

# Reintegration Assistance

## *Good, Promising and Innovative Practices*

### Practice #6

## Pre-departure reintegration assistance in the Netherlands: material and shipment support

**Implementing entity:** Foundation WereldWijd

**Project title:** WorldTools

**Donor:** Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice

### Summary

Based upon business plans developed before return, migrants willing to return from the Netherlands to their countries of origin (CoOs) are supported by the WereldWijd Foundation to receive in their CoO the tools and equipment required for the planned business. These tools and equipment are either donated or purchased before departure in the Netherlands and successively shipped to the migrants' CoO upon their return.

This pre-departure support allows migrants to return home “with something in their hands” and to start their business or support existing family-businesses quickly, often with tools and equipment of a better quality than those available in the CoO.

### Operational details

#### ► Description of the activity

The WorldTools project managed by Foundation WereldWijd in partnership with IOM offers material support to migrants residing in the Netherlands and returning to their country of origin.

#### **Material and equipment**

Before departure, beneficiaries develop a business plan and receive related materials, tools and machines to start their small business in their country of origin. The type of goods and equipment envisaged depend on the returnee's business plan. Together with the returnee, Foundation WereldWijd looks for the required tools and goods that can be either second-hand or new. Most of the time, the goods and equipment are donated free of charge, thanks to the large network of businesses and individuals supporting the Foundation in the Netherlands. Donated material is stocked in a large warehouse where returnees can go and choose the goods and equipment needed for their business. When

returnees need items that are not available at the warehouse or through the Foundation's network, they can buy material in the Netherlands. The cost of these items is then deducted from their reintegration grant (which amounts to 1800 euro under IOM's national assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programme in the Netherlands).

### Shipment and air freight

The materials and equipment received or purchased are then packed in a box of approximately one cubic meter. The space left after all business-related items are packed in the box, can be used to ship personal items.

The box is sent (either by ship or airfreight) after the returnee's departure and delivered directly to their home.

The shipment is free of cost for the beneficiary.



A returnee's box just arrived at the IOM office in Guinea © IOM

For delivery in some countries of origin (e.g. The Gambia, Uganda, Senegal, Iraq, Congo, Kenya, Vietnam), WereldWijd contracted partners that provide an all-inclusive transportation service (i.e. door-to-door), thus including customs procedures. In other CoOs, such partners could not be identified, and IOM Missions are asked to support beneficiaries with the customs declaration and sometimes assist with the clearance of the box. In such cases the customs clearance must be paid out of the returnee's reintegration grant and can involve lengthy and complicated procedures.

### ► Approach/Rationale

Foundation WereldWijd used to provide vocational training to returning migrants at pre-departure stage. While the training was appreciated by the returnees, some mentioned

that they would not be able to use the gained skills upon return because of a lack (or of a high cost) of related equipment in their CoO. The Foundation thus developed in 2009 the idea to provide beneficiaries with a box containing the required equipment. At present, the shipment activity is not linked to the training anymore but is successful in supporting returning migrants in their reintegration.

Thanks to this project, returnees are able to return home "with something in their hands" and they can start their business very quickly or support already existing family-businesses. They are also able to use better-quality material.

### ► Partnership/Synergy

The WorldTools project is managed by Foundation WereldWijd – a centre that specializes in the support to refugees and asylum seekers – in partnership with IOM, guaranteeing strong synergies with IOM's AVRR programme.

Migrants registered to the AVRR programme and entitled to benefit from WorldTools are referred by IOM to Foundation WereldWijd. The NGO assesses the relevance of WorldTools' support for the migrant and, if deemed relevant, supports the migrant in defining his/her business plan and determining what tools and goods to ship (and whether these goods and tools can be donated or have to be purchased).

Upon return, the migrant calls the IOM office in the CoO and only at this stage WereldWijd sends the box. The involvement of the IOM office in the CoO in the procedures related to the box is dependent on the specifics of each country on clearance, harbour and airport facilities and the possibilities of the IOM mission. In some countries, IOM actively assists with clearance and payment of fees, while in others the whole process is done without IOM having any active role.

### ► Useful contacts and references

Foundation WereldWijd can be contacted at [info@stichtingwereldwijd.nl](mailto:info@stichtingwereldwijd.nl) and more information on IOM's AVRR programme in the Netherlands is available at <https://iom-nederland.nl/en/voluntary-return>.

## Evidence base

### ► Outcome and Evidence

Since the Foundation WereldWijd and IOM started collaborating, more than 300 migrants were supported in their reintegration in 35 countries of origin, in a large range of business areas.

Between 2016 and 2019 only, 254 migrants were supported by this project (46 females, 208 males). In the same period, the top 5 CoOs were Iraq (81), The Gambia (20), Armenia (19), Nigeria (15) and Suriname (10).

Several positive outcomes were observed through numerous monitoring visits (both by the Foundation and by IOM):

- **Better equipped businesses:** For migrants who choose tools and equipment available and thus receive them for free, the value of the materials shipped is an addition to the reintegration grant migrants are entitled to under IOM's AVRR programme in the Netherlands. The grant can then be used to improve the business they could already set up. Therefore, they have more goods and equipment, resulting in comparatively better functioning businesses, that are potentially more sustainable. In addition, the tools and equipment donated in the Netherlands are often of a better quality than those available in the CoO.
- **Quicker business set-up:** Returnees can start their business upon return thanks to the materials shipped. This encourages the returnees to start up.
- **Returning with pride:** Most returnees fear to return to their families "empty-handed" and do not want to be seen as "losers". In this perspective, the box with tools and equipment, as well as with their belongings, allow them returning with their heads held high.
- **An additional thought for the family:** a toolbox with small handy tools is included in each box, no matter what the planned business is. These tools can be used by the whole family and more generally by the community. While this can appear as a very secondary benefit, reports from monitoring visits suggest that it is considered as very useful by returnees and their family.



Migrant returning to the Gambia with his box ©Wereldwijd

Between 2015 and 2018, IOM monitored 70 cases who were supported under this project, approximately one year after the returns took place. In 56 cases (80%), the planned business was fully or largely realized with positive expectations and the returnees generated enough income from the activities. In 14 cases (20%) the returnee had not succeeded or only partially succeeded. It is not possible to compare the data with the cases who did not receive the WorldTools support, but these results look rather positive.

The above positive outcomes should be nuanced by a note on the customs procedures. Wherever the Foundation managed to identify partners that can deal with the shipment in an all-inclusive manner, including the customs procedures, the project appears to be largely positive. Where no such partners were identified, the highly bureaucratic and complicated clearance procedures made the process difficult and, in some cases, quite costly, thus largely reducing the benefits of the free material and free shipment approach.

### ► Recommendations

**Pre-departure reintegration assistance combining training and the provision of relevant tools and equipment** can constitute an effective support for returnees' reintegration as it ensures that migrants return not only with skills, but also with the tools needed to quickly start their reintegration project.

While the practice illustrated here is largely dependent on the experience and structure of the Foundation implementing it (see below section), it is possible to suggest **alternative actors** that could be mobilised to contribute to a similar approach.



A returnee just opened his box © IOM

For instance, tools and equipment that are useful for someone's reintegration may be available at no cost or in second hand through **associations involved in remanufacture, material recovery, recycling, circular economy, or more widely in the social economy sector**. Partnerships with this type of organisation can be sought.

**Diaspora** could also be involved. For instance, diaspora members working in the import-export sector have unique insights into shipment costs and customs procedures: they could share their knowledge and experience with the organisation managing the reintegration programme or directly with future returnees.

### ► Conditions for Replicability

The practice exposed here is *per se* replicable in any other host country. However, it relies heavily on the work of the Foundation's network of volunteers and of cooperating businesses donating equipment in the Netherlands, making this intervention affordable. In addition, the shipment of boxes can be very time consuming and costly. This practice can thus most probably not be 'copy-pasted' easily but can offer valuable inspiration for actors seeking to support returning migrants from the host country's side.

To ensure feasibility and efficiency of their project, interested practitioners should pay a particular attention to the question of the customs procedures that can be long and burdensome. In addition, the customs costs should not be paid by the returnee.

Finally, equipment and skills should go hand in hand: it makes sense to support returnees with tools and material only if they have the relevant skills to use them (gained through professional experience or training in the host country or in the CoO) and skills are useful only if returnees have the tools and goods required to work.

### Knowledge Management Hub

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This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets on good and promising practices in reintegration assistance. It aims at disseminating good and promising practices on reintegration assistance to reintegration practitioners worldwide.

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