



Evaluating IOM Reintegration Assistance in Sri Lanka

From 18 to 24 July 2005, IOM conducted an evaluation and monitoring exercise in Sri Lanka in order to assess how its Reintegration Fund was affecting the reintegration of beneficiaries there. The aim of this self evaluation exercise was to make recommendations for improving the reintegration process of the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) in Sri Lanka.

Two IOM staff members visited Sri Lanka where they interviewed beneficiaries, visited businesses set up with IOM assistance and had informal meetings with IOM VARRP focal points in IOM offices in Colombo, Jaffna, Vavuniya, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

The dominance of small businesses

During the evaluation visit, 36 returnees were interviewed and two community projects were visited. Only one returnee visited had used the reintegration assistance for further training in which she is still enrolled. The vast majority of assisted returnees had used the reintegration assistance to set up small businesses including a grocery shop, poultry farm, spare parts shop, supermarket, fishing business and a communications centre.

The majority of returnees were earning some sort of income from these businesses with which they were able to support their families. For the most part, returnees made a profit from their respective businesses within the first month of operation.

It would be wrong to suggest that all returnees found the integration package to be a panacea. Many needed additional support from family and friends. Of course, a number of returnees thought that the amount of financial support should be increased, especially in the light of the post-Tsunami price inflation. However, all found the reintegration assistance extremely valuable in laying the foundations for a more sustainable return.



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Settling back in Sri Lanka with IOM's Assistance

The majority of returnees who were interviewed said that they would not consider leaving Sri Lanka again though some did say they would consider leaving if the political situation were to worsen.

Some of the returnees whom we visited had had their businesses destroyed by the tsunami in December 2004. IOM had been able to assist by replacing equipment, supplies or material required to re-start the business. All of the re-assisted businesses were up and running again.

In Batticaloa, one returnee whose garments factory and stock had been destroyed had recently been re-assisted. He reported that the new business was more successful than the first one. He had subsequently opened a jewellery shop with the profits from the re-assisted garments business.

Several returnees had received further assistance as recommended by IOM London Chief of Mission, Jan de Wilde when he visited them in January 2005. All of their businesses are expanding and continue to be successful with the help of this additional funding.

The provision of business training to selected returnees was greatly appreciated by the beneficiaries. For returnees who required general business training or training in a particular area of business, IOM was able to assist by finding a suitable institution which offers a relevant course

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Community Projects

Two community projects were visited during the evaluation trip. Both were in areas that had received a high number of returnees and were designed to assist the community as a whole rather than only the returnee.

One community project was located in Udappu, a small fishing village in Puttalam district north of Colombo. The project consisted of

building ten toilets for the local school, primary and secondary combined, for over 1,000 pupils both boys and girls. The school currently has one toilet. The project began in April 2005 and was due to be completed at the end of July 2005. The final sum was handed over during the evaluation visit. The total cost of the project was £2,500. The school teacher expressed relief and gratitude for the project.



The second community project involved the renovation and redecoration of a fishing cooperative building in Trincomalee. The building had been badly damaged during the conflict in Sri Lanka.

It now operates as the home of a fishing cooperative with a staff of 15 and a membership of 300. The site comprises of a kindergarten and a room which is available for hire to community members for weddings and other celebrations.



The cooperative provides a range of services to the local community and has been extremely active in the wake of the Tsunami, offering assistance to the fishing community.

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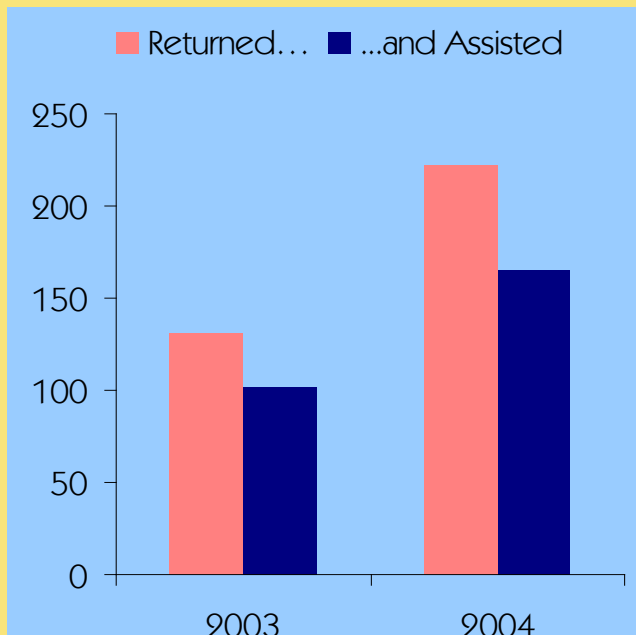
and by covering any costs incurred. IOM Colombo works with the Sri Lankan Development Agency and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to locate appropriate and high quality training courses.

The general impression was that the majority of returnees found reintegration assistance very helpful and were reliant to a large extent on the business that they established with the reintegration funds.

Briefly...

In 2003, a total of 131 individuals returned to Sri Lanka of whom 102 were assisted through the IOM Reintegration Fund. In 2004, a total of 222 individuals returned to Sri Lanka of whom 165 have so far been assisted.

In 2005, the total number of returnees to Sri Lanka who have been assisted so far is 115.



Since her return to Sri Lanka in March 2004, Ms F. has built up an extremely successful garment and tailoring business. Garments are sold wholesale to shops and clients are also able to order tailor-made and embroidered clothing. Within six months of setting up the business, Ms F. was able to support herself and four members of her family. She is very grateful for IOM's assistance and encourages IOM to advertise the programme so other Sri Lankans can also benefit.



Within five days of her return to Sri Lanka in July 2004, Ms M. visited the IOM office in Jaffna and, soon after, she was assisted



with the purchase of chickens and building materials for a poultry farm. She is now running a successful farm and lives with her husband in their house near Jaffna town. She is extremely grateful for the IOM assistance she received. However, she recommended that IOM look into assisting returnees with staged payments so that they would be able to expand their businesses gradually.

Mr D. returned to Sri Lanka in late May 2005. A friend told him about IOM and the reintegration assistance he could receive on returning to Sri Lanka. He



also visited the IOM London office. Mr D. contacted IOM Colombo two weeks after returning and within a month he had been assisted to start up a motor spare parts business. The business does not make a profit yet but he expects it to do so in year two. Mr D. is an example of a returnee who found IOM's assistance invaluable to start up a business. But he has also had to call on the support of family and friends until his business becomes profitable.

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TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS

We recently published two new publications - one is our 2005 Report of Activities and the other is a booklet of mini-cases of returnees who are beneficiaries of Reintegration Assistance. Both of these publications can be obtained free of charge by calling us. Alternatively, you could email us at info@iomlondon.org



Although this newsletter is designed to report on aspects of IOM (UK)'s work, below are a couple of brief reports of IOM activities worldwide

IRAQ

Helping Survivors of Stampede Disaster

As part of a UN and civil society response to help survivors of the recent disaster at the al-Aemma Bridge in Baghdad, IOM has contributed US\$50,000 to help fund relief work.

An estimated 2,000 people were killed or injured in a stampede at the bridge in northern Baghdad. The UN, in collaboration with the Iraqi Red Crescent and other partners, is currently distributing emergency packages to families of the victims which includes both food and cash assistance to help pay for some immediate costs.

Funding for the relief operation comes from the UN Development Group Iraq Trust Fund, which has so far contributed US\$300,000. IOM's contribution is additional and comes from the Kuwaiti government.

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AFGHANISTAN

IOM's Quick Impact Projects Programme Receives US\$32 Million of Additional Funding

The IOM Quick Impact Projects (QIP) programme in Afghanistan has received an additional US\$32 million in funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), raising the funding ceiling for the programme in Afghanistan to US\$64.5 million.

QIP, which is funded entirely by USAID, carries out infrastructure, education, media, health, and environmental projects, throughout Afghanistan. Since QIP began in September 2003, 289 projects have either been completed or are underway at a cost of US\$ 42.5 million. These projects have assisted over 1,000 communities and more than one million people in Afghanistan.

The projects involve the construction or restoration of roads, canals, irrigation systems, bridges, clinics, hospitals, municipal water systems, water wells, primary and secondary schools, university buildings, airfields and government buildings. Funding has also been allocated to civic education workshops for mullahs as well as vocational training for women, former combatants and war-affected youth, financial support for government officials, government agencies, radio stations, and newspapers, and employment-assistance centres.

The projects are conceived by USAID field programme officers and implemented by IOM in close coordination with Coalition Provincial Reconstruction Teams. For more information contact Robert McKenney, IOM Afghanistan, rmckenney@iomkabul.net