



City of Munich
**Department of
Social Services**

Office of Housing
and Migration

Coming Home

Project report

1.11.2007 to 31.10.2008

Sponsored by:

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Coming Home – Project Report 1.11.2007 – 31.10.2008

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Introduction

The European Union declared 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) – a year dedicated to the integration of immigrants and focusing on a series of projects and activities to raise awareness of the objectives of the EYID. The aim was to promote tolerance and understanding of different cultural traditions and break down barriers that disadvantage those with a foreign background.

2008 saw the implementation of a concept drawn up by the Munich authorities which lay down the fundamental conditions that establish an environment in which diverse cultures can live together in harmony. Munich is home to people from over 160 different countries – they come here to study or for professional or family reasons, and some of them come in search of help in cases of need and displacement, or they come as refugees and asylum seekers and they too must be seen as citizens of this city. Some stay only for a limited time, but others hope to establish a new home here – and it should be a matter of course that a modern city like Munich treats them with respect and dignity. The aim of the Munich

City Council policy has long been to accommodate and assist refugees in an atmosphere of respect and understanding, underlining this policy by funding integration projects. Language courses, school projects for children and adolescents, vocational training and job placements, as well as therapy for traumatised refugees, are a few of the measures organised by the Social Services Department in cooperation with charities and associations, or with various public and private initiatives.

But it is also the process of repatriation and reintegration that calls for counselling and assistance. As early as 1997 Munich City Council ruled unanimously to set up an Office for Repatriation Assistance and since then over 12,000 refugees and asylum seekers have been given support by the Social Services Department to resettle in their home countries. It was the ones who had had jobs here, and who had been integrated into German society, who found it much easier to build up a new, successful future, showing how important it is to make all integration measures available to all immigrants, even if their prospects of remaining in the country are uncertain. The Office for Repatriation Assistance works together with integration projects and – within the framework of the EU project *Coming Home* – offers help towards improved vocational qualifications.

In 2008 – the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue – it was 850 years since the foundation of the City of Munich – the key theme accompanying all the events was the idea of „Building Bridges“. The project *Coming Home*, which supports foreigners with a migrant background who return to their home country voluntarily, helps strengthen the bridges between exile and home.



Friedrich Graffe, Director of Social Services

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Refugees and asylum seekers in Munich

Approximately 315,000 people living in Munich hold a foreign passport. 9,000 from around 60 different countries are refugees, of whom 1,300 are entitled to be granted asylum. Under the new regulation regarding the right of abode, 700 refugees will probably be granted permanent residency. 7,000 do not have a declared residency status. The refugees come mainly from Iraq, Kosovo and Turkey.

On average, 100 people are allocated to the initial reception centre in Munich each month before being accommodated in homes in the city or the outskirts. While their application for asylum is being processed, they receive food supplies and € 40 pocket money a month and are generally obliged to live in special housing facilities run by the state, but less than 2% are eventually recognized as having a right of asylum. Asylum seekers are not allowed to take on any form of employment during the first year in the country, after which they may only work in jobs that cannot be filled by German or EU citizens. Although schooling is guaranteed for the children there is no provision for vocational training afterwards. The legal situation

and regulatory policies make it difficult or impossible for people without a clear residency status to become a part of our society – even for a short time.

Everyday practice has, however, shown that in every respect **a policy of support is far preferable to a policy of deterrence** – and it is this realization that has encouraged Munich authorities to provide funding for the support and welfare services for refugees. The Social Services Department goes to considerable effort to promote both short-term and long-term integration by organizing vocation-oriented German classes, housing and support to find a job placement. A strong emphasis is laid on supporting associations and initiatives in their work with unaccompanied minor refugees and traumatised newcomers. Everyone involved in working with refugees must cooperate to ensure that the help available is used to the full.

*Accommodation for refugees in Munich –
from a photo project for educational purposes*



3

Coming Home – objectives, overview, results

Objectives

Coming Home is a project organised by the Social Services Department with the support of the European Refugee Fund and the Bavarian State Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Family Affairs and Women. *Coming Home* aims to facilitate the voluntary return and permanent reintegration of refugees and asylum seekers to their home country, bearing in mind the special needs of minors, single mothers, refugees who were originally unaccompanied minors and anyone who is traumatised, elderly, sick or disabled. The Office for Repatriation Assistance also supports humanitarian projects in the countries of origin with as much involvement as possible from returnees.

Overview

Coming Home is intended to provide support and assistance oriented towards the specific needs of every individual and every family. The aim is to help people to help themselves. The prospects for the future are analysed together with the returnees with the aim of making it possible to return home voluntarily and maintain one's self-respect.

Coming Home also advises and assists advice centres in other towns, helps establish new repatriation centres and expand existing national and international networks.

The *Coming Home* team comprises seven members: two native speakers organise aid for refugees from south east Europe, primarily from Kosovo and Serbia; refugees from Asia and Africa each have one German counsellor to help them; one of the team members organises vocational qualification courses and advises anyone attending a course. The Office Director and Project Coordinator are responsible for general issues of organisation, as well as processing difficult individual cases, supporting aid projects, networking and public relations work.

The Coming Home team (from left to right): bottom row: Sylvia Glaser, Coming Home Project Manager; Anneluise Tiefengruber, counsellor specializing in Asia; Marion Lich, Director of the Office for Repatriation Assistance; middle row: Dr. Inge Kapraun, counsellor specializing in Africa; Anja Fürste, Counselling Assistant; top row: Hamid Sijercic and Latif Avdyli, counsellors specializing in south east Europe



Coming Home works together with other repatriation assistance organisations that operate on a national and international scale. The most important partners are IOM (International Organisation for Migration), AGEF (a German work group specializing in development and skilled labour in the fields of migration and development cooperation), SOLWODI (Solidarity with Women in Distress), HEIMATGARTEN

(a repatriation assistance project of the German association for workers' welfare in Bremerhaven), ZIRF (the Information Centre for Voluntary Return under the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), as well as the Bavarian repatriation counselling offices in Augsburg, Nuremberg and Würzburg.

The project ran for twelve months from 1 November 2007 until 31 October 2008.

Summary of the results

Under the *Coming Home* project 306 people from 46 countries received personal counselling and support, of which approximately 80% were individuals seeking help. During the term of the project 621 counselling sessions took place. A total of 105 people – 28 women and 77 men – returned to their home countries, and 104 people who participated in the project received, in addition to assistance from the IOM, starting capital from funds provided by the Bavarian Ministry of Social Affairs, the European Refugee Fund and the City of Munich. 26 female and 21 male refugees took part in courses to obtain vocational qualifications and 8 business start-ups received support. In 22 cases the personal circumstances were so complex or distressing that intensive counselling and support was required. 75 people who had returned home in the course of the current or the previous project continued to receive help.

Three aid projects in Afghanistan and Burkina Faso were given financial and material assistance.

The information and statistics in this report do not cover any returnees who were not refugees and who received assistance from some other source than the EU project *Coming Home* – 31 people from 18 different countries come under this category

in the period of time covered by this report, and 10 women and 10 men returned to their home countries. Citizens of EU member states were not eligible for return assistance.

Coming Home uses various methods of drawing people's attention to the help available: leaflets are distributed at special conferences and visits are made to refugee homes, counselling offices for migrants and the relevant local authorities dealing with the affairs of non-Germans. In addition, *Coming Home* sets up an information stand at the annual reception of the Foreigners' Advisory Council held in the old town hall, a leaflet in eleven languages explains the objectives of *Coming Home* and posters are hung in refugee homes and counselling offices. When Munich celebrated the 850th anniversary of its foundation, an exhibition of photos in the cultural centre in Giesing, Munich focused on „Returning from Exile“.

The Office for Repatriation Assistance is involved in research on the return of refugees and participates in study groups and projects dealing with the development of reintegration assistance.



Part of the celebrations to mark the Munich's 850th birthday – an exhibition in the cultural centre in Giesing showing the work of Coming Home.

3.1

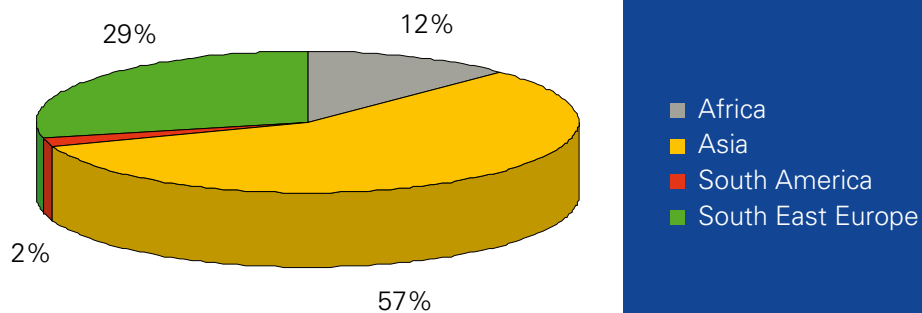
An overview of counselling sessions, assistance and departures

Region	Participants	Individual counselling sessions	Financial aid	Departures
Africa	88	144	20	13
Asia	147	346	60	60
South America	4	8	–	2
South East Europe	67	123	24	30
Total	306	621	104	105

As it can take an average of one to two years for a returnee to settle and adapt to life again in his home country, an important element of the Munich repatriation assistance is to offer support after refugees have returned home; this is often done

with the help of local organisations. The statistics include the number of cases in which support continued to be given – in 75 such cases 47 of the people had already departed before the project commenced.

Countries of origin of the returnees



Africa

	Participants	Individual counselling sessions	Financial aid	Departures
Ethiopia	12	26	2	2
Algeria	3	11	1	1
Burkina Faso	2	–	2	–
Ivory Coast	2	2	–	–
Eritrea	1	–	–	–
Ghana	1	1	–	–
Congo, DR	3	3	3	–
Congo, Rep.	1	2	–	–
Libya	3	6	3	3
Morocco	1	1	–	–
Nigeria	29	45	5	4
Sierra Leone	9	24	2	2
Senegal	1	1	–	–
Somalia	8	9	–	–
Sudan	1	1	–	–
Togo	3	6	2	1
Tunisia	2	5	–	–
Uganda	6	1	–	–
Total	88	144	20	13

Asia

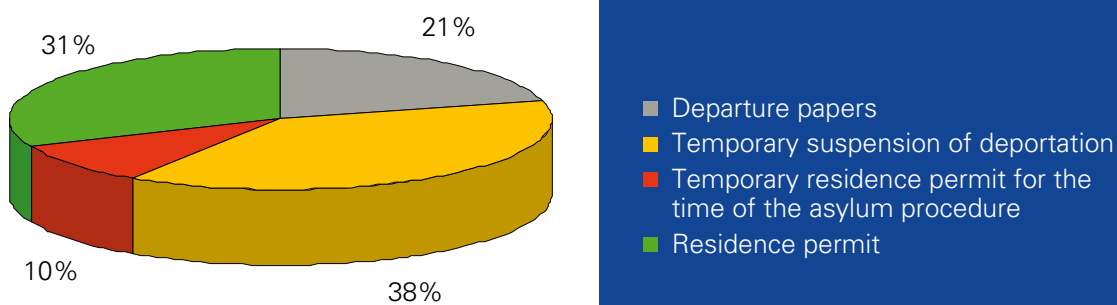
	Participants	Individual counselling sessions	Financial aid	Departures
Afghanistan	25	49	13	13
Armenia	3	8	–	–
Azerbaijan	4	2	2	2
Bhutan	1	1	–	–
Burma	1	1	–	–
China	8	4	1	1
Georgia	1	6	1	1
Iraq	68	213	30	35
Iran	4	7	1	1
Israel	8	12	4	2
Jordan	3	20	1	2
Kuwait	6	1	–	–
Mongolia	3	3	1	1
Pakistan	1	3	–	–
Palestine	2	7	1	1
Syria	1	1	–	–
Vietnam	8	8	5	1
Total	147	346	60	60

South America

	Participants	Individual counselling sessions	Financial aid	Departures
Bolivia	1	1	–	–
Colombia	3	7	–	2
Total	4	8	–	2

South East Europe				
	Participants	Individual counselling sessions	Financial aid	Departures
Albania	3	7	–	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9	11	6	3
Kosovo	32	43	13	11
Croatia	1	3	–	–
Montenegro	1	2	–	1
Russian Federation	5	10	–	1
Serbia	5	17	1	4
Turkey	5	20	1	5
Ukraine	6	10	3	3
Total	67	123	24	30

Residence status of the returnees



3.2

People with special needs

Sometimes the returnees have specific individual needs, mainly due to health problems. In the time covered by this report 15 women, 8 men and 7 children came under this category and were given more intensive counselling and support. Their return home had to be carefully planned and prepared, including consultations with doctors, family, aid organisations and the relevant authorities. For instance, when a refugee returns home as an unaccompanied minor close cooperation between the legal guardian and the people in charge of the case is vital. It is also thanks to the close working relationship with specialized aid organisations such as SOLWODI and HEIMATGARTEN that even in difficult individual cases of, for example, severe disabilities or chronic illnesses, the efforts to support reintegration have been successful.

In nearly all cases the prime motive for returning home was homesickness and the wish to be with relatives and friends and additionally, in some cases, the poor job prospects in Germany.

The prospect of continued help, even after departure, dispels fear, and the final decision to return home comes easier. If necessary, *Coming Home* guarantees continued support for up to two years and can pay for medical treatment, medication or vocational training in the home country.



Ramzia M., 59 years, from Iraq:

Ramzia M., who suffers from severe arthritis, is a widow. In 2005 she fled from north Iraq to relatives in Munich and decided to return to her home country two years later for family reasons. Due to the illness she can only walk with the help of a frame and needs continuous medication. In Iraq her son's family look after her and *Coming Home* paid for the medical treatment for two years.



Kimeta B., 71 years, from Kosovo:

Kimeta B. came to Munich to be with her son when the security situation in her home town Mitrovica became increasingly precarious in 2007. She had planned to stay for just a few months but her health deteriorated to such an extent that the idea of going home was not feasible. Eventually Kimeta B's son was able to accompany her home in the summer of 2008. From *Coming Home* she receives, in addition to initial funding, the medication for six months that she is dependent upon. She was referred to the aid project „URA – The Bridge“, organised by the AWO [a German association for workers' welfare] in Nuremberg, which gave her excellent follow-up support after this initial period. A flat in a safe area near her daughter was rented and furnished for her, the rent being secured for one year.

Country of origin and age	Specific problems	Support / Organisation involved	Date of departure
Ethiopia 20 years	Former unaccompanied minor, returned voluntarily to relatives	Financial aid SOLWODI	June 2008
Afghanistan 25 years	Single woman, mentally ill, returned to her home country voluntarily.	Financial aid for everyday living expenses and for medication <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	February 2006
Afghanistan 31 years	Single woman without any career prospects in Germany, returned voluntarily to her relatives; after her return to her home country she became seriously ill.	Financial aid for medical treatment <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	May 2006
Afghanistan 31 years	After separation from her husband as a result of domestic violence, the wife returned home to her relatives	Financial aid	May 2008
Afghanistan 39 years	Mentally ill man returned home to his relatives voluntarily	Preparatory trip and financial aid for medication	May 2008
Algeria 62 years	Single woman, seriously ill, returned voluntarily to relatives	Financial aid for medication	May 2008
Bosnia & Herzegovina 83 years	Widow in need of nursing care due to old age, due to loneliness she gave up residency in Germany in order to spend the rest of her life in her home country	Financial aid for medication and care in home country through HEIMATGARTEN <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	October 2006
Bosnia & Herzegovina 91 years	Widow suffering from illnesses arising from old age and in need of nursing care, due to loneliness she gave up residency in Germany in order to spend the rest of her life in her home country	Financial aid for medication and care in home country through HEIMATGARTEN <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	October 2006
Iraq 54 and 64 years	Married couple, man suffering from severe affliction of the hip, knee and disc, were lonely and decided to return to their children	Medication <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	October 2003
Iraq 57 years	Single mother, chronically ill with one child (17 years), returned voluntarily to relatives	Financial aid for medication <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	October 2006
Iraq 58 years	Single woman with severe arthritis, returned voluntarily to her family	Financial aid for medical treatment <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	May 2007

Country of origin and age	Specific problems	Support / Organisation involved	Date of departure
Iraq 58 years	Single woman with severe arthritis, returned voluntarily to her family	Financial aid for medical treatment <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	May 2007
Iraq 37 years	Single mother with two children (13 and 16 years), chronically ill, returned voluntarily to her husband	Financial aid for living costs and medication	March 2008
Iran 42 years	Man suffering from chronic pain resulting from war injuries, saw no chances of residency in Germany and decided to return to his home country	Financial aid for living costs and medication	August 2008
Israel 36 years	Mentally ill man without any chance of residency in Germany, returned to his relatives	Accompanied by medical staff during flight and received medication	June 2008
Congo, DR 32 years	Single mother with two children (7 and 5 years) returned voluntarily to her home country	Financial aid for the medical treatment of the children SOLWODI <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	January 2006
Kosovo 33 years	Father with severe chronic illness, returned with his family voluntarily to his home country	Financial aid for medication <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	August 2000
Kosovo 71 years	Widow without chance of residency in Germany, returned home to her children	Financial aid for medication AWO Nuremberg	July 2008
Libya 41 years	Single mother with two children (4 and 8 years) returned home to relatives voluntarily	Financial aid for living costs	February 2008
Nigeria 43 years	Man with physical ailments following an accident and without any chance of residency in Germany	Financial aid for medical treatment <i>(Follow-up support after departure)</i>	October 2007
Sierra Leone 18 years	Former unaccompanied minor, returned voluntarily to his mother	Financial aid for living costs	December 2007
Sierra Leone 42 years	Man severely physically handicapped after a stroke, returned voluntarily to his family	Financial aid for living costs and medical treatment	December 2007
Vietnam 50 years	Woman in need of nursing care after a stroke, returned voluntarily to live with her children in her home country	Accompanied by medical staff during flight and received medical treatment	October 2008

3.3

Career prospects

It is vital that a returnee is in a position to earn his own living and support his family if he wants to become reintegrated in his home country, and refugees who had a steady job in Germany are most likely to achieve this. They maintain their self-esteem and sense of responsibility and possibly are able to build up financial reserves and acquire skills that will help them in their future career.

The Office of Housing and Migration is an active supporter of efforts to find openings for refugees and asylum seekers on the job market in Munich.

Coming Home has basically got three ways in which it can promote career prospects: placement in training schemes, support for business start-ups and cooperation with job promotion projects in the relevant home countries.

Qualifications

If required, individual training schemes can be organised for returnees with specific career targets. A number of qualifications and work experience options, particularly in manual trades, are possible, depending on a person's training, his/her experience and skills. Sometimes the sponsorship of additional German language skills can be helpful. As the courses and work experience schemes can last for several weeks or months, only those who come for advice in good time – i.e. before they have to leave the country – can benefit from this form of repatriation assistance. Sometimes school and job-training allowances in the relevant home country can be granted.



Computer courses are available in German and English

Repatriation counsellor Latif Avdyli and Office Director Marion Lich with returnee D. in front of the Office for Qualification, Recruitment and Start-up Support, APPK, in Kosovo



There is no doubt that the most popular training schemes are the computer courses that are available in different modules that ensure that the trainees progress from one level to the next. Nowadays computer skills are a key qualification in almost all jobs anywhere in the world.

A total of 47 persons took part in qualification schemes, 26 women and 21 men.

Job placement

In Kosovo, Afghanistan and North Iraq the organisation AGEF (a German work group specializing in development and skilled labour in the field of migration and development cooperation) has established programmes and frameworks for job recruitment. In addition to vacancies on the regular job market, subsidised jobs and training placements are offered with the intention of helping returnees get back into regular work. The Office for Repatriation Assistance participated in an AGEF international project aimed at promoting cooperation between counselling services in the host country and the home country.

Business start-ups

Those who return to their home country with a realistic business concept and the necessary qualifications and experience can apply for start-up sponsorship from *Coming Home*. Up to € 3,000 can be granted, to be paid in instalments after departure and on submission of the relevant documentation that the business has actually been set up.

In some cases, additional support is also available from local organisations such as SOLWODI, an aid organisation that helps women gain their independence, mainly by granting financial support or a loan.

Country of origin, age and sex	Business venture (Organisation involved)	Departure
Iraq 33 years, male	Vehicle repair business	August 2008
Kosovo 28 years, male	Internet café (AWO Nuremberg)	March 2007
Kosovo 44 years, male	Fruit and vegetable retailer (AWO Nuremberg)	June 2008
Nigeria 32 years, male	Printing business	July 2008
Sierra Leone 38 years, male	Music studio	June 2008
Ukraine 50 years, male	Farming (HEIMATGARTEN)	September 2007
Ukraine 50 years, male	Car repair business (HEIMATGARTEN)	February 2008
Vietnam 45 years, male	Building material supplies	July 2007



Youssef Y., 33 years, Iraq

Youssef Y. came to Germany nine years ago. His application for asylum was recognised and as a qualified welder he was able to work in this field in Germany for eight years, but although he was well integrated at work he did not feel at home in Munich and decided to return home to his family. For a long time he had been planning to set up a business in his home town, Basra, and had bought tools and machines in preparation. *Coming Home* helped him transport everything home and granted him financial aid to establish the business. He returned to Basra in August 2008 and set up his workshop in his parents' garage where he now repairs motors and generators.



Daniel P., 32 years, Nigeria

After 4½ years in exile, Daniel P. decided to return to his home country in July 2008. His hopes of a better life in Germany had not materialized. Daniel P. is a qualified printer and applied for support to set up his own printing business. Even before he returned home, friends and relatives organised suitable premises and made enquiries about a second-hand printing machine. *Coming Home* organised a short spell of work experience in a Munich company to update his professional skills and just a few weeks after his return he was able to start work and mailed the repatriation counsellor „...thank you so much for your assistance and the organisation, thank you for making me achieve something in my life...“



Agim K., 44 years, Kosovo

Agim K. applied for asylum in July 2007, but after it had been rejected he had no future in Germany. Thanks to the cooperation of a reintegration project in Prishtina, „URA – The Bridge“, he was able to get financial aid to set up a business in Kosovo. Agim K. had previously been a successful greengrocer and after his return in the summer of 2008 he was given financial support to buy a mini-bus and since that time he has been able to earn a living for himself and his family.

4

Public relations work



Coming Home uses various methods of drawing people's attention to the help available: leaflets are distributed and talks are held at special conferences and visits are made to refugee homes, counselling offices for migrants and the relevant local authorities dealing with the affairs of non-

Germans. In addition, *Coming Home* sets up an information stand at the annual reception of the Foreigners' Advisory Council held in the old town hall, a leaflet in eleven languages explains the objectives of *Coming Home* and posters are hung in refugee homes and counselling offices.

Together with organisations such as AGEF and HEIMATGARTEN the Office for Repatriation Assistance arranges information sessions for multipliers and clients on the current situation in individual countries that refugees are returning to. A special seminar was held on the situation in the People's republic of China.

When Munich celebrated the 850th anniversary of its foundation an exhibition of photos in the cultural centre in Giesing focused on „Returning from Exile“ and also gave an insight into the work of *Coming Home*. In various Munich newspapers donations were appealed for in order to support returnees and aid projects.

Coming Home publishes a comprehensive report each year. All publications are also available as pdf files at www.muenchen.de/ reintegration.



Background studies seminar on China

5

Sharing experiences and networking

The Office for Repatriation Assistance depends to a great extent on close cooperation and sharing experiences with other counselling and aid organisations on a local, national and international level. The help that can be given to returnees is limited, so it is even more important that the various organisations work closely together so that all available support is applied as effectively as possible.

On a local level *Coming Home* cooperates with, among others, the Bavarian and the Munich council on refugees and exiles, the foreign aid section of the Red Cross, the counselling centres of the recognized charities Amnesty International, Refugio, various women's aid organisations, Doctors of the World, Café 104, organisations representing the interests of migrants, the „Bahnhofsmission“ (a charitable organisation based at major railway stations in Germany) and with authorities dealing with the affairs non-Germans.

The counsellors from all the Bavarian repatriation assistance organisations meet annually to discuss current issues, experiences and plans. In addition, the project managers meet twice a year to ensure that standards are harmonized.

Important partners on a national level are, among others, IOM Deutschland, BAMF, AGEF, HEIMATGARTEN and SOLWODI. We

have close international contact with HIT and COA (in the Netherlands), Goeteborg Initiativet (Sweden), Caritas Wien (Austria), APPK (Kosovo).

The Office for Repatriation Assistance attends workshops and projects on the development of reintegration assistance and during the time covered by this report was involved in two additional repatriation projects sponsored by the EU.

RIIM, Return Initiative for irregular migrants

The aim of this project, which was organised by IOM Netherlands and realized in cooperation with German and Austrian partners, was to develop strategies to avoid or reduce illegality. Sociological studies researched and described the situations and motivations of people without a valid residence permit. A flyer and a poster in eight languages were designed pointing out where people can get help and counselling anonymously in Munich.

The Office for Repatriation Assistance was involved in this project because, although people who live here illegally are one of our target groups, it is difficult to reach them and to tell them about the help available.



Meeting of the project managers of the Bavarian Repatriation Counselling Offices (from left to right): Werner Neumann, Augsburg; Martina Sommer, Nuremberg; Isabelle Schätzlein, Würzburg; Sylvia Glaser, Munich

CCM, Case Chain Management

In the project coordinated by AGEF with partner organisations from Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, a training course was designed for repatriation counsellors and AGEF's idea of Case Chain Management was tested. This relies on the central emphasis being on exchange of information and cooperation between the counsellors in the host country and the country of repatriation.

As part of the CCM project, the Office for Repatriation Assistance took part in a visit to Kosovo where talks were held with local aid organisations, staff from public authorities and UNMIK [United Nations Mission in Kosovo], and it was also an opportunity to visit returnees who had set out from

Munich for their home country several years previously and had successfully started a new life back home.

The Office for Repatriation Assistance became involved in this project because it is important to be in good contact with counsellors in the home countries. The experience that *Coming Home* gained from the workshops it organised in 2004 for prospective repatriation counsellors was integrated into the new training.

Working with other organisations in international projects and sharing experiences can trigger new incentives for the development of an organisation's own work.

6

Returnees' relief projects

„Utilize potential – discussing development cooperation on a local level and diaspora“ was the title of a conference organised by INWENT (Capacity Building International, Germany) at the end of 2007 in Bonn. The Office for Repatriation Assistance has experience in this field – for many years now the Office has been supporting aid projects in migrants' home countries who live, or have lived, in Munich. Since the Office was established this form of development aid has been an integral part of its self-concept and its sphere of activities.

In the early years it was mainly areas in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo that were supported. Returnees were mainly involved in an advisory capacity so that donations and relief operations were utilized and implemented where they were most needed.

The projects introduced here were initiated by people of immigrant origin who live in Munich.



School project – Burkina Faso

For fifteen years now Halidou S. from Munich has been supporting the development of a private school in his point of origin in the outskirts of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. This country in West Africa belongs to the poorest in the world with a high rate of illiteracy.

Before the project was set up there wasn't a school in the area. What started as a small-scale collection of donations among friends and acquaintances has now



The children are keen to go to school and they listen attentively during lessons

developed into a significant success story. What used to be one small classroom has developed over the years into a school and training complex where today over 700 children and students receive tuition. In addition, sponsorships ensure that orphans can attend school.

One of the reasons why the project is so successful is that it was implemented in close cooperation with the local school staff who are very committed to its success. Halidou S. regularly visits the school and records progress. For a long time now

there has also been a faithful circle of supporters that steadily grows. In the spring of 2008 a photographer from the Süddeutsche Zeitung in Munich took spectacular photos of the schoolchildren and their surroundings and gave them away in exchange for a donation for the school. The Office for Repatriation Assistance has been supporting this project for five years and in 2004 one of the staff members had an opportunity to see for herself the benefits that had been gained from the support.

Orthopaedic workshop – Afghanistan

Wali N. returned to Afghanistan in 2003 to help rebuild his home country. During the twenty years that he lived in Germany he trained to become an orthopaedic technician, working in this profession for a number of years before he travelled to Afghanistan after the overthrow of the Taliban regime to see exactly what conditions were like and whether it was possible to return and set up a business there. With the financial support of AGEF and *Coming Home* he opened an orthopaedic workshop in Kabul in mid 2003.

Wali N. has since expanded his business and now has 5 employees. He supplies orthopaedic aids for injured war veterans and fits artificial limbs, as well as manufacturing crutches, walking frames, wheelchairs and bicycles for people with disabilities. As a majority of the injured veterans are not in a position to pay for the orthopaedic care, Wali N. often treats them free of charge.

The workshop in Kabul is glad of any donations from Germany



In order to give the business in Kabul a secure footing and ensure long-term care for disabled people, Wali N. established an association, „empor – Aufbauhilfe für Afghanistan“ [an association with the purpose of supporting the rebuilding of Afghanistan].



The German company „Teufel“ supports the orthopaedic workshop in Afghanistan by supplying materials for the production of orthopaedic devices.



Wali Nawabi updates the staff at the German company „Streifeneder“ on his work



Production of an artificial leg for a patient

The association has since been recognized in Afghanistan too as an relief organisation.

Wali N's aim is to build up a nationwide network of orthopaedic workshops in Afghanistan and to ensure that the injured war veterans receive the orthopaedic help they need even after the international relief organisations have left the country. In order to realize this goal, he trains young men and women as orthopaedic technicians himself so that they can run the planned workshops. The first of the new branches is expected to open mid-2009 in Kunduz.

Although the political, economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated slowly since 2004, Wali N. has succeeded in creating a new future in his home country for himself and his family thanks to his own determination and enthusiasm, but also thanks to the support from his relatives. His work means that for some of his fellow countrymen life has taken a turn for the better. On the one hand, a large number of people with dis-

abilities receive orthopaedic help and, on the other hand, the creation of permanent jobs has improved the financial and social situation of his staff and their families.

Together with the association „empor“ *Coming Home* supports the work and project by collecting money and donated goods and organising their transport once a year. Numerous Munich businesses and private individuals have made donations and thus contributed to the success of the project. The Office for Repatriation Assistance would particularly like to thank Handicap International for its support and the following companies for their substantial donations of materials: F.G. Streifeneder and Wilhelm Julius Teufel, two German companies producing medical and orthopaedic equipment.

Further information is available at www.empor-ev.org

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Quality management

For thirteen years the Office for Repatriation Assistance has been helping and encouraging refugees and asylum seekers to make plans and look into the prospects of a possible return home. The staff at *Coming Home* developed the concept of repatriation assistance from their own experiences in the everyday work of counselling. These experiences were evaluated and then discussed and reviewed within the team, and among colleagues from other counselling centres and cooperation partners. This means that the help available and the quality of services are continuously improved and ensures that they are oriented towards the needs of the clients.

The Office for Repatriation Assistance can, as one of the first repatriation counselling offices in Germany, look back on a wealth of experience. But despite this it is necessary to review the standard of work achieved so far and to maintain this level. Since mid-2007 the Office for Repatriation Assistance has been working towards quality development and levels of competence in the areas of repatriation and reintegration assistance. The purpose of quality management is to promote our own professional work; evaluation and quality development means that professional standards are formulated; they can be reviewed and space for improvement can be pinpointed.

Evaluation

Reintegration aid that people have received from our Office is reviewed for effectiveness and benefits and, if necessary, is modified. To this end the project *Coming Home* applies the following methods:

- Clients are given questionnaires before they depart;
- Clients are contacted in their home countries;
- Returnees are visited in their home countries;
- Participation in surveys on repatriation and reintegration;
- Working together with local project partners and sharing experiences;
- Collecting statistical data.

Quality development

The aim of quality management is to question the benefits, efficiency and effectiveness of processes within the organisation and to conduct a critical review of the quality of the services provided. Quality management can therefore be seen as an important step towards securing and improving the standards of help provided.

Together with the IPP [a German research institute for work methodology and project

Interviewing a returnee in Ghana



consultancy] the Office for Repatriation Assistance designed an internal quality management plan. It is oriented towards the clients' needs and also takes into consideration partners' interests.

First of all, the staff defined an overall concept for the Office for Repatriation Assistance that reflected its purpose, values, spirit and aims.

The next stage of quality development that is still in progress involves the analysis, evaluation and description of internal working procedure and interfaces. A course of action is drawn up to solve problems effectively and consequently guarantee a high standard of professionalism.

How the Office for Repatriation Assistance sees itself

The Office for Repatriation Assistance helps people of immigrant origin return to their home countries voluntarily and it promotes permanent successful re-integration. One of the main concerns is that returnees should be able to maintain their self-respect and feel secure in their home country. In addition to providing individual help, the Office for Repatriation Assistance works together with other national and international relief organisations, and is in a position to support returnees in the realization of aid projects in their home countries.

Counselling

Counselling sessions are confidential and take place in an atmosphere of trust and understanding with the counsellors allowing sufficient time for an open and frank discussion of a client's situation. In-depth counselling helps make an informed decision and develop prospects for the future. Counselling sessions can be held in a client's native language and, if there are any problems, interpreters can be called in.

When counsellors work with prospective returnees it is their needs and expectations that influence the help provided. The focus is also on helping others to help themselves and strengthening their sense of responsibility. The counsellors identify the clients' skills and potential, and by offering them support targeted to their specific needs they can contribute towards successful reintegration.

Working methods

The staff at the Office for Repatriation Assistance have substantial knowledge about the cultural, political and economic situation in the countries their clients are hoping to return to; they have an up-to-date picture of the current situation there which is essential for the preparation of repatriation and the sustained support of the reintegration process.

The staff have a strong sense of responsibility and personal commitment and an ability to react flexibly to changed national and international political conditions (e.g. a mass flow of refugees, laws regarding residency and asylum, and agreements on renewed acceptance).

The work in the field of repatriation assistance is highly complex (e.g. counselling in difficult cases, negotiating with various authorities, securing medical treatment,

setting up businesses, contacts to partner organisations, travel arrangements) and requires that our staff are able to establish the necessary reserve or openness towards clients. Team sessions and discussions regularly take place as an opportunity to review work and ensure high standards.

Staff and management are very supportive towards each other and targets and standards are defined and developed together.

Further training courses, background studies and project trips contribute to the effectiveness and success of counselling sessions. Such occasions are an opportunity for in-depth exchange of experiences with other repatriation assistance projects.

Public relations work and cooperation

Focused public relations work publicizes the work of the Office for Repatriation Assistance and promotes understanding for its clients, as well as helps collect donations. Other bodies operating in this sphere are informed of the latest developments.

Close cooperation with other authorities, organisations and initiatives, conducted in an atmosphere of respect and equality, is oriented towards the clients' well-being.

Networking on a national and international level leads to synergistic advantage and boosts the acceptance of repatriation and reintegration assistance.

Further development

Conducting projects that are co-financed by the European Commission and the Federal State of Bavaria ensures that individual repatriation help is available to people of immigrant origin and that repatriation and reintegration work can be further developed.

The Office for Repatriation Assistance was founded in 1996 as one of the first counselling centres for returning refugees in Germany. The staff members have many years of experience and are very knowledgeable in strategic planning and socio-political discussions relating to repatriation and reintegration assistance on a national and international level. They support the demands that repatriation assistance should be a legally-founded social service. They are committed to the promotion of cooperation between the organisations for repatriation assistance and development cooperation.

8

Outlook

The European Refugee Fund is withdrawing from *Coming Home* and all other repatriation and integration projects. In the future, *Coming Home* will be sponsored by the newly-established Repatriation Fund. It will no longer be possible to combine measures from different fields; a practice that was permitted in previous periods of sponsorship. This means that it will no longer be possible to combine, for example, integration measures and repatriation support in one project. But, on the other hand, the good news is the increase in subsidies for repatriation projects and the inclusion, into

the projects, of foreigners with a migrant background who are obliged to leave the country, but who are not refugees.

For years the Office for Repatriation Assistance has been calling for improved networking and reciprocal exchange of information on repatriation projects on a national and international level, and thanks to the clearly-defined repatriation fund this can more easily be realized. In the coming years, the development of the repatriation counselling network, the professionalism of counselling and the Europe-wide sharing of experiences will all become the new main focus of the *Coming Home* project. In coordination with the German Federal Ministry, the Bavarian Ministry for Social Affairs, and together with long-standing cooperation partners, conferences and seminars on repatriation will be organised. Trainee counsellors will have the chance to attend workshops to acquire the necessary skills. The existing contacts to project partners in Europe form the basis for further joint activities.



„networking“

Repatriation counselling centres in Bavaria

Munich Social Services Department
Office of Housing and Migration – Office for Repatriation Assistance *Coming Home*
(Responsible for the city of Munich)
Franziskanerstrasse 8
81669 Munich, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)89 / 233 – 4 06 36
reintegration@muenchen.de
www.muenchen.de/reintegration

„Homecoming Migration Project“ for Refugees in Northern Bavaria
(Responsible for Upper and Middle Franconia, Upper Palatinate)
Marienstrasse 23
90402 Nuremberg, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)911 / 23 52 – 215
zrb@last-n.bayern.de
www.zrb-nordbayern.de

Central Repatriation Advice Service for Refugees in Southern Bavaria
(Responsible for Swabia, Lower Bavaria and Upper Bavaria –
with the exception of Munich)
Alte Gasse 17
86152 Augsburg, Germany
Tel: +49 (0)821 / 50 89 – 632
info@zrb-suedbayern.de
www.zrb-suedbayern.de

Central Repatriation Advice for Refugees in West Bavaria
(Responsible for Upper Franconia, the city and district of Coburg)
Röntgenring 3
97070 Würzburg, Germany
Tel: +49 (0) 931 / 38658 – 150

Veitshöchheimer Strasse 100
97080 Würzburg, Germany
Tel: +49 (0) 931 / 98 02 – 290
info@zrb-westbayern.de
www.zrb-westbayern.de



Names, acronyms and useful links

AGEF

A German workgroup specializing in development and skilled labour in the fields of migration and development cooperation. Based in Berlin it is a non-profit making organisation active in the implementation of projects relating to job placement and promotion of business start-ups in cooperation with BMZ and ZAV. It archives up-to-date information on relevant countries; www.agef.de
www.reintegration.net

APPK

Employment Promotion Agency Kosovo, a joint initiative of AGEF Berlin and AGEF Prishtina;

German Federal Foreign Office

Information on countries, addresses and consulates;
www.auswaertigesamt.de

BAMF

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees promotes projects aimed at improving the social and societal integration of immigrants in Germany (community-oriented projects). In department 213 the Information Centre for Voluntary Return is based. It evaluates data and information it has acquired through exchange with institutions active in repatriation assistance; www.bamf.de

BMZ

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development;
www.bmz.de

COA

Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands;
www.coa.nl

GARP

Government Assisted Repatriation Programme; an IOM reintegration programme;

Goeteborgs Initiativet

An organisation to promote the integration and reintegration of refugees in Sweden;
www.initiativet.nu

HEIMATGARTEN

A project of the German association for workers' welfare in Bremerhaven regarding the support of voluntary return and humanitarian reintegration for refugees;
www.heimatgarten.de

HIT

The Foundation for Restored Confidence in the Future; Municipal administrations, social organisations and COA cooperate in joint projects concerning migration and job promotion in the Netherlands;
www.hitfoundation.eu

Asylum Information Association

Up-to-date information on asylum for counselling practitioners;
www.asyl.net

IOM

International Organisation for Migration
www.iom.int
www.iom.int/germany

ISOPLAN

Institute for Development Research, Economic and Social Planning; database with information on countries for migrants and counsellors;
www.isoplan.de

REAG

Reintegration and Emigration Programme for Asylum Seekers in Germany; an IOM reintegration programme;

Red Cross/Accord

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation;
www.rotekreuz.at/accord

SOLWODI

Solidarity with Women in Distress; an aid organisation that offers individual reintegration support to single women and single mothers;
www.solwodi.de

UNHCR

United Nations High Commission for Refugees; reports and statements from the UN Refugee Commissioner's Office
www.unhcr.de

URA – The Bridge

An EU project in Kosovo supporting reintegration; conducted by BAMF and AWO Nuremberg;
Contact person: Martina Sommer;
Tel: +49 (0)911 – 27 41 40 42
martina.sommer@awo-nbg.de

WUS

The World University Service is an international community also open to students and skilled workers returning to their home country;
www.wusgermany.de

ZAV

Central Office for Job Placement;
www.zav-reintegration.de

