid Road, 2015, Newsletter September 2015
- Solid Road, 2015, Newsletter April 2015
- Solid Road, 2016, Beleidsplan June 2016

PRESENTATION OF TWO MANUALS ON HOW TO ASSIST VULNERABLE RETURNEES

When aspiring to provide helpful tools for counsellors with regard to assisting vulnerable groups, presenting manuals is a great step to tackle this undertaking. Out of five manuals for vulnerable groups two were chosen to be presented - Facing Return by Diana Geraci and the Manual Reintegration of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable persons in Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq by Caritas Austria. The manual Rückkehr und Reintegration von vulnerablen Personen by IOM Bern, which is only available in German and French, can be found online. Children and the Voluntary Return: Guide for parents by Katrien Van Gelder as well as Home: Practical guidelines for a dignified, safe and sustainable return of victims of human trafficking by Maatwerk bij Terugkeer were not presented either.

a. FACING RETURN

 Read about a practical counselling tool for the assistance in the decision making process!

Facing return is a manual which was compiled by a team of voluntary return experts in the Netherlands in 2011. The main focus of the authors was to provide helpful information and practical material for AVR counselling. Two aspects were focused on especially: support during the decision making process and an action plan for the return preparations. The approach which is presented in the manual "Facing Return" is named 'Psychosocial assistance for returnee'. Even though the manual was created for a general type of returnee, several suggestions and clues are exclusively concerned with vulnerable returnees. Therefore, the manual shall be introduced in the following.

The second chapter sets a theoretical framework to the counselling tools which are presented in the chapters three and four. In chapter three, which elaborates on the support in the decision making process, a first practical counselling tool, an assessment sheet, is presented. The assessment sheet is to be filled out by the counsellor during the counselling session. While asking the potential returnee about different factors of return such as the subjective perception of safety in the country of origin, the future of the children or the healthcare services, the counsellors transforms the answers into a positive or negative score regarding the perceived impact of return. In this case, the positive or negative ranking is not to be equated with a value judgement but rather with a means to neutrally visualize the inventory of opportunities, strengths, weaknesses and threats of the client in the host and home country.

The decision making process starts with understanding the legal status of the client. After having gained an overview of the client's status of the asylum procedure, the counsellor explains the future perspectives including remaining in the host country (legally or illegally), migrating to a third country or returning to the home country. In this case, the counsellor does not need to fill out the score columns. The next step is to inquire about the client's perception of opportunities in the country of origin and in the country of destination (or host country) (see the assessment sheet). Since vulnerabilities are country-specific, the counsellor needs to consider possible vulnerabilities after return, which are not existent in the host country. "The most common attributes determining whether someone is assessed as being part of a vulnerable group include: gender and sexual orientation, age (e.g. unaccompanied minors), ethnicity, political and religious beliefs, health status and past experiences (violence, torture, human trafficking, etc.)" (p.40).

The next step after the assessment is to revise the answers the client has given and inquire which factors could be changed from the negative score column to the positive score column and which measures would need to be taken. In some cases more available information or practical solutions can remove the perception of a negative impact of return. In case a client has not been in touch with family members remaining in the home country, a first contact could be established through the phone which then will bring more clarity on whether the returnee can expect support from his/her family after return or not. This example leads over to the chapter four "the action plan".

The manual provides many helpful questions in order to find the next necessary steps regarding all factors listed in the assessment sheet. Aside from the perceived opportunities in the host and home country the client is to be stimulated to recall personal goals regarding accommodation, employment and training. Reanimating old dreams and goals in life and searching for reasonable, realistic next steps towards its achievement will create or increase the client's life purpose.

WEIGHTING OF FACTORS (P.37)

- - - This factor has a very negative impact on return migration
- - This factor has a negative impact on return migration
- This factor has a slightly negative impact on return migration

N score: impact neutral or not known

- + This factor has a slightly positive impact on return migration
- ++ This factor has a positive impact on return migration
- +++ This factor has a very positive impact on return migration

Appendix 1 Overview 1: Factors which play a role in reaching a decision on return migration

How to use this overview
Score each factor ranging from - to - - - (lefthand column) and from + to +++ (righthand column).

- Return	Starting point	+ Return
	1 Outcome of asylum procedure	
	General Asylum Procedure/Extended Asylum Procedure/ Temporary Residence/undocumented migrant/refugee	
	Use this space for any comments relating to this factor:	
	(Perception of) Opportunities in the country of origin	
	2 Subjective perception of safety in the country of origin ¹	
	3 Children	
	4 Accommodation	
	5 Employment	
	6 Training	
	7 Family/social network	
	8 Healthcare services	
	9 Social norm with regard to return migration	
	(Perception of) Opportunities in the country of destination	
	10 Subjective perception of safety in the country of destination ¹	
	11 Children	
	12 Accommodation	
	13 Employment	
	14 Training	
	15 Family/social network	
	16 Healthcare services	
	17 Social norm with regard to remaining in the host country	
	Health	
	18 Physical health	
	19 Mental health	
Total -		Total +

Picture 6: Facing Return Assessment Sheet (p.69)

SOME QUESTIONS TAKEN FROM THE MANUAL P. 73 - 76:

- What gives you pleasure in life?/What do you enjoy doing?
- What sort of work would you like to do/would you be able to do if you were to live in your country of origin?
- Where (house, accommodation) would you like to/would you be able to live in your country of origin?
- Are there any other goals you would like to achieve if you were to live in your country of origin?
- Think what people/organisations might be able to help you and how: Family members, friends, organizations, religious communities, internet groups/ social media

Whenever families return, not only the goals and dreams of the adults need to be considered but also the needs of the children. The following questions from p.77 give some first ideas what to heed to when children are involved in the return process:

- (Where) Will children be able to attend school? Has there been contact with the school as yet?
- Are the children able to speak and write the language spoken and written in the country of origin? How will children be able to learn the language better?
- Are there big differences in social etiquette between the country of destination and the country of origin that you would like to prepare your child(ren) for?
- How can children get in contact with age group peers in the country of origin? What activities might children be able to participate in?

In chapter five the authors state that surveys amongst repatriation counsellors have shown that supporting mentally ill returnees in the decision process and the pre-departure preparations creates special challenges. In many ways the client may react in a much stronger emotional way than healthy returnees. Therefore, a few mental illnesses are presented and advice is given on how to respond to certain occurrences during the counselling in the manual Facing Return.

SOURCE:

- Geraci (Pharos), 2011, Facing Return: An approach for psychosocial assistance to (former) asylum seekers and undocumented

b. MANUAL - REINTEGRATION OF DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE PERSONS IN MONGOLIA, PAKISTAN AND IRAQ



Learn more about a broader perspective on vulnerability criteria!

The manual was compiled in April 2014 based on the evaluations of the reintegration assistance provided to 100 vulnerable returnees to Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq within the ERSO Sure project. Three aspects are elaborated in detail in this manual: a broader view on vulnerability criteria, pre-departure counselling advice for certain vulnerable groups and a guideline for a tailor-made reintegration assistance for vulnerable returnees. In this chapter only the broader view on vulnerability criteria shall be explained further.



In order to guarantee the best possible reintegration assistance, a special focus needs to be placed on the identification of the client's vulnerability and his/her specific needs before and during the reintegration process. Usually when talking about people's vulnerabilities in the context of return, the standard vulnerabilities derive from health issues, harmful experiences or a lack of familial support (see chapter 2). The authors of the ERSO SURE manual discovered, however, that the standard definition of vulnerability seemed not exhaustive based on the feedback from the local reintegration partners and the answers from the questionnaire. Their findings showed that vulnerability criteria were dependent on the specific circumstances and cultures in the countries of return and could, therefore, vary from one country to another.

The authors of the manual compiled a detailed list of vulnerabilities for each country. In this list several vulnerability criteria seemed to correspond in Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq which do not fall under the standard definition of vulnerability and shall be mentioned in the following: returnees without a minimum social network, returnees with substance abuse disorders and illiterate, uneducated returnees. The manual summarizes the three most difficult reintegration challenges for vulnerable clients in the researched countries:

PAKISTAN

- Mentally ill returnees are marginalized and therefore disadvantaged regarding health care access
- Returning single women without male company are subjected to isolation, harassment, assault and economic discrimination

- Young returnees often cannot afford education due to lacking finances

IRAQ

- Young returnees who grew up or spent most their lives in Europe struggle to adjust to the Iraqi culture and social rules
- Traumatized returnees do not have access to psychological counselling
- Reintegration will fail for unaccompanied minors when not returning to the (extended) family

MONGOLIA

- Young uneducated returnees will face great difficulties in the job search
- Returning adults with children struggle to find housing after return
- Returnees with substance abuse disorders cannot access medical support due to a lack of finances or offer

A further conclusion was that seemingly non-vulnerable returnees could develop vulnerability upon return. The vulnerability criteria 'long absence of the country of origin' should be mentioned here especially. The manual encourages AVR counsellors to think beyond the standard vulnerability criteria compilation and to investigate (in the best case in consultation with a local reintegration partner) if and to which degree a client can be classified as vulnerable. This assessment lays the foundation for a tailor-made reintegration assistance.

SOURCE:

- Caritas Austria (ERSO), 2014, Manual: Reintegration of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable persons in Mongolia, Pakistan and Iraq

a. AGREDS GHANA



Learn more about the reintegration assistance from AGREDS Ghana!

The national church-based non-profit development organization ASSEMBLIES OF GOD RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (AGREDS) in Ghana has been coordinating the development and relief efforts of the Assemblies of God churches since 1991. Amongst many other support programs AGREDS offers also reintegration assistance.

AGREDS started working in the field of assisted voluntary return and reintegration in 2011. From 2011 to 2016 AGREDS assisted 178 forced and voluntary returnees (including 11 families and 13 unaccompanied minors) with reintegration assistance.

AVR SERVICES

AGREDS offers a variety of support services starting with information provision during the pre-departure phase. Aside from the referral work which takes place between the AVR counselling office in the sending country and AGREDS, AGREDS offers a personal skype or phone call with the potential returnee in order to discuss the arrival scenario in the home country. Possible needs such as airport pick-up or transition accommodation will be discussed. With establishing a first contact prior to the departure, the client is reassured that the partner organization is trustworthy and will implement the reintegration plan as arranged with the sending office.

After the arrival AGREDS meets with the client for the first time, assesses the expectations of the returnee with regards to the

family reunification and social reintegration. The returnee is also given a brief introduction to the current socio-economic condition in the country of return, which is most crucial for the vulnerable group of “people with a long absence of the home country”. The reintegration plan gets revised and adjusted together with the returnee. If necessary, psycho-social counselling is offered also. In the first weeks and months after the return the returnee receives support from AGREDS with finding an old or new social network, disbursing the financial support of the previously agreed reintegration assistance and referring the client to partner organizations or social services according to the needs. Grace Kombian, the representative of AGREDS during the Transnational Exchange III Conference, highlighted the fact that returnees without social network could also look for connections within the religious community. Despite the Western reluctance to discuss religion in the AVR counselling, AGREDS sees a high value in the role of faith in the life of a returnee. She mentioned not only the possibility to build a new network within the religious community quickly but also the benefit of finding comfort and acceptance through faith. AGREDS executes two monitoring visits after six and twelve months.

Referral and partner organizations of AGREDS in Ghana include the Department of Social Welfare, Ghana Health Services, Ghana Education Service, Ghana immigration office, University of Ghana Center for Migration Studies and the Ghana Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service.

**CHALLENGES:**

- Two-year advance payment for renting a room or apartment in the city
- Insufficient reintegration budget
- High risk of rejection by family since the returnee did not succeed to accomplish the mission to support the remaining family in Ghana with money from Europe; the whole family helped out financially to send one family member to Europe and earn money there
- Assisting forced returnees who are traumatized from the deportation and the sudden return; they often suspect AGREDS to be an ally of the departing governmental office
- Strict rules on the disbursement of reintegration funds pose a challenge to sustainable reintegration
- Service fee for the reintegration assistance is not sufficient especially when the vulnerable clients need frequent and time-consuming support

Grace Kombian pointed out the country-specific vulnerability of returning married men during the Transnational Exchange III Conference. This vulnerability derives from the cultural distribution of roles. The man needs to provide for the family and be the bread winner. If he does not accomplish this task, he will lose the respect of his wife and family. In such a case the struggle of his professional and social reintegration is aggravated by the negative and contemptuous remarks of his environment. AGREDS campaigns in Ghana for migration prevention as well as for changing the stigma of returnees within the society.



Picture 7: Grace Kombian from AGREDS Ghana

SOURCE:

- Grace Kombian (AGREDS), 22.11.2016, PowerPoint
- www.agreds.org

b. CARITAS LEBANON



Learn more about AVR and reintegration assistance offered by Caritas Lebanon!

Caritas Lebanon was founded in 1972 in order to provide humanitarian aid to the most needy. Its main target group consists of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers. Due to Lebanon's migration history, Caritas Lebanon is evolving into an organisation which offers repatriation counselling as well reintegration assistance. This oddity can be explained with a closer look at Lebanon's migration.

Emigration started in the second half of the 19th century caused by „Christian-Muslim communal conflicts and the economic crisis around Mount-Lebanon“ (1). Throughout the 20th century the emigrants' profile changed from unskilled workers to educated workers which lead to a considerable brain drain. In 2011, 509,405 Lebanese citizens lived outside of Lebanon, which is 12% of the total population. At the same time, 702,315 immigrants came to Lebanon. Impelled by war and conflict many Iraqis and Syrians joined the already existing group of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This influx number increased drastically with the growing conflicts in Syria. Approximately 300,000 people entered the country legally (2). The legal immigration consisted mostly of migrant workers from Africa and South East Asia. These migrant workers searched for income generating activities in order to provide for the family in the home country. The low payment and insufficient legal protection of migrant workers did not and still does not stop them from coming to Lebanon. In most cases the working conditions turn out to be too difficult (no payment despite arrangement, violence, starvation, etc.), which force the migrant worker to consider return, or the migrant worker has fulfilled the work contract time and returns with the blessing of the employer (3). Caritas Lebanon offers repatriation counselling to this target group and even provides a shelter for the clients, in case they cannot return to their employer's house anymore. The repatriation counselling includes awareness-raising of rights and responsibilities



Picture 8: Bruno Atieh from Caritas Lebanon

in Lebanon, planning a new business in their countries and referring the client to the reintegration partners who are assisting them in their home countries such as Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Kenya, Congo, Togo, Cameroun, India, etc. Caritas Lebanon supports the clients during the pre-departure preparations such as acquiring the correct paperwork, organizing the medical care before and after the departure and facilitating contact with the families in the home countries and with the reintegration partners.

The reintegration cooperation is mostly set-up within the broader Caritas network (in Sri Lanka and Ethiopia) and or with local NGOs (BATISS in the Philippines, OKUP in Bangladesh, POURAKHI in Nepal). Several staff members in charge for the reintegration process of the local reintegration organization underwent the migration cycle themselves in the past and can, therefore, assist in the best possible way.

The reintegration assistance, however, is still in its infancy shoes. So far the returning Lebanese citizens were assisted in their return by their families in Lebanon. The high numbers of Arab refugees on their way to Europe, the false promises from traffickers and the overwhelmed European governments encouraged a certain number of poor Lebanese citizens as well as recognized Palestinian refugees to make their way to Europe in 2015 and 2016. This could lead to a higher number of returnees who will not be assisted in their return by their families and, therefore, will be dependent on the assistance of Caritas Lebanon.

During the Transnational Exchange III Conference, the topic of voluntary return of Syrian refugees to Lebanon was discussed heatedly. On the one hand, Bruno Atieh from Caritas Lebanon explained that the entry regulations for Syrians had become very strict which rendered returning from Europe to Lebanon nearly impossible. On the other hand, the European AVR counsellors reported about the high request for family reunification in Lebanon. Caritas Lebanon focusses its reintegration assistance on Lebanese citizens only.

SOURCE:

- (1) Tabar, 2010, Lebanon: A Country of Emigration and Immigration
- (2) Fargues & Fandrich, 2012, Migration after the Arab Spring
- (3) Bruno Atieh (Caritas Lebanon), 22.11.2016, PowerPoint

c. SDD PAKISTAN



Learn more about the reintegration assistance offered by SDD Pakistan!

The Society for Sustainable Development (SSD) in Pakistan was founded in 2007 and has grown into a nation-wide well-established civil society. Focusing on supporting the disadvantaged, vulnerable, marginalized and disempowered communities in Pakistan, SDD has been partnering with major Western non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF, Refugee Action, Caritas Belgium, the Dutch Council for Refugees, etc. Due to this fact, SDD offers high-quality reintegration support which has been developed and advanced over the years.



Picture 9: Zia Ul Badar Shabbir from SSD Pakistan

The reintegration assistance for returnees from Europe includes a meet and greet at the airport, temporary accommodation (if necessary), assistance with the onward journey, financial reintegration support, referral of the returnee to

health, vocational or professional trainings, development of a business plan and psycho-social counselling throughout the socialization. The psycho-social support is not only limited to the returnee him/herself but is offered to families and relatives, who often impede a quick and successful reintegration process by regarding the return as a failure. The representative of SSD, Mr. Zia Ul Badar Shabbir, pointed out during the Transnational Exchange III Conference that in some cases religion as a source of assurance is addressed in the counselling sessions. He stressed the fact that personal faith can be a constant independent from the place of staying and provide a feeling of belonging and acceptance when facing opposition from the family.

SSD attends to vulnerable returnees with special services such as the organization of vulnerability specific transport facilities, home visits to returnees, referral services even beyond the general contract period, career counselling for young people (especially for single women and single mothers), educational counseling for children below 15 years and adjusted technical and vocational trainings for returning teenagers aged between 15 and 18.

Several challenges arise when working with returning people. In many cases, the families do not trust outside organisations and do not want to process issues with outsiders regarding discrimination within the family etc. As with most non-governmental organisations SSD needs more finances to offer the best assistance possible and to hire trained staff. The financial lack also does not allow SSD to pay for clients' medical care who would need long-term treatment. Some returnees fear to return due to the high loans they took to finance their flight and therefore the pressure from debt collectors. Mr. Badar informed the participants that it is often difficult to get legal protection in these cases and the fear of the clients is understandable. Despite a well-informed decision prior to the return SSD encounters sometimes returnees who regret their decision to return to Pakistan.

SOURCE:

- Zia Ul Badar Shabbir (SDD Pakistan), 22.11.2016, PowerPoint
- www.ssd.com.pk

d. CARITAS UKRAINE



Learn more about the reintegration assistance from Caritas Ukraine!

The Greek Catholic community opened a Caritas office with the aim to tend to the disadvantaged after the Ukraine had become independent in 1991. In 1994, Caritas Ukraine was officially established and opened its headquarters in L'viv. The work of Caritas started with collecting and distributing humanitarian aid but has broadened towards home care, mobile work with children and youth and migration. The organisation works in 12 oblasts of Ukraine and employs nearly 1,000 employees and volunteers (1).

Within the field of migration Caritas Ukraine offers reintegration assistance, prevention of human trafficking and migration processes studies. The reintegration assistance was first launched in 2005 cooperating with Caritas Europa, Belgium, Austria, Italy and Raphaelswerk on projects with the target of successful repatriation and effective socialization of Ukrainian migrants. The services of return programmes include social counselling, legal counselling, covering of medical expenses, material aid and support in starting a micro-business. Especially setting up an own business is of high importance since the country is battling a high unemployment rate and the lack of opportunities to earn a living and provide for family members. If the reintegration is not planned well and supported with finances, the returnee will most likely continue the labor migration cycle. The target group of returnees consists of 20 to 40 year old people (65 % male, 35 % female), of which 50 % return to the Chernivtsi region (2).

Ms Maievska, the representative of Caritas Ukraine, shared during the Transnational Exchange III Conference in Augsburg that Caritas Ukraine makes a sincere effort to support vulnerable returnees. She shared one story of a man with memory loss wanting to return from Belgium to his home country. Due to the fact that the man had no memory and contact details of his home town and family members, Caritas Ukraine posted on the (social) media the man's photo asking the Ukrainians if anybody knew him. Within a

short amount of time his family called Caritas Ukraine. Together with the family his return was successfully organized.

There is still a large number of labor migrants; Caritas Ukraine is launching information campaigns about the risks of labor migration and providing guidelines for labor migration.

CHALLENGES

The humanitarian and charitable organisations in Ukraine face severe governmental restrictions. Next to strict bookkeeping rules which are often monitored by the government, the organisations need to pay high taxes on the donations and incoming money. Even if the returnee receives reintegration assistance, he/she needs to pay 19,5% income taxes on it. The purchase of medicaments often represents major challenges due to the lack of availability and the high prices. A return to the conflict zones is not supported by Caritas Ukraine due to safety reasons. If a person still wants to return to those areas, a connection to relatives and the provision of a shelter is essential.

Picture 10: Ms Maievska from Caritas Ukraine



SOURCE:

- (1) www.caritas-ua.org/index.php/en/about-caritas-ukraine/caritas-in-ukraine-en
- (2) Iryna Maievska (Caritas Ukraine), 22.11.2016, PowerPoint
- (3) www.caritas-ua.org/index.php/en

7.

SUMMARY OF TRAINING: COUNSELLING OF TRAUMATIZED AND MENTALLY ILL RETURNEES

The Transnational Exchange III Project aims at connecting repatriation counsellors on a European level to exchange best practices and experiences with regards to the assisted return of vulnerable clients.

The first half of the project was dedicated to the assistance of mentally ill and traumatized clients. Therefore, the second day of the conference was designed for the participants to reflect upon and share past experiences with the above mentioned target group and to enhance the participants' skill set when dealing with these types

of vulnerable clients in the future. Three trainers, two from the War Trauma Foundation Netherlands Janetta Bos and Fleur Van Hensbergen and one from Refugio München Hanna Küstner-Nnetu, guided the AVR counsellors through the day. In the following important lessons learned from the trainings shall be highlighted.



a. INTRODUCTION TO DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER



Learn more about certain mental illnesses!

The first step to discuss the topic of dealing with mentally ill and traumatized clients in the AVR counselling is to establish a basis of common understanding of certain illness and its symptoms. Out of a multitude of illnesses depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder – were chosen and presented (1).

a) DEPRESSION

A depressed person may experience physical symptoms such as tiredness, fatigue and weakness. Despite any obvious clinical reasons the whole body seems to be aching. With regards to emotional symptoms the client may express feelings of sadness, gloom, dejection and guilt. The client usually is little interested in social interactions and despairs when thinking about the future. When comparing himself/herself to others, he/she feels complete inadequacy which also may lead to suicidal thoughts. In this depressed stage, the client struggles immensely concentrating and making decisions.

Depression is reinforced with stressful life events, past experience of depressions and the lack of a strong social network including family members or a partner.

b) ANXIETY

Even though fear is healthy and natural in every person's life, anxiety becomes an illness when it hinders a person from carrying on with daily life. The physical symptoms include heart palpitations and a feeling of suffocation. The person may experience signs of headache, dizziness, tremble and tensed muscles. While the person is in an aroused anxious state, he/she may expect the worst to happen such as death or loss of health. The person worries so much that at times he/she seems to lose control or go mad and cannot control the racing thoughts. Anxieties can appear in different forms. Aside from the panic disorder, anxiety can be realized in the post-traumatic stress disorder which will be introduced in the following paragraph.

c) PTSD

The post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be understood as a coping reaction towards a traumatic event which took place in the past. Several ways of reacting towards this traumatic event are possible and intertwined. The client is reliving the traumatic events in nightmares and flashbacks continuously while experiencing intense fear and horror. The client may avoid any reminder of the traumatic event which includes not speaking about the events or going into a state of dissociation which can be realized in either depersonalization (disconnection of body and mind, watching yourself from outside) or derealization (detachment from the environment, feeling of isolation). These forms of dissociation can be interpreted like anesthesia for a client in severe pain; this state allows the client to be numb. Aside from avoidance patterns a person suffering from PTSD struggles with negative thoughts and moods. Problems such as sleeplessness, easy irritation or aggressiveness, depression, hypersensitivity with regard to danger and noises leave the client in a constant distressed state.

SOURCE:

(1) Janetta Bos (War Trauma Foundation), 23.11.2016, PowerPoint: Introduction to Trauma and Mental Illnesses

b. ACCOMPANYING MENTALLY ILL OR TRAUMATIZED CLIENTS THROUGH THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS WITH REGARDS TO RETURN



Learn more about empowerment and motivational interviewing!

VALUES & IDENTITY

Several questions arise when supporting traumatized or mentally ill clients in the pre-departure process: How much can this vulnerable returnee contribute to the pre-departure preparations? How to support the vulnerable client in the decision making process? How can a client-centered decision be ensured? Fleur Van Hensbergen, the trainer from the War Trauma Foundation (1), pointed out that a long-lasting decision with regards to a possible return from the client could only be achieved by empowering the client. Intending to empower a client, two key aspects should be focused on – values and identity. The first task for a counsellor could be to help the clients define values important to them. This task can be executed by asking the clients to write down several values which come to mind and rate them twice – first on a scale from one to nine rating how important the values were in the past and secondly how the importance of the values has changed up to the current status. Taking these newly defined values into consideration, the counsellor may encourage the client to search for ways to achieve a lifestyle guided by these values in the host or home country.

The second step mentioned by Fleur Van Hensbergen during the training sessions of the Transnational Exchange III conference was to reflect together with the clients on the clients' roles

which build up their identities. The returnees could be asked to write down several roles they see themselves in at the current state (such as refugee, jobless, African,...). Afterwards the counsellor could prompt the client to write down aspects of his past identity (such as father, friend, farmer,...). The third step then would be to build a new positive identity including strengths and skills from the past (such as friend, volunteer, ...). The goal of this exercise is to help the client realize that several strengths from the past even take effect nowadays.

STRENGTHENED SELF-CONFIDENCE

A third way to empower clients would be to build up their self-confidence by helping them realize that they are stronger than they think they are. The mere fact of their presence in the counselling office means that in many situations during the flight the clients managed to survive, to deal with the stress and to press onwards. In reminding them of this fact they are encouraged to see themselves from a different, more positive perspective. Coping and acceptance were two key elements for their survival. Counsellors could also explain factors which promote resilience and which ought to be reinforced in the clients' lives despite the current difficult circumstances. Amongst some of these factors are belonging to a caring family, upholding traditions and culture, exercising a strong faith or political ideology and rituals (weddings, funerals,...).



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Fleur Van Hensbergen introduced the method “Motivational Interviewing” from Miller & Rollnick (1991) as a tool to support the decision making process (2). The core idea of motivational interviewing is to access the intrinsic motivation for change of the client and to channel it towards the decision making process. Four steps can be taken in order to facilitate this process.

- 1) Listening emphatically to the client’s concerns and hopes (Result: development of a trusting relationship between the client and the counsellor)
- 2) Highlighting the discrepancy between the client’s goals and the behavioral status quo
- 3) Strengthening the existent, intrinsic motivation and channel it towards the decision making process
- 4) Planning the concrete next steps

While this method has its clear advantages, one needs to acknowledge the fact that governmental, business and welfare institutions use this technique. The goal of the Assisted Voluntary Return counselling is not the persuasion to return but to support the client’s decision with regard to his/her future. This method should not be applied with the intention to achieve quick results but to assist the returnee who needs help.

DEPRESSION AND RETURN MIGRATION

In certain cases depressed clients would like to contribute to the pre-departure preparations but are not able to do so due to their mental situation. Responses to questions during the counselling session can vary from answering really slowly to crying. It is recommended to

not encounter the client with a negative attitude saying things like “You should be stronger”, “Pull yourself together” and “Cheer up” (3). On the contrary, the counsellor should strive to rebuild trust, facilitate reflection on feelings and concerns, listen supportively and acknowledge the pain and frustration the client experiences. If the client is deeply depressed, he/she will need assistance from a third person with trips to public authorities. The counsellor should write down all important messages or let the client take notes.

ANXIETY AND RETURN MIGRATION

Anxious clients may need support in the assessment of the adequacy of their fears in relation to the respective topic (4). The counsellor should define the feelings first and then try to show whether the feelings have a basis in reality or not. In several cases remedial measures include gathering primary information from people in the country of origin, from compatriots who have returned recently or the local media.

PTSD AND RETURN MIGRATION

When clients suffering from PTSD decide to return, they may be reminded of earlier traumatic experiences and suffer from ‘flashbacks’ – recaps from past torture, abuse or persecution. The counsellor should provide a genuine possibility for the returnee to talk about his/her fears. Returning and settling in a different town in the country of origin may avoid a re-experiencing of the trauma. In all cases the returnee needs to be supported from a social network. The counsellor should encourage the returnee strongly to revive some old contacts.

SOURCE:

- (1) Fleur Van Hensbergen (War Trauma Foundation), 23.11.2016, PowerPoint: Challenges when assisting MHPSS clients in their return
- (2) www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64964/
- (3) Janetta Bos (War Trauma Foundation), 23.11.2016, PowerPoint: Mental Health and Psychosocial Care for Vulnerable Returnees
- (4) Geraci (Pharos), 2011, Facing Return: An approach for psychosocial assistance to (former) asylum seekers and undocumented

c. DEALING WITH MENTALLY ILL OR TRAUMATIZED CLIENTS IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS DURING THE COUNSELLING



Equip yourself with instructions of how to act and react in extreme situations during the counselling!

The last chapter showed ways of how to rebuild the self-confidence and inner strength within returnees who are struggling with trauma or a mental illness. In this chapter now the counsellor shall receive some practical advice with regards to dealing with exceptional situations during the counselling. What do you do when all of a sudden the client behaves in a very abnormal or strange way during the counselling? Janetta Bos from the War Trauma Foundation recommended the following (1):

In case a client is **overcome with emotions** during the counselling, the counsellors is supposed to

- ✓ Show respect and convey acceptance
- ✓ Delegate the control of the interview to the client. He/She may want to stop talking or take a break
- ✓ Identify first signs of possible health problems and refer the client to a health professional.

In case of appearance of an **intense fear or horror** the counsellor is supposed to

- ✓ Attract attention by calling the client’s name. If this does not help, the counsellor should announce that he/she will make a louder noise such a clapping his/her hands
- ✓ Help the client orientate by asking him to describe his environment (things in the counselling room)
- ✓ Do a breathing exercise together with the client in order to calm the client down
- ✓ Ensure a safe return travel to the place of stay
- ✓ Write down the date and time for a new appointment

In case the client **dissociates** the counsellor is supposed to

- ✓ Attract attention by calling the client’s name. If this does not help, the counsellor should announce that he/she will

- make a louder noise such a clapping his/her hands
- ✓ Avoid touching the person since physical contact could be connected to the stressful event or feelings
- ✓ Continue talking with a soothing voice while the client is returning to reality.
- ✓ Invite the client to speak the following sentences together “You are here with me in.....”, “You are with me in place (for example Augsburg). It is date (for example 23 November 2016)” “It is 2 o’clock” “You are safe now”
- ✓ Let the person press their feet on the floor/ let them stand
- ✓ Help the client orientate by asking him to describe his environment in a detailed way (things in the counselling room)
- ✓ Ask for details how s/he traveled to your place. How s/he will return. What s/he will do during the rest of the day
- ✓ Write down the date and time for a new appointment

In case a client shows a behavior of **extreme aggressiveness**, the counsellor is supposed to

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Remain polite and respectful
- ✓ Remain seated, if he/she is not in danger
- ✓ Keep his or her voice low (not loud or angry)
- ✓ Reflect back to the person their concern/wish: “I understand you want to have”
- ✓ Be honest: “I want to help you, but you are scaring me.”
- ✓ Politely but firmly set a boundary: “I can’t talk with you if you behave this way.”
- ✓ Explain consequences: “If you continue this way, we will have to stop.”
- ✓ Ask the client to leave the room when the aggressiveness aggravates or leave the room himself/herself
- ✓ Tell the client: “When you are calm, you can contact us again.”

In case a client threatens to **commit suicide** during the counselling session, according to the Manual Facing Return (2) the counsellor is supposed to:

- ✓ Acknowledge the problem and tell the client what he/she notices about him (takes it seriously)
- ✓ Tell the client what he/she can and cannot do (clearly communicate the boundaries)
- ✓ Inform the client that he/she is not authorized to deal with

this problem and that he should see his family doctor. The family doctor can decide what steps to take next.

- ✓ Call the acute mental health services

SOURCE:

- (1) Janetta Bos (War Trauma Foundation), 23.11.2016, PowerPoint: Mental Health and Psychosocial Care for Vulnerable Returnees
- (2) Geraci (Pharos), 2011, Facing Return: An approach for psychosocial assistance to (former) asylum seekers and undocumented

d. INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Intercultural sensitivity is declared an indispensable skill in our globalized world. In the AVR counselling setting with traumatized and mentally ill clients, the skillfulness of communication with clients from different cultures will highly affect the quality of the assistance. The counsellors cannot always assume that the clients have been diagnosed with a certain mental illness before the first encounter. Throughout the counselling process the potential returnee may comment or report on things which seem to be irrelevant to the context or which are not comprehensible. If a client states for example that his liver is burning, he may actually want to express a strong emotional pain (1). It is then the task of the counsellor to explore the client's emotional state further. In doing so, the counsellor should keep in mind that mental illness depending on the culture can be interpreted as emerging from within a person (internalization) or as imposed on a person from the outside (externalization – witchcraft for example). Psychological problems can be regarded as a shameful. Sometimes it might be helpful to use phrases like „many other people“ or „a person I know“ to help the client relax and to understand that his/her situation is nothing to be ashamed for. In addition, one needs to be aware of the fact that certain cultures express mental problems through physical pain or idioms referring to physical pain and not in psychological, abstract terms. The counsellor

does not need to know every single culture but needs to be willing to explore the motives of the client by asking questions such as “What do you mean by that?” or “How do people in your country act when they feel like you are feeling now?”. In this case even questions which seem most obvious or redundant can bring more understanding. The trainer Hanna Küstner-Nnetu explained further the perception of self as independent or interdependent as well as the high and low context communication, which shall not be explained in this brochure. With regard to culturally shaped behavior toward authorities, she reminded the participants that certain cultures would prohibit direct eye contact with authorities in order to show respect and that statements would be formulated only vaguely. Important topics or the main reason for the meeting may often only be presented in the very end of the session. In certain cultures the authorities are expected to be informed about the background or problem and that is why the issues are not addressed throughout the session, unless the client is specifically asked to do so. Direct answers such as “no” seem rude and shaming in several cultures. Throughout the entire counselling process the client and the counsellor ought to negotiate the meaning of statements by rephrasing and further explanations. Both parties should not be afraid to be authentic.

SOURCE:

- (1) Hanna Küstner-Nnetu (Refugio München), 23.11.2016, Handout: Sensitisation to intercultural processes



Be reminded of some facts when navigating through intercultural encounters!

8.

REVISION OF PRE-DEPARTURE COUNSELLING STANDARDS

On the last day of the Transnational Exchange III Conference the pre-departure counselling standards were attempted to be revised. In a time of increased governmental emphasis on (voluntary) return and a growing multitude of assisted voluntary return counselling providers, it seems necessary to talk about standards in a European context.

The discussions, however, were though since assisted voluntary return or repatriation counselling is not a protected term yet and can be interpreted in many different ways. Throughout the revision, the diversity of the existing assisted voluntary return counselling offers surfaced once again. The assistance provided by governmental offices and non-governmental organisations ranged from only organisational return assistance to solely return counselling to a mixed form of

counselling and organisational support. In this setting, a call for a European harmonisation was voiced again. The goal to offer a European standardized AVR counselling, however, still needs to overcome great challenges such as to unify the different goals which are aspired to by the different providers. While most governments on the one hand target high (forced and voluntary) return numbers, welfare organizations on the other hand want to support individuals ensuring a free choice and return with dignity.



The working groups were asked to discuss the following questions:

1. Which components are essential to the pre-departure counselling?
2. According to your experience how much time do you spend on each component (counselling, organization and networking) during the pre-departure counselling process? What would be the right balance between the three different components and who should carry out which tasks?
3. What are important criteria for an easy access to pre-departure counselling (e.g. irregular migrants, etc.)? What kind of setting would you recommend (e.g. location, counsellor,...)?
4. Which importance do the following aspects have in pre-departure counselling? Consideration of emotional needs, openness to result, sensitivity for intercultural communication, responsibility for client after return



A first step towards a renewed standard of AVR was to gather currently present counselling aspects.

A SHORT OVERVIEW IS LISTED UNDERNEATH:

Counselling	Organization & Networking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining the role as counsellor • Explaining different NGOs/state agencies and their roles • Explaining the free choice regarding voluntary return • Offering legal/administrative counselling (perspectives in home and host country) • Giving information on country of return (reality now) • Elaborating goals in life • Assessing vulnerability criteria • Empowering: Build up confidence by revising strengths and skills, mobilize resources and skills • Developing a reintegration plan • Managing expectations • Practicing conversations which are likely to take place after return • Using a book to prepare children for the return • Providing space and time for the client to reflect on past migration • Encouraging (farewell) rituals • Explaining behavior during the flight and what to wear when necessary • Highlighting the change of roles the returnee has undergone and will undergo (identity) • Planning date of departure according to academic year • Creating an action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flight Ticket • Assistance with organization of travel documents (check exit and entry stamps in the passport) • Travel money • Medical attestations (including attestation for travel fitness) • School diplomas, attestation on the content learned • (international) birth certificate • Translation of certificates • Application for financial reintegration assistance (medical, professional, social, ...) • Organization of a travel escort • Contact to local partner organization for reintegration assistance • Return contract for client • Enroll kids in language classes while still in the host country • Check import laws • Organization of an airport drop-off or pick-up

Since time was limited and the discussion intensive, the questions 2 – 4 were not answered by all the working groups during the conference. Therefore, a ranking of or distillation to a limited amount of vital criteria for assisted voluntary return

counselling will take place during the upcoming Transnational Exchange III events – with the goal to propose a common basis of counselling standards which could serve as a basis for a European harmonization.

9.

FURTHER IDEAS AND OUTLOOK

A first overview of the content discussed during the conference is now given. Certain aspects were only touched briefly during the conference which require further addressing. Some shall be highlighted here as they came up in the discussions.

Religion as a counselling aid was mentioned several times by the reintegration partners. The European counsellors, however, refrain from this method usually. It would be interesting to explore further if and how this counselling method supports the returnees' self-confidence and inner strength. In line with this topic one could mention that witchcraft and voodoo appears to be a real threat to African and Arab returnees which is often hard to comprehend for Western counsellors. As religion can be a source of interior strength and hope, the support of religious groups and fellowships could provide an external source of strength and might benefit a returnee in need or a returnee lacking a social network. What are the benefits and dangers, one should keep in mind?

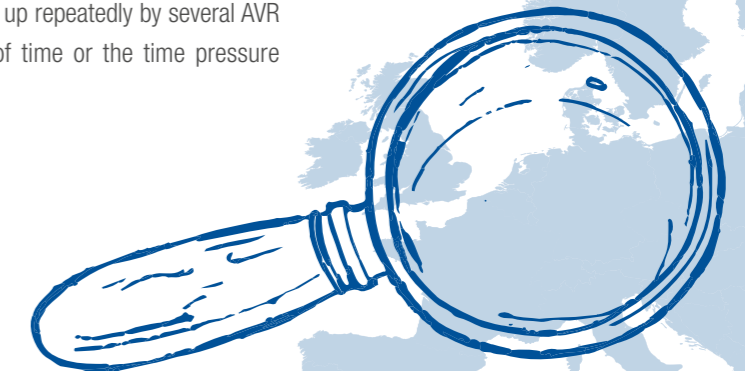
A second topic which was addressed during the conference was that counsellors are allowed to contact the reintegration partners (also through ERIN) in order to check on the reintegration process of the returnee. It happens rarely, though. The question to be discussed: how much should the return counsellor still be involved after the return of a client?

The third issue which came up repeatedly by several AVR counsellors was the lack of time or the time pressure

when working with rejected asylum seekers (especially in Germany, Austria, ...). Attempting to compile an average amount of time for returnees with different criteria (single returnee, families, undocumented migrants, vulnerable returnees, ...) could serve as a basis to address this issue with the authorities. Of course, each case needs to be considered individually but when negotiating with governments certain generalizations need to be made.

A fourth issue to be mentioned here was the great challenge of how to respond to the return wish of many Syrians. An array of opinions from the decision of an adult needs to be respected to the protection of people from the conflict raging in their home country were brought forward. Finding a common perspective will remain an immense challenge.

As mentioned earlier the Transnational Exchange III Project will host two further events. The next event will be a workshop taking place from the 20th to the 22nd of June 2017 in Augsburg. The final event of the Transnational Exchange III project will be another conference taking place in Augsburg from the 20th to the 22nd of February 2018.





Organisers: Sarah Dillmann, Salomé Maxeiner & Priscille De Larquier

AGENDA OF THE TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGE III CONFERENCE I

DAY 1, 22.11.2016 –

European repatriation counselling systems and World café with reintegration partners

1	09:30 – 09:45	Welcome speech	Wolfgang D. Friedel Head of Division Migration and Foreign Aid Caritas Association for the Diocese Augsburg
2	09:45 – 10:00	Welcome speech	Sarah Dillmann Project Manager Transnational Exchange III Caritas Association for the Diocese Augsburg
3	10:00 – 11:15	Introduction to European repatriation counselling systems of Germany, Belgium, Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden (panel discussion)	One representative from each country
4	11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break	
5	11:30 – 11:45	Presentation of European Reintegration Support Organizations (ERSO)	Monika Schneid Manager of Information Office Raphaelswerk Germany
6	11:45 – 12:10	Presentation of Facing Return manual	Lenie van Goor Project Manager VluchtelingenWerk Nederlands
7	12:10 – 12:30	Presentation of ERSO Sure manual	Hermien Wittouck Reintegration Counsellor Caritas International Belgium
8	12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break	
9	13:30 – 15:10	World café with reintegration partners in combination with discussions about ethics in repatriation counselling (Part 1)	Grace Kombian, AGREDS Ghana Bruno Atieh, Caritas Liban Iryna Maievska, Caritas Ukraine Zia Ul Badar Shabbir, SSD Pakistan
10	15:10 – 15:30	Coffee break	

11	15:30 – 17:00	World café with reintegration partners in combination with discussions about ethics in repatriation counselling (Part 2)	Grace Kombian, AGREDS Ghana Bruno Atieh, Caritas Liban Iryna Maievska, Caritas Ukraine Zia Ul Badar Shabbir, SSD Pakistan
	18:00	Dinner at Haus St. Ulrich	
	19:30	Optional evening activity: guided city tour through Augsburg Meeting point: lobby Haus St. Ulrich or lobby Hotel Ibis	

DAY 2, 23.11.2016 –

Training day with psychotherapists with regards to counselling of traumatized and mentally ill clients

1	09:00 – 9:30	Introduction to mental illnesses and PTSD and Introduction to training sessions: 1. Role of staff with regards to beneficiary MHPSS* needs and practical skills 2. Sensitization for intercultural processes 3. Challenges when assisting ill or traumatized returnees	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München
2	9:30 - 11:15	Training session 1	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München
3	11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break	
4	11:30 – 12:30	Training session 2, part A	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München
5	12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break	
6	13:30 - 14:30	Training session 2, part B	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München
7	14:30 – 14:45	Coffee break	
8	14:45 – 16:30	Training session 3	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München
9	16:30 – 17:00	Presentation of psychiatric follow-up support in three countries of return and Development of trauma/ illness after return (Panel Discussion)	Fleur Hensbergen, War Trauma Foundation Jannetta Bos, War Trauma Foundation Hanna Küstner, Refugio München Two reintegration partners, one ERSO member
	18:00	Dinner at Haus St. Ulrich	
	19:30	Optional evening activity: beer tasting at the local brewery König von Flandern Meeting point: lobby Haus St. Ulrich or lobby Hotel Ibis	

DAY 3, 24.11.2016 –
Open dialogue with key actors regarding standards of repatriation counselling

1	09:00 – 09:10	Welcome speech	Canon Dr. Andreas Magg Director Caritas Association for the Diocese Augsburg
2	09:10 – 09:25	Welcome speech	Heiko Zindl EU-Fonds AMIF Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
3	09:25 – 09:40	Welcome speech	Henning Schüttel Government Council Bavarian Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family and Integration
4	09:40 – 10:25	To what extent do NGOs and state departments cater to the special needs of vulnerable groups throughout the entire return process? How are the responsibilities allocated in Belgium?	Koen Van Rompaey Cities Project Manager - Voluntary Return Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers (FEDASIL) Belgium
5	10:25 – 10:45	Coffee break	
6	10:45 – 11:30	To what extent do NGOs and state departments cater to the special needs of vulnerable groups throughout the entire return process? How are the responsibilities allocated in the Netherlands?	Martijn Tubbergen Director of Supervision and Measures Directorate Repatriation and Departure Service of the Ministry of Security and Justice (DT&V) Netherlands
7	11:30 – 12:00	Trends concerning assisted voluntary return in Germany	Stephan Schmidt Division R2 Voluntary Return, Reintegration and Communication Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) Germany
8	12:00 – 12:30	To what extent do NGOs and state departments in Germany cater to the special needs of vulnerable groups throughout the entire return process? European perspective on AVR	Bettina Scheer EU-Fonds SOLID Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) Germany
9	12:30 – 13:30	Lunch break	
10	13:30 – 15:00	Revision of pre-departure counselling standards and procedures (working groups)	All participants
11	15:00 – 15:20	Coffee break	

12	15:20 – 15:50	Presentation of findings from working groups (plenum)	All participants
13	15:50 – 16:40	What is the added value of pre-departure counselling for the voluntary return of vulnerable people (taking into account the findings of the working groups and the reintegration perspective)? (panel discussion)	BAMF(ERIN), FEDASIL, DT&V, ERSO, Reintegration Partner Pakistan, Return Counsellor
14	16:40 – 17:00	Wrap up and farewell	Moderator
	18:00	Dinner at Haus St. Ulrich	
	19:30	Optional evening activity: cocktails at the restaurant Ratskeller Meeting point: lobby Haus St. Ulrich or lobby Hotel Ibis	








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