



IOM International Organization for Migration

IOM

in the UK

newsletter

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Increased Reintegration Assistance now available for a limited period

IOM will implement a "Pilot Enhanced Returns Scheme" which the UK Government has initiated and under which the normal reintegration assistance package will be increased, for a limited period, from £1000 to £3000 per family member. Recipients of the enhanced package will receive £500 in cash at the airport as a relocation grant.

The remainder will be disbursed, as is normal practice, following discussions between individual returnees and IOM field officers, to ensure that the money is targeted in a way which best contributes to a sustainable return. If it is thought appropriate in this context to make further cash payments they will be phased over a period of a year. Under no circumstances will a cash lump sum be given.

The enhanced package will be available under the following conditions:

- 1) Applicants must return between 1 January 2006 & 30 June 2006
- 2) They must have applied to return by 31 May 2006
- 3) They must have applied for asylum before 31 December 2005

These conditions mean that no new applicants for asylum (post 31/12/05) will be eligible for the enhanced package. Further, although the cut-off date for applications to return is 31 May 2006, to benefit from the enhanced package applicants must travel before 30 June 2006. For some countries travel documentation may be hard to obtain swiftly. It is therefore vital that returnees apply as early as possible and do not wait until 31 May 2006.

Since 2002, under the VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) IOM has been offering reintegration assistance to anyone who has been in the asylum system and has decided to return voluntarily to their home country. This is in addition to help with obtaining travel documentation, purchasing flight tickets and domestic transportation in the UK and in the country of return. The standard reintegration assistance package is worth about £1000 to assist with business set-ups, vocational training and education. IOM will pay the bills for equipment and services agreed upon with the returnee as a part of his reintegration strategy, but will not give cash directly to the beneficiary.

The programme is co-funded by the European Refugee Fund and by the UK Government.

(See the FAQs about this special scheme on pages 2-3)



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Reintegration Assistance

IOM helps every asylum seeker who wishes to return to his/her home country and will be able to assist them further after their return with:

- * small business start ups
- * vocational training & apprenticeships
- * education courses for adults and children



Apply for voluntary return to your home country by **31 May 2006**

and you may be eligible to receive a total of **£3,000** assistance per family member

Call IOM free on 0800 783 2332

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This programme is co-funded by the European Refugee Fund

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Mapping out Brazilians' favourite UK media

The Information Department at IOM (UK) has started the implementation of a long-term Mapping Exercise.

The aim of this activity is simply to find out how best IOM (UK) can communicate the benefits of its voluntary return programmes to a number of diaspora communities in the UK. What community organisations are there? What media do these community groups read, watch and/or listen to?

With this information IOM (UK) will then be able to advertise in the preferred media used by these diaspora communities and offer to give presentations to their members.

We decided to start our first mapping exercise with the Brazilian community across the UK.

The research was conducted using multiple approaches to data collection; data was gathered using in-depth interviews with multipliers (ie those individuals or organizations who are well-known amongst diaspora groups and play a key role in delivering information), and by disseminating and collecting questionnaires.

In addition, extensive networking was carried out to identify media, organizations, churches and individuals who interact with Brazilians who were prepared to distribute the questionnaires. The fieldwork took place between October and November 2005. In December 2005 IOM compiled the Brazilian Mapping Exercise Report.

Other mapping exercises planned for 2006 will cover community groups from Angola, Mozambique, China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Increased Reintegration Assistance: Frequently Asked Questions

1) Will someone who has already applied to return home, say in late November 2005, receive the £3000?

Yes – as long as they travel before 30 June 2006.

2) You say £3000 per family member – is there any limit to the age of the recipient or to the number of beneficiaries in a family?

No limit – all family members returning will be eligible. A family of five would therefore receive a total of £15,000 worth of reintegration assistance if they comply with all the conditions stipulated above.

3) The letter sent out by the Home Office said that applicants can choose to take the extra £2000 in cash – is that not now the case?

Just to clarify the matter in more detail...as stated above, £500 per family member will be available in cash at the UK airport of departure – as a relocation grant. The remainder will be regarded simply as an enhancement to the normal reintegration assistance package to be disbursed in consultation with the IOM field officer. Flexibility will be shown so that if further cash payments are required then they will be made but only if they are phased over a period of one year, and contribute to the returnee's sustainable reintegration. There will be no cash lump sum.

(cont. on p. 3)



Some of the beneficiaries of IOM's Reintegration Assistance

Increased Reintegration Assistance: Frequently Asked Questions

(cont. from p. 2)

4) What if someone is concerned that a large sum of cash in their pocket could make them vulnerable to theft or harassment?

We will listen carefully to returnees' concerns and ensure that the cash relocation grant is only given if they wish to receive it. IOM is used to giving the entire reintegration package in kind, not cash, so this issue poses no additional administrative problems.

5) What happens if someone does apply to return by 31 May 2006 but for administrative reasons beyond the control of the applicant (like hold-ups with documents by the relevant embassy) they do not travel before 30 June 2006?

The Government has stated that to receive the enhanced package returnees must travel before 30 June 2006. (Anyone travelling after that date would of course receive the normal reintegration assistance). That is why it is very important that those who want to be sure to benefit from the enhanced package should apply as early as possible – before 31 May – to give themselves the best chance of benefiting from the enhancement.

6) How will people know about the scheme – how are you communicating it?

The Home Office has written to some 50,000 asylum seekers and they have already started to respond with enquiries to IOM. As a result of these letters and word of mouth, diaspora communities in the UK will have heard very quickly about the enhanced package. IOM is of course communicating with its partner agencies and will be placing advertisements in relevant diaspora community media. We have no concerns about how quickly knowledge of the enhancement will reach those to whom it is likely to be of interest.

7) What is success? If this enhancement is successful will it become a permanent feature?

This is a question for the Home Office themselves. As far as IOM is concerned anything which gives returnees the best possible chance to make a sustainable return is to be welcomed whether it is short-term or not. We will do our best to help everyone who wishes to return to do so during the enhancement period and after, in accordance with our belief that migration – if orderly, dignified and voluntary – is of benefit to both individuals and society as a whole.

Cultural Orientation training for UK-bound refugees

Cultural Orientation (CO) classes are pre-departure training courses aimed at increasing refugees' knowledge of the countries where they will be resettled. They focus on some of the practical and cultural features of life in the host countries.

IOM worldwide has a long history of providing such induction training to refugees. In the UK, this aspect of IOM's work is carried out under the umbrella of the Gateway Protection Programme for the resettlement of refugees.

Last year, 47 Burmese and Karen refugees who settled in the UK attended a CO training in Thailand. The course was coordinated and run by IOM Bangkok. Medical screening and travel assistance were also provided to the refugees by IOM Bangkok.

In November 2005, a group of 45 Sudanese refugees residing in Uganda and bound for resettlement in the UK benefited from IOM's CO training classes. During a brief visit to London, Ms Timnit Embaye, IOM Cultural Orientation Officer in Nairobi explained that this was the first group of beneficiaries in Africa who attended IOM's CO training (under the CO Africa Project - see below). A second group of refugees (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo) will attend CO classes in Zambia. They will be arriving in the UK in late February/early March 2006.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, the CO Africa Project started operating locally in 1990. Since then, it has widened its coverage and successfully arranged CO training in 28 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. Ms Embaye told us that so far IOM Nairobi has provided pre-departure training to 83,000 US-bound refugees, a further 7,500 who were going to Canada and over 3,000 who resettled in Australia.

The Nairobi office is staffed by a dozen trainers who speak Amharic, English, Kiswahili, Oromo, Somali and Tigrayan. In conjunction with colleagues and officials from the host countries including the UK, they provide CO training lasting a total of fifteen hours over a 3-day programme.

IOM opens new offices in Liverpool and Glasgow

Last year, we commissioned market research to look into our outreach activities and see what we could do to make them more effective. One of the key recommendations of that research suggested that we ought to start introducing a degree of decentralisation and get closer geographically to potential returnees outside London. We decided to implement this recommendation by opening two new offices, one in Liverpool and one in Glasgow.

Our Liverpool office was officially launched on 4 October 2005 when IOM (UK)'s Chief of Mission, Jan de Wilde, visited Liverpool City Councillor Flo Clucas. The office, located in the very heart of the city centre, will promote IOM (UK)'s Voluntary Assisted Returns programmes to the migrant community and service providers in the North West.

Since the office opened, meetings have been held with representatives of refugee community organisations, service providers and non-governmental support groups as well as key statutory agencies in Liverpool. Staff at the Liverpool office are currently extending their outreach work into the Manchester area and the wider North West region.

In addition, migrants who have been calling at the office received free advice on how IOM can assist them in terms of Voluntary Return and Reintegration Assistance. This has led to a number of applications for voluntary return. There are also plans to organise drop-in advice sessions at key city centre locations and throughout the North West in the coming months. Currently those wishing to discuss voluntary return can be seen on an appointments basis.

Contact: IOM (UK), Liverpool Office, DBH Reception, 5th Floor, Corn Exchange, Fenwick St, Liverpool. L2 7QL. Tel: 0151 225 0248/0249.

The Glasgow office was officially launched on 12 January, 2006 by Mr Jan de Wilde, IOM (UK)'s Chief of Mission and Councillor Irene Graham, spokesperson for Equalities at Glasgow City Council.

Expressing high hopes about the role of the new office in Glasgow in publicising and supporting IOM's programmes in the whole of Scotland, Mr de Wilde said "Increasing awareness of IOM's programmes increases choice for migrants by giving them more options to make decisions for themselves. We can help everyone with their travel documents and travel fares, and we can offer anyone who has been in the asylum system reintegration assistance in their country of origin to make their return more sustainable."

The official opening and press conference was followed by a private meeting between Mr de Wilde, Councillor Graham and representatives from many public and voluntary agencies, including the Glasgow Asylum Seeker's Support Project, the Scottish Refugee Council and the YMCA, who are IOM's formal partners in Glasgow.

Contact: IOM (UK), Glasgow Office, 38 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3DX. Tel: 0141 548 8116.



Mr Jan de Wilde, IOM (UK) Chief of Mission and Councillor Irene Graham, Spokesperson for Equalities at Glasgow City Council. © Photo IOM