



Return assistance: a change of perspective

## Return assistance - in practice

### The Gambia, Serrekunda



In summer 2014, Mr. J. voluntarily returned to The Gambia with help of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). After Mr. J. had received transit assistance in Brussels, he was received by the IOM personnel on-site at Banjul airport. Furthermore, IOM Banjul organized his travel from the airport to his home village in the far east of the country. Before his return, Mr. J. had elaborated a reintegration project with the assistance of the return council. He wanted to use this project for a store in Serrekunda selling plastic items

and kitchen utensils. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) examined Mr. J's project idea and approved the respective demand for return assistance. Only a few days after his arrival, Mr. J. visited the IOM office in Banjul. The office took all steps necessary to enable Mr. J. the setup of his shop. As an extraordinary monitoring visit in August 2014 revealed, Mr. J. could fully implement his reintegration project. Mr. J. was very satisfied with his situation. With the income generated by his project, Mr. J. was able to cover all his living costs as well as to support five other persons. Only the fact that he owned money to a friend, which he previously needed to finance his store, made him only partly financially independent. Nevertheless, Mr. J. found himself in a better situation than before his return from Switzerland. Mr. J. sees his future in The Gambia, where he wants to fully devote himself to his store.



*As a humanitarian and, at the same time, reasonably-priced solution, the concept of Return Assistance has proved itself and gained acceptance in many European countries. The object of Return Assistance is to harmonize the justified interests of migrants with those of Switzerland and the countries of origin. Return Assistance makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable and successful return. It is conceived so as to rule out undesired pull factors in the direction of Switzerland.*

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