

# **The Return and Reintegration of Migrants to the South Caucasus: An Exploratory Study**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2001, the Research and Publication Division of IOM proposed to the three IOM missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to implement a study of the return and reintegration of asylum seekers, and to interview irregular migrants returning from western Europe to their countries of origin in the South Caucasus. This study was carried out by the IOM missions in Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan from October 2001 until March 2002. The main aim was to study the process of return and reintegration of migrants in the three countries concerned, and to assess the impact of the return of migrants on their families and communities.

IOM interviewed 103 respondents in the three countries on two occasions: the first was an in-depth interview focusing on all relevant aspects of the migrants' stay abroad, their return and, in particular, their reintegration efforts; the second interview took place about six weeks after the first interview with the purpose of carrying out an initial evaluation of the success of reintegration of the respondents concerned and to assess their future plans. The sample included three categories of returnees: people returning with the assistance of IOM (41 respondents); deported migrants (35) and persons who returned on their own initiative and volition (in total 27 respondents). Focal host countries were Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands, all characterized by the most significant return numbers.<sup>1</sup>

This study is the first of its kind to be conducted in all three countries of the South Caucasus. For a number of methodological reasons, the sample of this study turned out to be smaller and less well balanced than originally planned. As a result, the conclusions may not be fully representative of all returnees to the South Caucasus.

The sample comprised two different types of migrants: people who wanted to remain abroad permanently and migrants who wanted to work abroad and come back after a couple of years. Most respondents went abroad with the intention of improving their living standards and support their families back home. However, almost all of them tried to use the asylum procedure to obtain a permanent or temporary residence permit abroad, but apart from one case they all failed in this attempt.

About half of the respondents qualified their stay abroad as a success, while the other half felt that it had been a failure. Those who described their stay abroad as a success usually had fewer problems in adapting to the situation back home.

In terms of employment opportunities in their home countries, most respondents ended up worse off than before they left. Their stay abroad was not particularly beneficial in terms of newly acquired professional skills or personal contacts that could have helped them to find a job or enter business. The health of most respondents was somewhat worse when they returned, mainly as a result of stress from the failure of the stay abroad. An additional stress factor was the fact that they had not been able to earn enough money abroad and therefore could not repay debts they had assumed to finance their departure. This sometimes resulted in strained relations with family members and their communities.

In line with these results, about half of the respondents declared their intention to go abroad again if they had the opportunity. The main reasons were the lack of improvement in their socio-economic situation and lack of any prospects for immediate economic advancement in their home countries. Most respondents added, however, that they would prefer to stay in their own country if they could improve their socio-economic situation there.

The second interview to evaluate respondents' reintegration efforts yielded a slightly more negative and pessimistic picture. The situation of most migrants had hardly improved, in particular, they had problems in finding a job. Some migrants, who had initially been positive about their return, now felt less optimistic both in regard to their own position and the success of their reintegration. The health of some respondents had deteriorated further, and family relations continued to be as strained as before since their financial problems had not been solved. Most respondents were still quite resolute about going abroad again if they could not improve their socio-economic circumstances soon.

This study clearly demonstrates that migrants returning from western Europe confront a number of problems back home. Whether they can secure regular income or not after return appears to be the overriding factor in determining the success of their reintegration. Respondents who had returned without any capital, and were unable to find a job in their own communities, reported a number of financial, social and psychological problems that made them feel strongly about going abroad again. Other respondents, who had earned some money abroad, were happy to be reunited with their relatives and friends. They acknowledged that it was difficult to make ends meet, but considered it more important to make the best of things in their own communities.

Although it cannot claim to be fully representative owing to the limited samples and the practical obstacles encountered, this study provides some valuable examples of the problems migrants face when returning to their countries of origin. It also yields useful insights into the manner in which future research on the return and reintegration of migrants in other parts of the world might best be conducted.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

In the past ten years, IOM has assisted more than 1.6 million migrants to voluntarily return home to more than 130 countries. The assistance provided to returnees can vary broadly and ranges from the basic assisted-return scheme of providing pre-departure information, counselling and the organization of the voluntary return, to projects aimed at facilitating the long-term reintegration and economic viability of migrants following their return home.

Many countries, including the European Union (EU) Member States, are striving to find ways to manage return migration more effectively. The increasing interest in voluntary assisted return schemes, is reflected, for example, in a new publication by the EU Commission entitled “Green Paper – On a Community Return Policy on Illegal Residents”.<sup>2</sup> At the European Council in Tampere in October 1999, the heads of state and government of EU Member States called for the development of a common EU policy on migration and asylum. The Commission underlined that the return and readmission of third-country nationals, illegally resident in the EU, must form an integral part of such a common policy. The basic premise is that an efficient return policy of rejected asylum seekers is needed to safeguard the integrity of the legal and humanitarian admission systems. The Commission acknowledges that in some cases return arrangements may require the establishment of assistance packages for those migrants who require further assistance to reintegrate into their home countries following their return. It is recommended that the EU consider and decide on which forms of support would be appropriate for returns to be sustainable. However, to date there has been little research on these issues.

Some research has been carried out under IOM auspices to assess the success of returnees in reintegrating in their countries of origin.<sup>3</sup> IOM has published a paper in its Migration Research Series that reviewed the attempts by governments in three western European countries to link assisted return schemes and reintegration assistance.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it remains necessary to investigate the return and reintegration efforts of migrants in their countries of origin.

IOM is currently facilitating a dialogue between the three “sending” countries of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and a number of traditional “receiving” countries<sup>5</sup> to address migration and migration issues of mutual concern. This co-management approach among a small group of countries of destination, transit and origin, called the “Cluster” process, was begun between South Caucasian and western European countries at the beginning of 2001. The participating countries identified, and agreed to work on, the five main areas of cooperation measures, including:

1. Information campaigns to control irregular migration from the three South Caucasian countries;
2. Enhanced information exchange among relevant authorities;
3. Readmission agreements;
4. Technical cooperation and capacity building programmes for the governments concerned;
5. Reintegration assistance for returning migrants.

Western European countries were selected as being highly representative of destination countries and the three South Caucasian countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as countries of origin because:

1. There are sufficient numbers of assisted voluntary returns from western Europe to these three countries;<sup>6</sup>
2. The countries of origin are relatively small, which was perceived as facilitating the identification and location of returnees;
3. The three IOM missions have all recently implemented research on irregular migration and have the capacity to build on those research efforts.

The main aims of this study are to:

1. Study the process of return and reintegration of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants and the situation of persons from the three selected countries following their return from western Europe;
2. Assess the impact of the migrants' return on their families and communities, with particular regard to the choice between reintegration or renewed migration;
3. Gain an understanding of the policies of the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on the readmission and reintegration of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants;
4. Facilitate the effective and focused implementation of the return and reintegration projects planned by the IOM missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within the framework of the Cluster process;
5. Explore different methodologies for studying the return and reintegration of irregular migrants.

The results of this study will contribute to discussions within the Cluster process on the effective management of return migration.

## 2.2 METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

To gain a better understanding of the return and reintegration processes of migrants and to assess the returnees' success in settling down in their countries of origin, IOM developed a format for an interview to be conducted with returnees on two separate occasions. The first in-depth interview dealt with all aspects of the migration process and reintegration after return. The second interview, which took place on average six weeks after the first interview focused mainly on questions concerned with the reintegration and future plans of the respondents. The interview format was a combination of closed questions, containing a standardized set of answers, and open questions addressing more subjective issues such as the returnees' experiences and emotions. The questionnaires IOM employed in both interviews can be found in Annex I.

The target group consisted foremost of migrants assisted by IOM to return to their country of origin under its Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programmes in Europe. IOM also decided to include migrants who had been deported from the country of destination and such who returned home on their own initiative and volition (referred to in this study as "independent returnees"). The different categories of return should be reflected in the sample according to the following breakdown:

1. Fifty per cent of the sample should be Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR);
2. Twenty-five per cent deportees;
3. Independent returnees should make up the remaining 25 per cent of the sample.

The sample should consist of a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 50 respondents per country, which means that the total sample in all three countries would vary between 105 and 150 respondents. This number was chosen with regard to the duration of the study (six months, including data analysis and the writing of the report) and the need to conduct two interviews with an average interval of six weeks.

*A priori*, IOM counted on a refusal rate of between 25 and 40 per cent, which implied that at least 50 returnees would have to be approached to arrive at the required minimum of 35 respondents.

During the first implementation phase the IOM missions concerned agreed on a method of referral and contact with returning migrants which would ensure privacy and confidentiality of the information.

In order to inform returnees about the study and request their participation, a small leaflet was devised in the three local languages and distributed in the host countries in western Europe (to be consulted in Annex II). This system became operational in December 2001. Returnees were contacted mainly by mail or by phone after their return. For reasons of confidentiality, it was agreed that the returnees should not be met on arrival at the airport, but some time after their return.

During a meeting in October 2001 in Tbilisi, Georgia, the three project coordinators at the three South Caucasus missions of IOM agreed that, in principle:

1. Only migrants who had returned in 2000, 2001 and 2002 should be included in the sample;
2. Victims of trafficking should not be included in the sample for reasons of homogeneity;
3. The destination countries would be European Union Member States,<sup>7</sup> plus Norway and Switzerland.<sup>8</sup>

The questionnaire for the in-depth interviews was tested in all three countries in October 2001, when 17 respondents were interviewed. After this pilot phase, the relevant IOM missions suggested some changes to the final version of the questionnaire, which was then used during a period of four months from November 2001 to February 2002. In a similar fashion, the IOM missions developed and tested the format of the evaluation interviews with 13 respondents in December 2001 and January 2002, and conducted the evaluation interviews from January to March 2002. In both instances, the respondents of the pilot phases were included in the final sample, because the changes in the interview format after completion of the pilot phase were so minor that exclusion of the pilot sample from the actual study was deemed unnecessary. As far as possible, IOM involved the same respondents for the pilot phase of the evaluation interview as for the pilot phase of the in-depth interviews.

IOM developed detailed guidelines for the interviewers on how to approach the potential respondents and how to conduct the actual interviews (see Annex III). In order to secure consistency in the conduct of the interviews, they were conducted by the same two interviewers.

The study proceeded in a standardized manner in all three countries of origin and used the same methodology and time schedule. For this purpose, the three IOM missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia each appointed a study coordinator in September 2001; they maintained frequent contacts, including a meeting, to coordinate the implementation of this study.

### 3. THE SAMPLE: IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS

#### 3.1 IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Despite the attempts of the three implementing missions to ensure uniformity, the study encountered practical obstacles and, as a result, the three samples are very different from each other. The main reasons for this were the reluctance of a number of returnees to participate in the study and the difficulty

TABLE 1  
IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS: SOME FIGURES

Item	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Total
Total sample in-depth interviews	47	29	27	103
Total sample evaluation interviews	25	6	12	43
Explanation of difference 1 vs. 2	22 excluded	23 excluded	15 excluded	60 excluded
Excluded because return <2000	15	7	7	29
Refused after 1st interview	-	10	1	11
Went abroad again	-	3	4	7
Recent AVR arrivals	7	-	-	7
Could not be contacted anymore	-	3	3	6
Type of return				
Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)	22 / 47%	3 / 11%	16 / 59%	41 / 40%
Deportation	23 / 49%	5 / 17%	7 / 26%	35 / 34%
Independent	2 / 4%	21 / 72%	4 / 15%	27 / 26%
Contact with respondent				
With the help of local NGOs	-	15	20	35
Through social networks	8	13	4	25
Upon AVR referral by IOM	20	-	-	20
Local IOM database of deportees	19	-	-	19
With help of foreign-based NGOs	-	-	3	3
Respondent contacted IOM	-	1	-	1
Details AVR referrals		Not applicable		
Actually interviewed	20	-	-	20
No valid address & tel. number	2	-	4	6
AVR cancelled at last moment	-	-	4	4
Refused to participate	1	-	2	-
Did not meet sample requirements	2	-	1	3

in locating and contacting potential respondents (which could partly be explained by a reluctance to participate), and the few AVR referrals obtained from western European countries, as well as the fact that the project period included a month or two when fewer returns are arranged. Table 1 illustrates this in more detail.

Only IOM Yerevan received a fair number of referrals of assisted returnees and managed to conduct 20 interviews with them. IOM Baku did not receive a single AVR referral during the six months study period. IOM Tbilisi was informed of 11 AVRs but, for various reasons, none of them could be interviewed. Owing to the small number of referrals from the destination countries, the three implementing missions decided to locate potential respondents through other channels, such as local NGOs, social networks and the so-called snowball method.<sup>9</sup>

The means of identifying respondents were therefore very circumstantial and the inevitable outcome was that sample composition was determined mostly by factors beyond IOM's control. This explains why, for example, in Azerbaijan most respondents belonged to the category of independent returnees, whereas the Armenian sample had a relatively large share of deported returnees. Both missions resorted to databases of returnees and contacts with NGOs based on previous research efforts. In Georgia, IOM received very useful assistance from a number of NGOs that had managed to locate a fair number of people who had been assisted to return voluntarily (mostly from Germany). One of these NGOs focuses particularly on ethnic minorities in Georgia, which explains why the Georgian sample has a disproportionately large number of persons belonging to the Yezidi<sup>10</sup> community.

These divergent methods of securing the cooperation of respondents were quite cumbersome and time-consuming, further aggravated by a general reluctance among potential respondents to participate in the study. The most common reasons given were an unwillingness to recall unpleasant experiences and concern that the authorities might obtain the information and use it against them. Although IOM stressed repeatedly that the study was conducted in a way to ensure confidentiality, this did not satisfy most returnees to participate in the study. The mistrust was particularly strong in Georgia for reasons that will be dealt with in the next section.

Difficulties in identifying a sufficient number of respondents meant the interviewers had to include people who had returned before 2000. Though far from ideal, the prime consideration was to try to reach a sufficiently large sample size.

The various obstacles encountered by IOM in contacting returnees resulted in smaller samples than originally planned. Only IOM Armenia secured the participation of enough respondents (47 returnees in total), which can be explained by a generally larger caseload of returns<sup>11</sup> and a fairly large number of AVR referrals.

The three implementing missions also encountered obstacles in securing the participation of the respondents for the second interview. First of all, IOM excluded most respondents who had returned before the year 2000, as it was not considered useful to conduct evaluation interviews with persons who had returned many years before. Among the remaining 74 respondents, 11 refused to participate in the second interview, 7 respondents had gone abroad again after the first interview and 6 persons could not be contacted anymore. This resulted in a sample for the second interviews consisting of 43 persons, only 42 per cent of the total of the first interviews. This means that the results of the second interviews are less representative than the first and therefore need to be interpreted with caution.

### 3.2 MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Table 2 gives an overview of the sample in terms of sex, age, year of return and destination country. Whenever relevant, the sample of this study is compared to the overall caseload of assisted voluntary returns arranged by IOM from 1995 until September 2001 to assess whether this sample is significantly different from the particular returnee population on which IOM has information available.

Of a total of 103 respondents 58 per cent were male and 42 per cent female, which corresponds very well with the general profile of the caseload of all returnees assisted by IOM during the last seven years.<sup>12</sup> Compared to the 2001 research on irregular migration in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the gender balance of this study deviates in the case of Georgia: in 2001, there were more female than male respondents among 143 Georgian irregular migrants (56% and 44%, respectively).<sup>13</sup>

The average age differed significantly by country: in Georgia the average age was 32, in Azerbaijan 34 and in Armenia 42. The IOM's statistics on assisted returns since 1995 show a somewhat different picture: in all three countries, the majority of returnees were under 30 years of age (54% for Azerbaijan, 60% for Georgia). However, this picture is skewed because AVR statistics from the last six years include also children returning with their parents. For obvious reasons, infants and young children were not considered potential respondents for this study. The age structure of the respondents coincides to a large extent with the samples of previous IOM studies of irregular migration from the South Caucasus. For example, Armenian respondents were on average older (92% of a 2001 sample of 100 respondents were over 30 years of age) than Georgian respondents (61% of a 2001 sample of 143 respondents were older than 30).

All respondents in Armenia were of Armenian ethnicity, which is quite representative for this country.<sup>14</sup> A few respondents in the Azeri sample were of non-Azeri background,<sup>15</sup> whereas the majority of the Georgian sample were actually of non-Georgian stock (59%). This is not representative of the country as a whole,<sup>16</sup> but the large share of non-Georgian ethnic populations in the Georgian sample is mainly explained by the relative ease with which IOM was able to reach them with the help of local NGOs. This concerned in particular representatives of the Yezidi community in Tbilisi.

Of a total of 103 respondents, 40 per cent had returned with IOM assistance through the AVR programmes, 34 per cent were deported and the remaining 26 per cent had returned on their own. Most deportees were interviewed in Armenia (23 out of a total of 35), whereas most independent returnees were interviewed in Azerbaijan (21 out of a total of 27). These figures cannot be compared to the overall population of returnees from the last six years, because of the lack of complete statistics available on returning migrants in the three South Caucasian countries. Moreover, Armenia and Azerbaijan do not publish reliable statistics on nationals deported home, therefore the only complete return figures available are those collected by IOM through its various AVR programmes.

With regard to the respondents' destination country, Germany was by far the most popular destination for all three, accounting for more than 54 per cent of all returnees. The second and third most popular destination countries for the respondents were Belgium and The Netherlands, accounting together for 33 per cent of the total sample. This pattern reflects quite accurately the overall tendency of return, in the sense that Germany assists many failed asylum seekers from the South Caucasus to return home, with Belgium ranking second.<sup>17</sup>

TABLE 2  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS: SOME FIGURES

Item	Armenia (47)	Azerbaijan (29)	Georgia (27)	Total (103)
Gender				
Female	23 / 49%	12 / 41%	8 / 30%	43 / 42%
Male	24 / 51%	17 / 59%	19 / 70%	60 / 58%
Age	42	34	32	37
< 21 years	-	-	1 / 4%	1 / 1%
21 - 30 years	6 / 13%	8 / 28%	13 / 48%	27 / 26%
31 - 40 years	15 / 32%	11 / 38%	7 / 26%	33 / 32%
41 - 50 years	16 / 34%	8 / 28%	5 / 19%	29 / 28%
> 50 years	10 / 21%	2 / 7%	1 / 4%	13 / 13%
Year of return				
2002	4 / 9%	1 / 3%	1 / 4%	6 / 6%
2001	-	11 / 38%	9 / 33%	20 / 19%
2000	20 / 43%	9 / 31%	5 / 19%	34 / 33%
1999	3 / 6%	2 / 7%	3 / 11%	8 / 8%
1998	1 / 2%	5 / 17%	2 / 7%	8 / 8%
1997	10 / 21%	-	4 / 15%	14 / 14%
1996	8 / 17%	-	2 / 7%	10 / 10%
1995	1 / 2%	-	1 / 4%	2 / 2%
Destination country				
Germany	25 / 53%	14 / 48%	17 / 63%	56 / 54%
Belgium	20 / 43%	-	-	20 / 19%
The Netherlands	1 / 2%	8 / 28%	5 / 19%	14 / 14%
Greece	-	2 / 7%	1 / 4%	3 / 3%
Denmark	-	-	2 / 7%	2 / 2%
Switzerland	1 / 2%	-	1 / 4%	2 / 2%
Israel	-	2 / 7%	-	2 / 2%
Spain	-	-	1 / 4%	1 / 1%
France	-	1 / 3%	-	1 / 1%
United Kingdom	-	1 / 3%	-	1 / 1%
Sweden	-	1 / 3%	-	1 / 1%
AVR from Europe to:	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Total
2001	430	152	271	853
2000	548	136	379	1063
Deportations from Europe back to:	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	
2000	Not available	Not available	1691	
Asylum applications in Europe by citizens of:	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Total
2001	6,601	3,470	6,010	16,081
2000	6,711	3,925	3,570	14,206

Most respondents were married, varying from 78 per cent in Georgia to 59 per cent in Azerbaijan, therefore most respondents also had children, varying from 81 per cent in Georgia and Armenia to 62 per cent in Azerbaijan. The difference between these and the percentages of marital status can be explained by the fact that some respondents were divorced and had children from their previous marriage living with them.

The level of education of the respondents varied by country. A relatively large number of respondents in Armenia and Azerbaijan (43% and 59%, respectively) reported that they had finished university. The respondents in Georgia, on the other hand, usually had either secondary education or some years of vocational training, usually of a technical nature (70% of the Georgian sample).

Partly as a result of the relatively low level of education, 30 per cent of the Georgian respondents had no particular profession and did not have any working experience before they went abroad. Overall, the respondents who were employed (44% of the total sample) covered a broad range of professions with no particular over-representation of a certain profession or level of education among the respondents. A clear tendency, though, is that the majority of respondents in all three countries (56%) had been unemployed before departure, in particular in Armenia: 85 per cent had no job before they went abroad. In contrast, in Azerbaijan the unemployed accounted for only 28 per cent of the local sample. These figures are hard to compare to official statistics on unemployment, as they are usually not very reliable. The Georgian government, for example, estimated in April 2002 that the official unemployment rate was 9.6 per cent, but non-governmental sources claim that this figure is higher, without, however, being able to indicate the country's actual unemployment level.

### 3.3 CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

As a result of the obstacles and the difficulties encountered in locating respondents, the overall sample is not representative of the total population of migrants returning from western Europe to the three countries in the South Caucasus region. Therefore, the results do not provide grounds from which to draw valid conclusions for the whole population of returnees in these countries.

From most perspectives, the sample composition does not deviate significantly from the research samples on irregular migration provided by IOM in all three countries in 2001. Moreover, the sample does not diverge meaningfully from the characteristics of IOM assisted migrants returning to the three South Caucasian countries between 1995 and 2001.

## 4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### 4.1 TRAVEL ABROAD

The main reasons given for migrating were clearly linked to the poor socio-economic conditions in the country of origin and the perceived attractive opportunities of finding some kind of employment abroad and of improving their living conditions. In total, 86 per cent of all respondents cited these reasons for migrating abroad, and for most of them, they were clearly the main reasons. A much smaller number alleged human rights abuses by the authorities, while some respondents had initially gone abroad to study or to be reunited with their family.

The reasons given for choosing the country of destination depended largely on information the respondents had received from relatives and friends who were already there. However, this was less of a consideration for the Georgian respondents (only 15%), but more so for the Armenian and Azeri group (49% and 41%, respectively). The respondents from the latter two countries were largely influenced by advice and concrete support from relatives and friends in the destination countries. In Georgia, 74 per cent of the respondents said that the main reason for choosing the destination country was the positive information that circulated in their home communities about the attractive living conditions, the possibility of finding a job and the apparent ease with which asylum could be obtained. However, 43 per cent of the Armenian respondents stated that the choice of the destination country was more or less accidental and did not significantly depend on their own preferences.

Evidently, most Armenian and Azeri respondents (72% and 70%, respectively) had acquaintances in the destination country, whereas this percentage was lower for the Georgian sample (56%). In most cases these acquaintances informed the migrants of the living conditions in that particular country, and in a significant number of cases also paid for their travel expenses (e.g., 39% of the Armenian sample) and, usually during a short period directly after arrival, supported their stay abroad (64% of the Armenian respondents and 33% of the Georgian respondents).

Most of the respondents (60%, particularly regarding the Georgian sample) stated that before departure they were determined or at least interested in settling abroad permanently. Another category (21%) intended to return back home after a couple of years, if they had earned enough money to provide for their families. Some of these respondents also indicated that they had planned to return if the overall situation in their home country had improved.

Forty-six per cent of the respondents explained that it was the poor socio-economic conditions in their own country that induced them to stay abroad for an extended period. These respondents had a strong desire to get away from such conditions, either temporarily or forever. Other respondents (17%) indicated that they had always intended to return after a while, but said they had felt obliged to go abroad to improve their financial position. The remaining respondents could not mention a particular time frame and said that much depended on the conditions they would find abroad.

## 4.2 STAY ABROAD

Upon arrival in the country of destination, most respondents from Georgia and Armenia, but not Azerbaijan (80%) applied for asylum. The majority of the Azeri respondents (62%) overstayed their visas after legal entry; they all wanted to work abroad for a couple of years and return to Azerbaijan after they had earned enough money.

From the respondents' accounts, it became clear that most of them (91%) had in fact travelled with a visa and entered the country of destination legally. The Georgian respondents applied for asylum soon after their arrival (ranging from a couple of hours to two weeks). Many Armenian asylum seekers (85% of the Armenian sample) first overstayed their visa before applying for asylum.

Not surprisingly for a study on returned migrants, almost all asylum claimants participating in this study (99%) had been unsuccessful in their asylum applications. The only respondent who claimed to have acquired official status in the country of destination returned to Georgia for personal reasons (homesickness combined with family circumstances). Furthermore, eight per cent of the respondent sample withdrew their asylum claim because they grew tired of the lengthy and strenuous asylum procedure and felt a strong desire to go back home.

Almost all asylum claimants had their applications rejected within one year. A fair number among them (42% of the total sample) decided to appeal against that decision, either because they still saw a reasonable chance of a positive answer from a different authority, or simply to lengthen their stay abroad. The processing of their appeal against the first decision usually took longer, sometimes as long as two or three years. Some respondents had problems recalling the exact time span between the different stages of the asylum procedure, which makes it impossible to present average figures applicable to the whole sample.

Overall, nearly half of the total sample had found a job abroad. A large number of Azeri respondents (65%) were employed, against only 34 per cent of the Georgian respondents. They could either not find a job despite their best efforts, or they did not even consider seeking employment as they knew that an asylum seeker could not work officially.

Most respondents were employed in the construction sector (27% of the total number of employed respondents) and household work (18%). Quite a number of them held more than one job and were anxious to avoid periods without work. This appears to be particularly true for the Azeri respondents, who reported that they had all worked at least 30 hours per week and were all employed for more than half of the period spent abroad. Work for the Armenian and Georgian returnees was more irregular and sporadic and many (45% of the total group of 49 employed respondents) worked less than an average of 30 hours per week, or had problems recalling the number of hours they had actually worked. Most respondents in Armenia and Georgia (19 persons or 39% of the employed respondents in all three countries) worked during less than half of their stay abroad. Most of the employed respondents (84%) worked for a private business. For many of them (57%) the work they found was very different from what they did before they had left their home country; however, ten per cent reported doing the same kind of work.

As a logical consequence of the above findings, the majority of the Azeri returnees reported earning an average monthly salary of more than US\$ 500 (53% of the employed sample in Azerbaijan). In contrast, most Armenian respondents (86%, or 18 persons out of a total of 21) earned less than

US\$ 500 per month with most earning under US\$ 100 per month. The Georgian sample lies somewhere in between, but the number of Georgian respondents who earned money abroad (9 persons) is too small to allow any valid conclusions.

Regarding the migrants' adaptation in the destination country an interesting contrast may be noted, in particular between the accounts of the Georgian and Armenian respondents. Almost all Georgian respondents (93%) and 69 per cent of the Azeri respondents reported that they had been happy abroad and had had no problems in adapting; in contrast, 49 per cent of the Armenian respondents stated that they had encountered problems in adapting to the different circumstances. This difference cannot be explained by feelings of homesickness alone as this was generally mentioned by all respondents as a particular problem most of them (74%) had to deal with. Rather, the difference may be explained by the way the respondents managed to cope with separation from their families: half of the Armenian respondents reported a very negative effect leading to depression and stress that usually grew worse over time.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, only around 25 per cent of the Azeri and Georgian sample reported similar problems of homesickness and loneliness, which, while still significant as such, is much lower than for the Armenian sample. Comparing this to the accounts of other respondents it became clear that those who had work managed to cope with such feelings better than respondents who had no particular occupation and were basically biding their time.

Since most respondents had, in fact, requested asylum, they were unable to go home for short periods of time during their stay abroad. Only two Azeri respondents went back and forth for family reasons in Azerbaijan. Most respondents (79%) said that they had had quite regular contacts with their home community, usually by phone or mail, but, generally speaking, the respondents' financial situation limited their ability to contact their families back home.

During their stay abroad, most respondents were fairly optimistic about their future: 52 per cent of the total sample thought they would be allowed to stay in the destination country and had plans to bring their family to join them. Armenian respondents were an exception to this as they were generally less optimistic. Thus, only 28 per cent viewed their future life abroad in a positive light, with the rest more diffident and reconciled to accepting things as they came.

Other migrants (16% of the total sample) intended to return to their countries of origin if the situation back home improved or when they had earned enough money to support their families. This accords with the general idea migrants had before going abroad (see last part of Section 4.1), and it appears reasonable to conclude that they did not significantly change their idea of their future during their stay abroad. The only exception were the Armenian respondents, who were more pessimistic regarding their stay abroad, with homesickness and the failure to achieve the objectives set before departure weighing on their minds.

### 4.3 IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE COMMUNITY BACK HOME

Two indicators were used to measure the impact of migration on the home community of the respondents: money transfers from abroad, and the effect their absence had on the daily life of the family back home.

Most respondents (82%) were not able to send money home. This may be because a majority of them were asylum seekers and therefore not allowed to work, but also because many respondents who did work only earned enough money to support themselves and were unable to save any money to send home. Nineteen respondents were able to send average annual remittances of US\$ 1,530, ranging from US\$ 590 for Armenians to US\$ 2,500 for Azeris. For 63 per cent of the respondents' families, such remittances accounted for around 90 per cent of their average income, indicating their heavy reliance on the remittances from their family member abroad. However, as only 19 respondents sent money back home it is impossible to draw any general conclusions from this.

Over half of the respondents stated that their absence had neither a particularly negative nor positive impact on their families back home. Only 12 per cent of the respondents thought that their absence had a positive impact, mostly through an improvement in family finances through the remittances sent home. One-third judged their absence as having had a negative impact on their families, mostly because they were not able to send money home or because their families were worried about their fate.

#### 4.4 RETURN BACK HOME

The reasons for returning home varied considerably (see Table 3). In general, however, they were a combination of three basic factors. The deported respondents (34% of the total sample) stated that they had intended to stay abroad longer, but had no choice as they were forced to leave. For others (16%), the most important reason was the rejection of their asylum application and the resultant request by the authorities of the destination country that they leave the country. These respondents all preferred to take the opportunity to return home with the assistance from the government and IOM instead of prolonging their stay in an illegal manner or trying their luck in another country. Other important reasons were "homesickness" and feelings of loneliness (27% of all respondents), particular personal problems that the family was experiencing back home (9%), problems in adapting abroad (9%) and problems in securing resources to support their stay abroad, usually because the respondents had lost their jobs (18%).

A number of respondents (29%) had spent some time in other countries than the one they eventually returned from, but not a single respondent reported having applied for asylum in more than one country.

The average stay abroad was 22 months for the whole sample. The Armenian migrants stayed for an average of 28 months, whereas the Azeri respondents went back home after an average stay of 15 months.

Almost all Armenian and Azeri respondents (92% of the two samples) reported crossing the border into their country of origin without any particular problems, even if they were deported or had no passport but only a temporary travel document (*laissez-passer*). This was in contrast to the Georgian sample, 48 per cent of whom reported encountering problems when arriving at the border, including humiliating treatment and abusive language by some officials and extortion.

After their return home, Armenian and Azeri respondents were rarely contacted by authorities. Only on one occasion were Armenian respondents approached with the intention of extorting money from them. A quarter of the Georgian sample had also been contacted a number of times by some officials, again mainly with the intention of extorting money from them. In most cases, such harassment stopped when the officials realized that the returnees had no money at all to "share" with them.

TABLE 3  
REASONS GIVEN FOR RETURNING HOME

Reasons for Return	Armenia 47 respondents	Azerbaijan 29 respondents	Georgia 27 respondents	Total (103) 103 respondents
Deported	23	5	6	34
Homesickness, longing for own environment	2	11	8	21
Lost job and social support abroad	7	8	2	17
Asylum claim rejected and requested to leave	1	2	13	16
Situation of family back home	5	-	4	9
Adaptation problems abroad	2	2	3	7
Bad treatment and living conditions abroad	2	4	1	7
Situation in home country improved	2	-	1	3
Other (various)	1	2	3	6

Note: Several respondents gave more than one reason; therefore there are more answers than total respondents.

The Yezidi community in Tbilisi and surroundings were particularly subjected to this type of harassment, which has to be seen in the general context of harassment and discrimination of ethnic minorities, as alleged by the Yezidi respondents. This is not to say that ethnic Georgian respondents were not harassed upon arrival, but the trend revealed in this study is that ethnic minorities appeared to be especially affected.

Almost all respondents in the AVR category (40 per cent of the total sample) evaluated the return assistance offered by IOM positively, especially those who, in addition to travel home had received modest financial assistance to facilitate their reinsertion back home.

In most cases, the deportees did not report any particular problem linked to their forced return, except disappointment at the abrupt end to their stay abroad. Apparently most of the deportees, especially the Armenian respondents, did not resist the deportation, which facilitated a smooth return home. A couple of Georgian respondents reported violent treatment by Dutch policemen, but acknowledged that they had tried to resist deportation and had been detained prior to their forced return for crimes committed abroad.

More than half of the respondents described their stay abroad as either successful (48%) or very successful (10%). This evaluation was mainly based on the fact that they had been able to earn badly needed money by working abroad, which was very welcome to support their families. A few other respondents were positive about their stay abroad as this had allowed them to get to know and appreciate other societies and cultures. The respondents who assessed their stay abroad as either a failure (24%) or a complete failure (5%) mainly based this on the fact that they had not been able to realize their initial plans. This was so for rejected asylum seekers and, in particular, persons who could not find a job during their stay abroad. In fact, the rejection of their asylum claim meant that they had lost the initial investment in their departure which, for some of them, meant serious financial problems back home.

Asked whether they would do things differently if they got the chance to migrate again, 15 per cent of the total sample, almost all Georgians, said that they still thought they had done the right thing. Some of the other respondents acknowledged that they should have been more active in looking for a job (22%, mainly Armenians) or in supporting their own asylum claim (15%). Others (3%) regretted their return and said they should never have come back, but at the same time 13 per cent stated that had they known what they now know, they would never have left their home country in the first place. Finally, 19 per cent, in particular Azeri respondents, felt that they should have prepared their trip better and regretted believing the encouraging accounts they had received from friends and people smugglers before leaving.

#### 4.5 REINTEGRATION IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The ease with which the returnees were able to re-adapt to life and circumstances in their home country varied considerably. Nearly two-thirds of the Armenian sample indicated that they had few if any problems to settle back into normal life. This may be explained by the fact that part of that sample had been keen to return to Armenia because of homesickness and problems in adapting abroad. In contrast, 69 per cent of the Azeri sample and 82 per cent of the Georgian sample reported experiencing some problems or even serious problems in adapting to life back home. For some of them, these problems diminished over time, while others had still not managed to find their place in society at the time of the interview. The most common statements were:

- “After living for a while in a highly developed country it is hard to find your rhythm again in your own country where living standards are much lower”.
- “We are glad to be reunited with our families”.
- “It is good to be back home, but if I remain unemployed we will soon run out of the money I earned abroad”.
- “The situation in my home country is still the same, a very bleak future and no prospects of improvement”.
- “It is very difficult to get back to normal, because I still have to pay off old debts made to finance my departure”.

The problems faced by respondents in reintegrating in their countries of origin did not arise from their illegal stay abroad. At least not as concerned respondents in Armenia and Azerbaijan, although for four Georgian respondents this did play a role.

For just over one-third of the respondents it had been possible to improve their socio-economic position thanks to their stay abroad. In particular, 47 per cent of the Armenian sample reported slight improvements, which, however, is at odds with their previous statements of the modest earnings they had had abroad. A similar percentage stated that their stay abroad had not changed their socio-economic position

back home, while for the remaining 29 per cent the socio-economic position was worse after their return than before, mainly because they had earned no money abroad and had run into debt to finance their departure.

An unfavourable housing situation caused additional problems for several respondents. Some respondents, especially those who had gone abroad with their families, had sold their houses to finance the departure, or sold their apartments to buy smaller ones instead. The result was that the returnees were either forced to live temporarily with relatives or live with their family in very cramped circumstances. This was so for a little more than one-half of the respondents, which they felt impeded their smooth integration in their home societies.

Most respondents had been unable to improve their employment situation after their return. On the contrary, whereas 56 per cent of the total sample had previously been unemployed, this share had increased to 69 per cent after their return. The share of respondents who were in either full or part-time employment dropped from 29 per cent before departure to 17 per cent after return. Similarly, few respondents qualified their stay abroad as having increased their chances to find a job in their own country: only 13 per cent of the total sample experienced any positive impact, whereas for 79 per cent it had made no difference.

Asked whether any skills acquired abroad or personal contacts made could be of benefit regarding their chances to find a job after return, 67 per cent of the respondents reported no particular experience or contacts that could help them in their professional development after return. The main acquired skills mentioned were knowledge of foreign languages and more experience of life and general knowledge. At the same time, these skills were reported to have no particular beneficial effects on their chances to find a job. Only four Georgian respondents mentioned that they had met current business contacts during their stay abroad which had helped them to start up small business and earn additional income.

On average, the respondents reported that their health was worse after return than before departure. The health-related problems appeared particularly serious in the Armenian sample, where five returnees reported various chronic illnesses. Most respondents ascribed their deteriorated health to stress and spells of bad nerves mainly owing to the failure to improve the socio-economic position of their families.

Directly related to their failed migration experience abroad, eight per cent of the respondents experienced strained family relations, mainly spouses blaming the migrants for failing to bring in badly needed income. However, for 18 per cent family relations had actually improved, mainly owing to happiness over being reunited with their families and satisfaction with their socio-economic progress. For the remainder, their temporary stay abroad and their return back had not changed their relationship with family members in any way. Around two-thirds of the respondents reported receiving assistance from their family, especially in terms of making the returnees feel at ease and giving them more attention and affection. Financial or social assistance was less common.

The returnees' relationship with their communities (neighbours, friends and colleagues) did not change as a result of to their move abroad. This was so for the vast majority (82%), though some respondents reported that neighbours and friends appeared to be more attentive. However, some Georgian respondents did not always experience this in a positive way. Friends and neighbours often sought to borrow money from the returnees, in line with the general perception that migrants returning from western Europe had earned enough money to be able to share part of it with their acquaintances.

Some respondents (40%) partly relied on assistance from their community to facilitate their reintegration after return. In almost all cases, this assistance consisted mainly of psychological support, i.e., paying attention to returnees' stories and showing affection. Financial assistance was quite rare, since most people back home were themselves badly off and could not afford to help others.

Regarding other assistance, such as from NGOs or governmental structures, most of the respondents felt that, as no help was available, why bother looking for it? A few Georgian respondents reported claiming human right violations by the authorities to NGOs and international organizations, but most had received no support. The general tendency seemed to be for respondents to request help from family members and their communities and they were generally not keen to involve outsiders in finding solutions to their problems. However, this notwithstanding, 67 per cent did in fact acknowledge that they needed help, in particular to find a job or other means to secure a regular income.

#### 4.6 FUTURE PLANS OF RESPONDENTS

As a result of their relatively pessimistic view of the near future, half of the respondents stated their intention to go abroad again if the opportunity arose. As previously, fewer Armenians (25% of the local sample) than Azeri and Georgian respondents (81% and 67%, respectively) were prepared to go abroad again. About a fifth were undecided, with any decision to go abroad again depending on whether they could find a job in their home country within a reasonable time.

The overwhelming majority would re-emigrate to improve their socio-economic situation, but most would prefer to stay in their own countries if they were able to support their families decently. Unfortunately, many felt that this was impossible given the situation in the three South Caucasian countries, and considered migration to find a job in other countries or to seek permanent settlement abroad as the only way out.

Those Armenian respondents who were very determined about never migrating again stated that it was primarily because they did not want to feel alienated and treated as a second-class citizen in western countries again. Another important reason was that they felt more secure in their own community where they knew whom to rely on for help if needed. Such considerations were shared by only a few Azeri and Georgian respondents.

Asked which country they would like to go to, 43 per cent replied that they would like to return to the country from which they had just returned, as they felt it would be easier to settle down in an environment they were already familiar with. For 32 per cent the previous destination country was one among others they would like to return to, while the remaining 25 per cent preferred other countries, mainly because their asylum claim had been rejected at the time and would probably be rejected again. Rather, they would turn to some other country currently popular with migrants from the three South Caucasus countries, as it appeared easier to obtain some kind of official temporary status there than the traditional destination countries in western Europe.<sup>19</sup>

However, a large proportion of the respondents had no clear idea of how to realize such a renewed move, or declined to discuss their thoughts on this matter. Others indicated that they would either rely on friends for money (8%) or sell their apartments or other assets (6%). All were well aware of the impossibility of undertaking the trip or of finding a job via legal means and instead planned to collect a

substantial sum of money to finance irregular migration and entry into their preferred country of destination. There was a strong impression that the respondents did not even consider legal migration options and that they perceived illegal ways as the only option available to them.

#### **4.7 RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION INTERVIEWS – INTERVENING CHANGES**

The three implementing missions conducted a second interview with the same respondents on average six weeks after the first interview. For reasons outlined in Section 3.1, there were far fewer second interviews than originally scheduled, which means that the total sample of 43 evaluation interviews is insufficient to draw valid conclusions on intervening changes affecting the returnees reintegration.

Though for most respondents the adaptation process had not become more difficult than reported during the first interview, very few respondents had managed to actually improve their socio-economic position in the few weeks between the first and second interviews. Lack of work and of a regular income was the major difficulty encountered in all three countries alike, and the capital the respondents had been able to accumulate abroad was quickly running out, putting them under additional psychological stress. Armenian returnees and their health appeared to be most affected.

The general situation prevailing at the time of the first interviews regarding family relations had not changed much either. For some respondents the improvement noted at the time continued, while for others the difficulties linked to lack of money and prospects were increasingly straining their relations.

Therefore, those respondents who had participated in the evaluation interviews were still as determined to move abroad again to find a job and improve their living conditions as soon as the possibility arose. They still preferred those countries of destination from which they had returned.

#### **4.8 DIFFERENCES IN REINTEGRATION ACCORDING TO CATEGORY OF RETURN: EXAMPLE FROM ARMENIA**

The Armenian sample included sufficient examples of both categories of returns – returnees who returned voluntarily (AVRs), and those who had been deported (22 and 23 persons, respectively) to facilitate a comparison between the two groups and to investigate the differences in the sustainability of their return. However, it has to be borne in mind that this comparison is based on statements of only 45 persons and, therefore, subject to biased results. It cannot be construed as being generally valid for Armenia, nor for Azerbaijan or Georgia.

The only differences between the statements of AVRs and deported returnees concerned the evaluation of their returns and their decision to either stay in Armenia or move abroad again. Most deported returnees (61%) were very keen on going abroad again, whereas only 39 per cent of the AVR respondents would migrate again if they had the opportunity. Similarly, AVR respondents evaluated return more positively; 55 per cent of them referred to their return in positive terms, whereas 44 per cent of deported respondents were negative. A clear difference between the two categories was that AVR respondents had had unrealistic expectations about their chances of settling in the country of

destination before migrating, while deported returnees had had fewer illusions about their chances of obtaining a legal residence permit abroad. When denied the chance to remain abroad, AVR returnees were usually quite disappointed and determined not to attempt to migrate again after their return. In contrast, deported returnees were usually more persistent and keen on trying to re-emigrate.

Regarding other aspects, such as the profile of the respondents, their experiences abroad and the obstacles they encountered in reintegrating, there were no significant differences between AVRs and deported migrants. Unfortunately, the samples in Azerbaijan and Georgia do not allow a similar comparison between the various categories of return.

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the objectives of this study, similar to the survey on returning migrants, was to assess the readmission and reintegration policies of the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in regard to their own citizens. This issue has been placed at the forefront of discussions held in the framework of the Cluster process between the three South Caucasian and five western European countries. The destination countries in western Europe are interested to conclude bilateral readmission agreements with the South Caucasian countries in order to regulate the return of rejected asylum seekers and illegal migrants from these three countries. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have all taken up this issue and indicated that they are ready to discuss such agreements with their west European counterparts.

Armenia has been approached by a number of European governments (e.g., Benelux, Latvia, Poland, Switzerland and Ukraine) to conclude bilateral readmission agreements. At the time of the survey, the Armenian government was still considering the draft agreements with these host countries. The Armenian administration also acknowledged that government policy needed to be further developed to assist returning migrants with reintegration, and was establishing the necessary mechanisms and structures.

At the time of the survey, the governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia were discussing readmission agreements with several countries, including the Benelux and Switzerland. There was a growing recognition by these governments that readmission agreements could provide a useful, consensual framework to facilitate return to the mutual benefit of both governments and migrants, particularly (from the perspective of South Caucasus region) if these agreements also provided for reintegration assistance.

At the third consultative meeting of the Cluster process in June 2002 in Tbilisi, Georgia, the issue of readmission agreements appeared to have made considerable headway. It seems that the countries of origin will soon move forward on bilateral readmission agreements with a number of western European destination countries, marking a step forward in facilitating a safe and dignified return for migrants to their home countries.

### 5.1 INSIGHTS GAINED

This study produced a number of interesting insights which we would like to summarize here. It is clear that most respondents went abroad to improve their living standards and to support their families back home. This accords with the results of research into irregular migration recently conducted by the three IOM missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.<sup>20</sup> The sample of this study consisted of two different types of migrants: people who wanted to remain abroad permanently, and migrants who wanted to

work abroad and come back after a couple of years. Almost all of them had tried to use the asylum procedure to obtain at least a temporary, residence permit abroad. Aside from one case, they had all failed in this attempt. The rejection of the asylum claim and the subsequent request to leave, or their enforced return, were compelling reasons for many to actually return home. Other important reasons were homesickness and a feeling of not fitting in abroad or, especially for the category of independent returnees, the actual realization of the goals they had set before departure.

## 5.2 REINTEGRATION: MAIN FACTORS DETERMINING THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF REINTEGRATION

The migration experience and whether or not they had been able to achieve some of the objectives set before going abroad played an important role on how the returnees viewed their return and reintegration back home. This study yielded polarized results, as about half of the respondents qualified their stay abroad as a success, and the rest as a failure. Positive influences were the ability to have earned and saved some money to be used back home while, on the negative side, the rejection of their asylum claim and the obligation to leave the country weighed heavily on their state of mind.

Respondents who felt their stay abroad had been successful usually had fewer problems in readapting to the situation back home, even though some experienced difficulties later on owing to lack of work and the dwindling of the money they had earned abroad. Others were negative from the very first moment of entering their home country, and their feeling was usually exacerbated by the prevailing poor socio-economic conditions. For some, this was a particular shock after having spent some time in a western country with better living conditions.

In terms of employment opportunities in their home countries, most respondents were worse off than before departure. For many, their stay abroad had not been particularly fruitful in terms of newly acquired professional skills or helpful personal contacts. Respondents reported that their health had deteriorated, mainly because of the failure of the stay abroad. The fact that they had been unable to earn any money to bring home with them caused additional stress for some respondents, as they could not repay debts incurred to finance their departure. This also caused strained relations with family members and with their communities.

In line with these results, about half of the respondents were willing to go abroad again if they had the opportunity to do so. Seven people from Azerbaijan and Georgia did in fact leave after the first interview and could therefore not be contacted again for the second interview. The main reason for re-migrating was the absence of any improvement in the respondents' socio-economic situation and of any economic prospects in their home countries. However, most respondents also emphasized that they would prefer to stay in their own country if they could improve their living conditions there.

The second interview conducted by IOM to monitor reintegration efforts showed a slightly more negative and pessimistic outlook. For most of the migrants the situation had hardly improved and the difficulty of finding a job persisted. Some migrants who had earlier been more positive regarding their return and reintegration had become less so. Some respondents had developed health problems owing to the stress, and family relations remained strained as their financial problems remained unsolved. Most respondents were still quite determined to go abroad again, if their situation did not improve soon.

Because of the small and less well balanced sample, this study does not yield conclusions that could be considered valid for the whole population of returnees to the South Caucasus region. However, it is useful to the extent that it highlighted the kind of problems confronting migrants who return from western Europe. The overriding factor determining the success or failure of the returnees' reintegration back home appears to be their ability to secure a regular income after return. Respondents who had returned without any capital and were unable to find a job in their own communities reported a number of financial, social and psychological problems that made them feel quite strongly about going abroad again. Other respondents, who had earned some money abroad, were happy to be reunited with their families in their own communities. Despite the obstacles they encountered in making ends meet, they felt that it was important that they stay in their own communities and were willing to make an effort to reintegrate. Finally, the results of this study show that the reintegration of returning migrants can be very problematic. But it also shows that, with the right support, their reintegration can be facilitated and encouraged so that returnees are able to cope successfully with the many problems they encounter upon return.

### 5.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. The outcome of any return strategy has to be evaluated against the reasons driving irregular migration: the economic differentials between the countries of origin (usually developing countries) and countries of destination (most often highly developed countries). Such differentials work as a powerful pull factor in a world where international communication and travel have become easier and available to a broad public.
2. The reintegration difficulties experienced by the respondents in this study, in particular the difficulty of finding a job, suggest that activities such as, e.g., skills training preceding return, and assistance with temporary accommodation, counselling and medical assistance on return, together with some post-return training and assistance with small-enterprise development could be useful, as this would encourage migrants to return and facilitate their reintegration back home.
3. It is recommended that the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia undertake a labour-market assessment in their countries in order to recognize shortages and/or establish a better match regarding the returnees' professional background and skills. This would also enable returnees to evaluate and improve their own skills in relation to the conditions and demands of the local labour market. Ideally, this assessment of both local conditions and the suitable skills of returning migrants should be made before they return to their home countries.
4. Countries of destination and of origin should identify and create a joint approach to migration management. This recommendation is based on the fact that countries of destination are predominantly focused on return, whereas countries of origin tend to stress official labour migration schemes for their citizens in the host countries or, alternatively, the reintegration of returnees at home. The cycle of migration is set to continue until return and reintegration are acknowledged as a mutually dependent process, requiring multilateral involvement if it is to be successfully addressed.

5. The dialogue begun in the “Cluster process” on return and reintegration of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants in the home country should be further developed within a framework of mutual cooperation, where the need for readmission agreements is balanced with the necessary and appropriate migration management policies, which look into the push and pull factors underlying migration dynamics to the destination countries.
6. There is an evident need for more research and monitoring to evaluate in greater detail the fundamental factors which contribute to the long-term sustainability of return and the successful reintegration of returning migrants in their home countries.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH RETURNEES

*For the research team to introduce yourselves:*

- *“My name is... and I am coming on behalf of IOM (Baku, Tbilisi, Yerevan) in order to assess with you how you have returned and reintegrated back home and what help you have received in that process.*
- *This interview and the answers you provide will be treated in an absolutely confidential manner and will not be passed to any third party.*
- *The interview will last about 45 minutes.*
- *We will contact you again at a later stage to evaluate with you the success of your settlement back home by means of a second, shorter interview.”*

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FILE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORY OF RETURN:**

AVR

DEPORTED

INDEPENDENT

OTHER, \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>
----------------------------

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  Female  Male

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW WITH RETURNEES

### PART I – PERSONAL DATA

1. **Date of birth** (*day, month, year*): \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_
2. **Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Marital status:**
  - 3.1 Single
  - 3.2 Married
  - 3.3 Divorced
  - 3.4 Separated
  - 3.5 Widow(er)
4. **Do you have children:**
  - 4.1 No
  - 4.2 Yes → **AGE**
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
    4. \_\_\_\_\_
    5. \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Education** (*highest level completed*):
  - 5.1 Secondary school not completed
  - 5.2 Secondary school completed
  - 5.3 Vocational training / technical institute
  - 5.4 University
  - 5.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)
6. **Profession** (*main occupation after education*): \_\_\_\_\_

### PART II – TRAVEL ABROAD

7. **Why did you decide to migrate abroad?**
8. **When did you leave your country of origin** (*year and month*)? \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Which was your country of destination?** \_\_\_\_\_
10. **Why did you choose that country?**
11. **Did you have acquaintances who lived in that country?**
  - 11.1 Yes, namely: \_\_\_\_\_ (*relation to respondent*)
  - 11.2 No → *Go to question 13*
  - 11.3 Don't know → *Go to question 13*

12. **What role did these acquaintances play in your decision and arrangements to travel to that country?**

- 12.1 Helped financially to travel there
- 12.2 Informed me about the opportunities to settle there
- 12.3 Helped to obtain travel documents
- 12.4 Supported the stay abroad
- 12.5 No particular role
- 12.6 Don't know
- 12.7 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

13. **How long did you originally intend to stay in the country of destination?**

14. **In case of a specific answer to question 13, why did you intend to stay for that period of time?**

**PART III – STAY ABROAD**

15. **What status did you have abroad?** (*please note that more than one answer is possible*)

15.1 Asylum seeker → **What happened with that application?**

15.11 **Applied on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

15.12 **Refused on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

15.13 **Appealed on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

15.14 **Appeal denied on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

15.15 **Withdrawn on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

↓

15.2 I overstayed my visa → **Visa expired on:** \_\_\_\_\_ (*date*)

15.3 Undocumented ever since first entry

15.4 Don't know

15.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

16. **Did you have a job abroad?**

16.1 Yes, full time

16.2 Yes, part time

16.3 Yes, on-and-off/irregular

16.4 No, not at all → *Go to question 19*

*Specify as to:*

16.5 **What kind of job did you have?** \_\_\_\_\_

16.6 **How many hours per week did you work?** \_\_\_\_\_

16.7 **Who was the employer?** \_\_\_\_\_

16.8 **Did you have a legal work permit?**

16.8.1 Yes

16.8.2 No

16.9 **How many months during the period abroad did you have a job:**  
\_\_\_\_\_ months = \_\_\_\_\_ % of total stay abroad (see q. 30)

17. **If yes to question 16, was this type of work the same as you had been doing in your country of origin?**

17.1 Yes, the same

17.2 Partly the same

17.3 No, very different

17.4 Not applicable

17.5 Don't know

18. **If yes to question 16, what was the average monthly salary that you earned abroad (with regard to your whole period of your stay abroad, and not just to the periods when you worked)? Note: use exchange rate at time of payment!**

\_\_\_\_\_ (local currency) = \_\_\_\_\_ USD

19. **Did you have any particular contacts with government authorities in the destination country related to your status?**

19.1 Yes

19.2 No → *Go to question 21*

19.3 Don't know → *Go to question 21*

19.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify what contacts and with whom:

20. **Have these contacts played any role in your decision to return to your home country?**

20.1 Yes

20.2 No

20.3 Don't know

20.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

21. **How did you manage to adapt in the country of destination?**

21.1 Very well

21.2 Rather well

21.3 Not so well

21.4 Not at all

21.5 Don't know

Specify:

**22. Have you spent any time in another country than the one you have just returned from?**

- 22.1 Yes → 22.11 How many months? \_\_\_\_\_  
22.12 Which country? \_\_\_\_\_  
22.2 No  
22.3 Don't know  
22.4 Other

Specify:

**23. Did you miss your family, friends and acquaintances?**

- 23.1 Yes, a lot  
23.2 Yes, regularly  
23.3 Yes, but only sometimes  
23.4 No → *Go to question 25*  
23.5 Don't know → *Go to question 25*

Specify:

**24. If yes on question 23, how did it affect your everyday dealings during the time that you were abroad?**

Specify:

**25. Did you stay in touch with your home community?**

- 25.1 Yes, regularly  
25.2 Yes, sometimes  
25.3 Rarely  
25.4 Not at all  
25.5 Don't know  
25.6 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify how and why:

**26. Did you travel home for a short period of time during the period that you stayed abroad?**

- 26.1 Yes  
26.2 No  
26.3 Don't know  
26.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the reason:

**27. How did you portray your future when you were still residing in that destination country?**

**PART IV – IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BACK HOME  
(covering the period when the respondent was abroad)**

28. Were you able to send money home when you stayed abroad?

- 28.1 Yes
- 28.2 No → Go to question 31
- 28.3 Don't know → Go to question 31
- 28.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

29. How much money, on average, were you able to send home per year? (Note: use exchange rate at time of payment!)

\_\_\_\_\_ (local currency) = \_\_\_\_\_ USD

30. Was this remittance important for your family/friends/community?

- 30.1 Very important
  - 30.2 Rather important
  - 30.3 Not so important
  - 30.4 No importance at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ % of the average annual income of your family

Specify:

31. What kind of impact did your absence have on family plans and household arrangements? (such as the role of the breadwinner, planned family extension, care for children and elderly, etc.)?

- 31.1 Very positive impact
- 31.2 Rather positive impact
- 31.3 No impact whatsoever
- 31.4 Rather negative impact
- 31.5 Very negative impact
- 31.6 Don't know

Specify:

**PART V – RETURN FROM ABROAD AND FIRST EXPERIENCES BACK HOME**

32. Why did you decide to return to your country of origin?

33. When did you return? \_\_\_\_\_ (month and year)

34. How long have you stayed abroad? \_\_\_\_\_ months

35. Please describe your experiences with border patrol authorities when you entered your home country upon return (in terms of admission into the country, possible problems with travel documents such as laissez-passeurs, questions asked):

36. **Has there been any contact between you and government officials after your return to your home country?**

- 36.1 Yes
- 36.2 No
- 36.3 Don't know
- 36.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

- 36.5 Which officials? \_\_\_\_\_
- 36.6 For what purpose was a contact established? \_\_\_\_\_
- 36.7 What was the outcome? \_\_\_\_\_

37. **FOR AVR ONLY: how do you evaluate the assistance that you received from IOM in returning home?**

- 37.1 Very positively
- 37.2 Positively
- 37.3 Neutrally
- 37.4 Negatively
- 37.5 Very negatively

Specify:

38. **FOR AVR ONLY: Did you receive from IOM any financial assistance before departure?**  
(Note: use exchange rate at time of payment)

- 38.1 Yes → How much? \_\_\_\_\_ USD
- 38.2 No → Go to question 41
- 38.3 Don't know → Go to question 41
- 38.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

39. **FOR AVR ONLY: Has this amount of money been of any help for you in settling back home?**

- 39.1 A lot
- 39.2 To a certain extent
- 39.3 Little help
- 39.4 Not at all
- 39.5 Don't know
- 39.6 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

40. **FOR DEPORTEES ONLY: please describe the deportation process in full detail.**

- 40.1 Reason of detention \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 40.2 Treatment by police \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

40.3 Events during deportation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

40.4 Events upon arrival \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**41. After all, do you think that your stay abroad has been successful or a failure?**

- 41.1 Very successful
- 41.2 Successful
- 41.3 Neither success nor failure
- 41.4 A failure
- 41.5 An absolute failure

Specify why:

**42. Looking back now, what would you like to have done differently?**

**PART VI – IMPACT OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION**

**43. ADAPTATION: Have you been able to get back to normal, everyday life after your return to your country of origin?**

- 43.1 Yes, no problem
- 43.2 Yes, but only minor problems
- 43.3 No, I experience some problems
- 43.4 No, I am faced with insurmountable problems
- 43.5 Don't know

Specify the problems (*focus on both positive and negative experiences; where does respondent experience major problems*):

**44. Do you experience negative repercussions in your home country because of the fact that you stayed abroad on an irregular basis (for example with regard to contacts with employers, government officials, housing authorities, others)?**

- 44.1 Yes
- 44.2 No
- 44.3 Don't know
- 44.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**45. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION: How would you describe your socio-economic situation before you migrated abroad and after your return?**

	BEFORE MIGRATION	AFTER RETURN
45.1	Very good	
45.2	Good	
45.3	Reasonable	
45.4	Bad	
45.5	Very bad	

Specify the difference:

**46. Have you been able to improve your and your family's socio-economic position because of your stay abroad?**

- 46.1 Yes, a lot
- 46.2 Yes, a bit
- 46.3 No, it has remained the same
- 46.4 No, it became worse
- 46.5 No, it became much worse
- 46.6 Don't know

Specify how:

**47. HOUSING: is your current accommodation meeting the needs of you and your family?**

- 47.1 Yes, very well
- 47.2 Yes, rather well
- 47.3 No
- 47.4 Not at all
- 47.5 Don't know

Specify:

**48. EMPLOYMENT: please specify your employment situation before migration and since returning to your home country.**

	BEFORE MIGRATION	AFTER RETURN
48.1	Employed full-time	
48.2	Employed part-time	
48.3	Self-employed	
48.4	Irregular jobs	
48.5	Unemployed	

Specify the type of employment:

**49. In all, what is the effect of your stay abroad on your chances on the job market in your country of origin?**

- 49.1 The stay abroad has helped a lot
- 49.2 The stay abroad has helped a bit
- 49.3 No effect
- 49.4 The stay abroad has damaged my chances
- 49.5 The stay abroad has very much damaged my chances
- 49.6 Don't know

Specify:

50. **Have you acquired any specific professional or technical skills while you were abroad, which help you now in finding a job in your own country?**

- 50.1 Yes, a lot
- 50.2 Yes, a few
- 50.3 No
- 50.4 Don't know
- 50.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify what skills and their effect:

51. **During your stay abroad have you made any professional or personal contacts that are useful for the development of your professional career back home?**

- 51.1 Yes, a lot
- 51.2 Yes, a few
- 51.3 No
- 51.4 Don't know
- 51.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify what contacts and their usefulness:

52. **HEALTH: please provide more information on your health as it was before migration and as it is now since returning to your home country.**

	BEFORE MIGRATION	AFTER RETURN
52.1	Very good	
52.2	Good	
52.3	Reasonable/few complaints	
52.4	Regular complaints	
52.5	Chronically ill	

Specify:

53. **FAMILY: Has your stay abroad and your return made any changes to the relationship with your family?**

- 53.1 Yes
- 53.2 No
- 53.3 Don't know
- 53.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**54. Has your family assisted you in reintegrating?**

- 54.1 Yes
- 54.2 No
- 54.3 Don't know
- 54.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help and its importance:

- 54.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_
- 54.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_
- 54.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_
- 54.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_
- 54.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**55. COMMUNITY: How is your relationship to the community that you are part of (friends, acquaintances, neighbours, colleagues) since your return?**

- 55.1 Better than before
- 55.2 The same
- 55.3 Worse than before
- 55.4 Don't know
- 55.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**56. Has your community assisted you in reintegrating?**

- 56.1 Yes
- 56.2 No → *Go to question 57*
- 56.3 Don't know → *Go to question 57*
- 56.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help and its importance:

- 56.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_
- 56.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_
- 56.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_
- 56.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_
- 56.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**57. ASSISTANCE: Have you asked for help from anybody else in reintegrating into society (government, local NGOs, international organizations, other)?**

- 57.1 Yes
- 57.2 No → *Go to question 58*
- 57.3 Don't know → *Go to question 58*
- 57.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help:

- 57.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_
- 57.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_
- 57.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_
- 57.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_
- 57.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify from whom:

**58. Overall, do you feel you need(ed) help in reintegrating in your country of origin?**

- 58.1 Yes
- 58.2 No
- 58.3 Don't know
- 58.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the reason and what kind of help:

## **PART VII – FUTURE PLANS**

**59. At this point in time, how do you evaluate your return to your country of origin?**

- 59.1 Very positively
- 59.2 Positively
- 59.3 Neutrally
- 59.4 Negatively
- 59.5 Very negatively
- 59.6 Don't know
- 59.7 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**60. Do you think there are enough opportunities for you here to sustain yourself and your family?**

- 60.1 Yes
- 60.2 Maybe
- 60.3 No
- 60.4 Don't know
- 60.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**NOTE:** *INFORM THE RESPONDENTS ONCE AGAIN THAT THE ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY.*

**61. Do you consider going abroad again if you would get the opportunity?**

- 61.1 Yes, definitely
- 61.2 Yes, maybe / it depends
- 61.3 No → *Finish the interview*
- 61.4 Don't know → *Finish the interview*
- 61.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**62. What would be the most important reasons for making such a decision?**

**63. Which countries of destination would you favour most? (name in order of preference)**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

- 63.6 No special preference
- 63.7 Don't know
- 63.8 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**64. How do you think you could realize these plans?**

Specify:

For the research team:

*Thank the respondent for her/his time and cooperation, and indicate that you wish to come back in about 4 to 6 weeks time to have another meeting with the purpose of assessing the progress made in the reintegration process of that respondent.*

**Is the respondent willing to be interviewed again for evaluation purposes?**

- Yes
- No

**Tentative date and hour for next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EVALUATION INTERVIEW WITH RETURNEES**

*For the research team to introduce yourselves:*

- *“This interview is meant as a follow-up to the first interview we had with you a number of weeks ago. The purpose of this interview is to assess with you whether there have been any changes in your situation since the first interview.*
- *The information that you will convey to IOM will be treated in an absolutely confidential manner and will not be passed to any third party.*
- *This interview will last about 20 minutes.”*

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**FILE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORY OF RETURN:**             AVR  
    DEPORTED  
    INDEPENDENT  
    OTHER, \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  Female     Male

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION INTERVIEW WITH RETURNEES

### PART I – IMPACT OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION: DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE FIRST INTERVIEW

1. **ADAPTATION:** Compared to the time we had the first interview with you, is there any difference for you in getting back to normal, everyday life?

		FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
1.1	No problem		
1.2	Only minor problems		
1.3	Some problems		
1.4	Insurmountable problems		
1.5	Don't know		
1.6	Other:		

Specify the changes (*focus on both positive and negative experiences*):

2. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION:** How would you describe your socio-economic situation at the moment of the first interview and right now?

		FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
2.1	Very good		
2.2	Good		
2.3	Reasonable		
2.4	Bad		
2.5	Very bad		
2.6	Don't know		

Specify the changes:

3. **Have you been able to improve your and your family's socio-economic position since the time of the first interview?**

- 3.1 Yes, a lot
- 3.2 Yes, a bit
- 3.3 No, it has remained the same
- 3.4 No, it became worse
- 3.5 No, it became much worse
- 3.6 Don't know
- 3.7 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify how and why:

4. **EMPLOYMENT: please specify your employment situation during the time of the first interview and right now.**

		FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
4.1	Employed full-time		
4.2	Employed part-time		
4.3	Self-employed		
4.4	Irregular jobs		
4.5	Unemployed		
		↳ Go to question 6	
4.6	Other:		

Specify the type of employment and the changes:

5. **In case you are employed, is the job you have now satisfying the needs of you and your family?**

- 5.1 Yes, very well
- 5.2 Yes, rather well
- 5.3 I barely manage to meet our needs
- 5.4 No, it's impossible to meet our needs
- 5.5 Don't know
- 5.6 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

5.7 Current average monthly salary: \_\_\_\_\_ local currency = \_\_\_\_\_ USD  
*(Note: use exchange rate of the day this interview was conducted)*

Specify how:

6. **Are you looking for employment or another job at the moment?**

- 6.1 Yes, actively
- 6.2 Yes, but not actively
- 6.3 No → Go to question 8
- 6.4 Don't know
- 6.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify motivations (why yes, why no):

7. **What are your experiences in looking for a job?**

8. **HEALTH:** please provide more information on your health as it was during the time of the first interview and as it is now.

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
8.1	Very good	
8.2	Good	
8.3	Reasonable/few complaints	
8.4	Regular complaints	
8.5	Chronically ill	
8.6	Don't know	
8.7	Other:	

Specify the changes:

9. **FAMILY:** With regard to your return from abroad, has there been any change in the relationship with your family since the time of the first interview?

- 9.1 Yes
- 9.2 No
- 9.3 Don't know
- 9.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the changes:

10. With regard to your return from abroad, has your family assisted you in adapting and reintegrating since the time of the first interview?

- 10.1 Yes → *Go to question 10.11*
- 10.2 No → *Go to question 12*
- 10.3 Don't know → *Go to question 12*
- 10.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help:

- 10.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify any possible changes:

**11. Can you evaluate the importance of this help for you?**

- 11.1 Very important
- 11.2 Important
- 11.3 Neither important nor unimportant
- 11.4 Not important
- 11.5 Very unimportant
- 11.6 Don't know
- 11.7 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**12. COMMUNITY: With regard to your return from abroad, has there been any change in your relationship to the community that you are part of (*friends, acquaintances, neighbours, colleagues*) since the time of the first interview?**

- 12.1 Yes, better than before
- 12.2 No, the same
- 12.3 Yes, worse than before
- 12.4 Don't know
- 12.5 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify:

**13. Has your community assisted you in adapting and reintegrating since the time of the first interview?**

- 13.1 Yes
- 13.2 No → *Go to question 15*
- 13.3 Don't know → *Go to question 15*
- 13.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help:

- 13.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_
- 13.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Can you evaluate the importance of this help for you?**

- 14.1 Very important
- 14.2 Important
- 14.3 Neither important nor unimportant
- 14.4 Not important
- 14.5 Very unimportant
- 14.6 Don't know
- 14.7 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

15. **Have you had any contacts with government officials of your own country since the time of the first interview?**

15.1. Yes

↓

15.11 Which government officials? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15.12 For what purpose was a contact established? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15.13 What was the outcome? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15.2 No

15.3 Don't know

15.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

16. **ASSISTANCE: Have you asked for help from anybody else in reintegrating into society (government, local NGOs, international organizations, other) since the time of the first interview?**

16.1 Yes → Go to question 16.11

16.2 No

16.3 Don't know

16.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the kind of help:

16.11 Psychological, \_\_\_\_\_

16.12 Social, \_\_\_\_\_

16.13 Financial, \_\_\_\_\_

16.14 Health, \_\_\_\_\_

16.15 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify from whom:

17. **Compared to the first interview, do you feel you need help in reintegrating in your country of origin?**

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
17.1	Yes	
17.2	No	
17.3	Don't know	
17.4	Other:	

17.5 Please specify the changes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17.6 Please specify your motivations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17.7 What kind of help would you need most? \_\_\_\_\_

**PART II – CURRENT JUDGEMENTS IN RELATION TO FUTURE PLANS**

18. How do you evaluate your return to your country of origin right now, as compared to the time of the first interview?

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
18.1	Very positively	
18.2	Positively	
18.3	Neutrally	
18.4	Negatively	
18.5	Very negatively	
18.6	Don't know	
18.7	Other:	

Specify:

19. At this point in time, do you think there are enough opportunities for you in your own country to sustain yourself and your family, in comparison with the time of the first interview?

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
19.1	Yes	
19.2	Maybe	
19.3	No	
19.4	Don't know	
19.5	Other:	

Specify:

**NOTE:** *INFORM THE RESPONDENT ONCE AGAIN THAT THE ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY.*

20. At this point in time, do you consider going abroad again if you would get the opportunity?

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
20.1	Yes, definitely	
20.2	Maybe / it depends	
20.3	No	
		L> Go to question 21 and then finish the interview
20.4	Don't know	
		L> Finish interview
20.5	Other:	

Specify:

21. What would now be the most important reasons for making such a decision?

22. Which countries of destination would you favour most? (name in order of preference)

	FIRST INTERVIEW	SECOND INTERVIEW
22.1		
22.2		
22.3		
22.4		
22.5		
17.1	No special preference	
17.2	Don't know	
17.3	Other:	

Specify:

23. Compared to the time of the first interview, is there any change in your ideas how to realize these plans?

- 23.1 Yes
- 23.2 No
- 23.3 Don't know
- 23.4 Other, \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the changes:

***Only for the IOM coordinator:***

<b>1.</b>	<b>GENERAL IMPRESSION / SUMMARY OF SUCCESS REINTEGRATION</b>
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<b>2.</b>	<b>POTENTIAL OF CANDIDATE TO PARTICIPATE IN REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME</b>
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## Pre-return Note

### IOM Research Study on the Return and Reintegration of Migrants in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) presents its compliments to you and wishes to address the following:

We would like to ask you if you would work with us to help improve return and reintegration for persons from the South Caucasus in the future. Our colleagues in Georgia/Azerbaijan/Armenia would like to interview you several weeks after your return to see how you are doing. This interview will help us determine what measures we should take to enable successful return and reintegration in the future.

So that our colleagues may contact you when you are home, we need your contact address and a telephone number if you would like to take part in this research. We assure you that your personal details will be kept strictly confidential and will NOT be given to anyone else for ANY other purpose

Please fill out the attached form and give it back to the person who gave it to you [NGO, etc.], who will fax it to IOM Bonn/IOM Brussels/IOM The Hague.

Your address and phone number will be forwarded to IOM Tbilisi/Baku/Yerevan after your departure from Germany/Belgium/the Netherlands/....

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

#### Contact addresses for your information:

IOM Bonn/Brussels/The Hague/...

IOM Baku  
43-a, Boyuk Qala str  
Baku  
(+994-12) 97 04 32

IOM Tbilisi  
41 Gogebashvili Street  
Mtatsminda District  
Tbilisi 380008  
Tel: (995 32) 29 38 94

IOM Yerevan  
UN House  
14 K. Liebknecht Str.  
Yerevan 375010  
(374)1/585.692

## STUDY ON THE RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS FROM THE SOUTH CAUCASUS FROM WESTERN EUROPE

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### Guidelines for the interviewers and local IOM coordinators

#### 1. Practical circumstances

Agree with the respondent to meet in a location of her/his own preference, so as to make him/her more comfortable and increase the chance of cooperation.

Offer to pay travel costs of the respondent in case you meet somewhere else than in his/her own house and the respondent has made costs in travelling to that location.

Conduct as much as possible the interview with a team of two interviewers, unless the respondent would object. This will allow one person to write down the information, while the other can ask the questions, keep eye-contact with the respondent, and make sure that there are no unwanted breaks during the interview. The person not writing should have a possibility afterwards to make his or her comments (in writing) on the interview.

#### 2. Before the interview

Inform the respondents in a few lines what the basic aim is of the study that IOM implements (see project document sent to you before). Use ordinary words to explain this and make sure the respondent has understood your input by asking whether (s)he has any questions.

Explain that IOM would like to interview the respondent for a second time for purposes of evaluating the reintegration process, about 6 weeks after the in-depth interview.

State very clearly and several times before and during the interview that the interview is confidential and that the answers of the respondent will not be shared with any third party. Mention also that in the final report of the study IOM will make absolutely sure not to write down any kind of information by which a respondent could become recognizable for outsiders.

#### 3. Front page and file number

Make sure you fill in the front page (including contact information) as much as possible before the interview.

To reinforce the confidential nature of the interview, keep the front page separate from the actual questionnaire. If possible leave it in your folder or bag, but do not obviously hide the front page from the respondent – that is likely to make him/her MORE nervous rather than less.

*Use a separate file number for each respondent. The proposal is to do it according to the order of interviewing respondents, followed by the abbreviation of the country in which the interview takes place, as follows:*

- 01/ARM = the first interview conducted by IOM Yerevan;
- 02/AZB = the second interview conducted by IOM Baku;
- 03/GEO = the third interview conducted by IOM Tbilisi, etc.

The file number itself is not so important, the consistency of its application is in all three countries in which the study is implemented. Make sure that the local IOM coordinators are in charge of the usage of the filing system. They should make a separate document specifying the composition of the sample using the following variables:

File number	Name <sup>21</sup>	Category of return <sup>22</sup>	Interview	Comments
01/GEO	Niko Kartvelishvili	AVR (Belgium)	01.11.01	
02/GEO	Guram Somekhisvhili	DEP (Netherlands)	02.11.01	
03/GEO	Nino Dzneladze	IND (Germany)	03.11.01	
04/GEO	Eka Dvali	OTH (Switzerland)	04.11.01	

As soon as you know that an interview is going to take place, assign a file number to each respondent and inform the interviewers what number they have to use.

For consistent application of this system, as in general of the way the interviews will be conducted, make sure that you do not employ more than 2 interviewers, who will be doing together ALL interviews for this study.<sup>23</sup>

Write this file number on each page of the questionnaire (left bottom) so as to make sure that the questionnaires will not be mixed up. Do so before the interview.

#### 4. During the interview

In some cases a question consists actually of several parts. For example question 18: first ask the respondent “*What particular contacts, if any, did you have with government authorities in the destination country related to your status?*”? After the answer of the respondent ask the second part of the question.

Ask the questions in exactly the same way as they have been written down in the original English version, taking use of idioms into account. Make sure the translation of the questionnaire into your local language is of good quality.

Guidelines or suggestions for the interviewers have been written down in the questionnaire in *italics*. Don’t mention these notes to the respondents at first, but wait until (s)he needs prompting or clarification on the question or leaves out information that we want to get from him/her. Be sure to phrase follow-up questions (probes) neutrally, so you do not influence the answer. For instance, if a respondent indicates that being deported had no negative effect on his/her reintegration. Do NOT say: “Are you sure that being treated like a criminal has not negatively influenced you?” If his/her initial response was unclear, you might follow up with a neutrally worded question such as: “Can you explain this to me a little more clearly?” – the wording will depend on the question and the situation. You will have to be flexible, and think on your feet, in order to personalize the follow-up questions, while remaining within the frame of the questionnaire.

Write down whatever conclusions or assumptions you make, based on what the respondent has said to you. If there is something that seems particularly interesting, or unusual, ask gently and neutrally for more information, writing that down as well. Make sure to clearly note what the respondent has said and what your assumptions are. For two-interviewer teams, with one interviewing and one writing, the interviewer should also, at the conclusion of the interview, write down what (s)he additionally thought. Mark these comments in such a way that they can be easily distinguished from the answers (e.g. by circling them).

On closed questions, read the respondent the options available, if necessary twice, to make sure (s)he has understood all options, and mark her/his answers, always allowing for the categories “don’t know” and “other – explain”.

If a respondent hesitates to answer a question, try to use other subtle angles to get the information you are looking for. Make sure, though, that you don't insist, as this might make the respondent feel uncomfortable and could make her/him less cooperative for the rest of the interview. If the respondent does not give an answer then simply write down in capital letters: "RESPONDENT REFUSED TO ANSWER." Do not any comments made by the respondent that might explain his/her motivations to refuse to answer. Again, as above, make sure that you are only trying to get a more complete answer, and not a particular answer. You must accept that, in some cases, the respondent may refuse to answer.

If you have serious doubts about the veracity of the statements of the respondent, make a small mark in front of the question and write during the interview, if possible, why you think the statement probably does not correspond to reality. Mark these comments in such a way that they can be easily distinguished from the answers (e.g. by circling them). Discuss later with the interviewers and the local IOM coordinator as well as RES Unit at IOM Headquarters, whether these doubts are serious enough to question the overall validity of the interview.

## 5. After the interview

Establish whether the respondent is willing to cooperate with IOM in the evaluation interview and reach agreement on the date when IOM will contact her/him again to make the appointment.

## 6. Skipping questions depending on answers or profile of respondents

If no on question 11, go to question 13 (this kind of guidelines will be indicated in the final questionnaire after the pilot phase is over).

*Likewise for:*

- Question 15: if no go to question 17;
- Question 25: if no go to question 27;
- After question 33: if the respondent is not an AVR, then go to question 37.
- Question 37: if the respondent is not a deportee, then go to question 38.
- Question 61: if no, finish the interview.

## 7. Question 14

To get the terminology right, a short definition of:

**Applied on:** the date on which the asylum claimant expressed to authorities in the country of destination the wish to be eligible for receiving the status of refugee as formulated in the UN Refugee Convention of 1951.

**Refused on:** the date on which the authorities of the destination country rejected that asylum claim.

**Withdrawn on:** the date on which the asylum claimant decided to withdraw his claim, for example by sending an official statement to that extent to the authorities dealing with the asylum claim, or simply by leaving the country before the official decision on the asylum claim has been announced.

**Appealed on:** the date on which the asylum claimant appealed against the rejection of the asylum claim.

**Appeal denied on:** the date on which the appeal against the initial rejection was refused, thereby basically exempting any further opportunity for the asylum seeker to claim asylum in the destination country concerned.

*Not all blanks may be filled in on this question, as some respondents may not have filed an appeal or withdrawn their asylum claim.*

**8. In case of outstanding questions**

Contact IOM Tbilisi at [marc@pirveli.com](mailto:marc@pirveli.com).

In case of interviewers hired by IOM: make sure you contact first the local IOM coordinator, who might be able to address your queries. If in doubt, contact IOM Tbilisi.

## ENDNOTES

1. Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands (in that order) accounted for more than 90 per cent of the assisted voluntary returns to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the period 1995-2001.
2. Commission of the European Communities, COM (2002) 175 final, 10 April 2002, “Green paper – On a community return policy on illegal residents”.
3. IOM has some recent experience of conducting research of this kind with rejected Roma asylum seekers returning to Central and Eastern Europe.
4. *Return and Reintegration of Rejected Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants*, IOM, 2001, Migration Research Series, Number 4.
5. The western European destination countries participating in this process from the beginning are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.
6. From 1995 to September 2001, IOM assisted in the return of 7,480 migrants to the three South Caucasian countries.
7. These are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
8. One reason for this decision is related to the fact that over 95 per cent of the assisted voluntary returns arranged by IOM during the period 1995 – 2001 were from these 17 destination countries.
9. The snowball method consists of identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers to other respondents.
10. An ancient ethnic community in the South Caucasus whose settlements correspond to that of the Kurds. Their roots go back to Mithraism (2000 B.C.) and their religious centre is Lalilsh, in northern Iraq. Around 30,000 are living in Germany and they tend to be over-represented in asylum claims made by Georgian citizens.  
Most flights bringing returnees from western Europe to Baku, Tbilisi and Yerevan arrive in the middle of the night. This placed an additional burden on staff resources to contact returnees directly upon their arrival.
11. Armenia is the largest source country of (irregular) migrants in the South Caucasus, judging by the number of asylum seekers and the statistics of AVR's since 1995 (see Table 2, points 5 and 7).
12. According to IOM statistics, from 1995 until September 2001 among all migrants assisted to return by IOM, 55 per cent were male and 45 per cent were female.
13. For more information on the 2001 studies on irregular migration by IOM in the South Caucasus, the following reports can be downloaded at <http://www.iom.int> : (a) “Away from Azerbaijan, destination Europe – A study of migration motives, routes and methods”, IOM Baku, September 2001; (b) “Hardship abroad or hunger at home – A study of irregular migration from Georgia”, IOM Tbilisi, September 2001; (c) “Irregular migration and smuggling of migrants from Armenia”, IOM Yerevan, January 2002.
14. Estimates are that roughly 5 per cent of the population of Armenia is actually of non-Armenian stock.
15. The population of Azerbaijan consists of 90.6 per cent of ethnic Azeris. The remaining 9.4 per cent are composed of a large number of ethnic groups, of which the most important are Lezgins, Russians, Armenians and Talish (all four groups represent more than 1 per cent each of the total population of Azerbaijan).
16. It is generally assumed that ethnic Georgians make up about 70 per cent of the total population of Georgia. Ethnic minorities in Georgia are Armenians, Azeri, Russians, Jews, Greeks, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Kurds, Yezidis and a number of other, smaller communities.
17. From 1995 until September 2001, Germany accounted for 82 per cent of all IOM assisted returns to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Belgium returned 12 per cent and the Netherlands 3 per cent of a total caseload of 7,480 returnees to the three South Caucasus countries in that period.
18. Interestingly, most respondents who reported such problems returned to Armenia voluntarily with IOM's assistance.
19. It is obvious from asylum statistics published by UNHCR in March 2002, that countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Norway and Sweden are among the most popular countries for South Caucasian asylum seekers, while some traditional countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands received fewer asylum claims from that region. Germany remains a prime destination country for

Armenian, Azeri and Georgian migrants, while Canada and the United States of America are also perceived as ideal to lodge an asylum claim. However, most find it very difficult to reach these countries legally and do not have the financial resources to do so illegally.

20. Referring to:
  - (a) “Away from Azerbaijan, destination Europe – A study of migration motives, routes and methods”, IOM Baku, September 2001.
  - (b) “Hardship abroad or hunger at home – A study of irregular migration from Georgia”, IOM Tbilisi, September 2001.
  - (c) “Irregular migration and smuggling of migrants from Armenia”, IOM Yerevan, January 2002.
21. Fictitious names.
22. The acronyms refer to the categories of return as distinguished at the front page of the questionnaire.
23. As agreed by Maryam, Ovsanna and Marc in Tbilisi on 25 October.

