



A Ghanaian returnee at her newly established provisions shop. © IOM 2012

About IOM and AVRR

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is a core activity of IOM and is part of a comprehensive approach to migration management. The aim is to promote a dignified, orderly and humane return of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin as well as to re-establish them back into the society of their country of origin. For migrants who need to return home but lack the means to do so, AVRRs are often the solution to their immediate plight. Beneficiaries of AVRR programmes include any person abroad requiring the humane and cost-effective support of IOM, such as rejected asylum seekers or those likely to face rejection of their claim, irregular migrants, stranded migrants, victims of trafficking, and other vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied minors (UAMs), elderly people, or those with health related needs.

The consequences of not returning such migrants in a safe and speedy way can be grave for the migrants, and place heavy socio-economic burdens on destination and transit countries' asylum and social welfare systems.

IOM has over 30 years of experience in providing AVRR services to vulnerable migrants and has assisted over 1.2 million individuals.

AVRR in Ghana

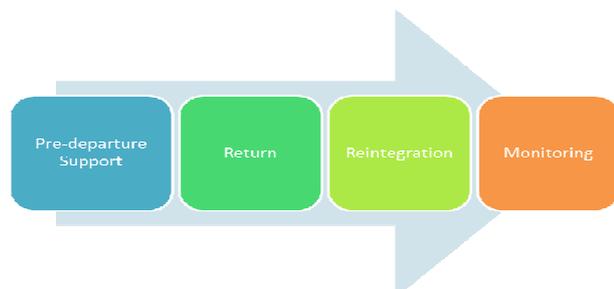
IOM facilitates the voluntary return and reintegration of both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian migrants. Assistance includes pre-departure and post-arrival information and counselling, flight arrangements, airport assistance and reintegration assistance to establish a small business or engage in further education and training.

Ghanaian migrants return from Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, Malta, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom. However, returns have also taken place from the Canada, Ireland, Israel, Morocco, Egypt, Libya among others. Since 2006, IOM Ghana has provided reintegration support to 2,247 returning Ghanaian nationals and has assisted in the voluntary return of over 560 stranded migrants in West Africa to their countries of origin.

Following the Libyan crisis of 2011, over 18,000 Ghanaians were evacuated back to Ghana suddenly and

unexpectedly. The majority arrived after the start of the conflict (March-April 2011) with returns recorded over a period of a year. IOM assisted with the reintegration of returnees through the provision of business skills training, start-up grants, registration with the National Health Insurance Scheme and psycho social counselling.

There are **Four Stages** within the return and reintegration process:



1. Pre-departure support within host countries

This includes counselling and return-related information dissemination on the country of origin, medical assistance (e.g. medical examinations and documentation), and transport assistance arrangement including travel documentation

2. Return

Services may include: travel document, flights, airport assistance on arrival, local transportation via public transportation or internal flights for those who live outside of Accra.

3. Reintegration

Reintegration assistance is provided to help individuals returning to their country of origin to re-establish themselves and this assistance ranges from a limited reinstatement allowance at the micro-level to a variety of socio-economic assistance provided directly to support the returnees or to their communities at the macro level. Examples of

assistance include: post-arrival counselling, small-business establishment, vocational training or further education, business plans, vendor liaison, temporary accommodation, and medical support.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring of returnees is conducted throughout the return and reintegration process.

Assisting Ghanaian Migrants Returning From Libya

Over 18,000 Ghanaian migrants were evacuated from Libya during the country's crisis in 2011. The majority were single men in their twenties who were previously earning an income and sending remittances home. With funding from the Government of Japan, IOM provided reintegration assistance to these Ghanaian migrants.

Following the opening of a sub-office in Tamale in June 2012, the project activities focused on the economic reintegration of beneficiaries, and the registration of almost 4,000 former migrants and their dependents to the National Health Insurance System (NHIS). IOM, in coordination with PENTAX Management Consulting Services Ltd., provided training in group formation and management as well as in expanding business development skills. In addition, beneficiaries received basic start-up kits (tools) to implement their individual income-generating activities.

Registration of returnees and their families into the NHIS was another important component of the project. The NHIS registration was also paired with the identification and referral to Ghana Health Service (GHS) of any Ghanaian migrants showing signs of psychological stress, trauma or depression related to their experiences in Libya or the challenges faced upon their return.

Stranded Sri Lankan Migrants in West Africa

Increasing numbers of destitute and stranded irregular migrants are found in West African countries, lured by agents in their countries of origin by promises of greener pastures in Western countries. Many of these individuals once stranded are left in inhumane conditions, exposed to disease, hunger and restricted mobility.

IOM initiated the West Africa AVRR project in December 2011 to provide pre-return, transit, arrival and reintegration assistance for Sri Lankan migrants. Additionally, government officials from West Africa and Sri Lanka have been provided with capacity building training on irregular migration and migrant protection issues. As of December 2014, IOM has assisted 612 Sri Lankans to safely return home.



A returnee family at their new grocery shop in Vavuniya. © IOM 2013

IOM Mission to Ghana

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