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Return to Nepal in January 2010 – A Success Story

Nepalese Ramakant Prasad* (32) risks a new start in his home country after nearly 5 years in Switzerland.

Ramakant Prasad successfully runs a carpentry business with several employees in the Chitwan region in the south of Nepal. Due to repeated reprisals exerted by the Maoists and ensuing payments of protection money to them, he becomes more and more entangled in difficulties with the army. They accuse him of collaborating with the enemy. Tired of the threats and conflicts, he decides at the beginning of 2005 to get away from it all and to start a new life abroad. A couple of months later, he applies for asylum in Switzerland.

The bustling young man quickly finds a job in a busy hotel at Lake Zurich. His cheerful nature and his discipline at work are much appreciated by his employer.

On 26 November 2009, Ramakant Prasad is taken by surprise to find the FOM's definite negative decision in his letterbox.

Individual Return Assistance

The IOM supports voluntary returnees in the implementation of their business, education, or dwelling project. The FOM issues an appropriate mandate.



It says that he has to leave Switzerland by 22 December 2009. He has no other choice than to return home after nearly five years in exile. He wants to start up a carpentry business in his home town again. The RKB St. Gallen supports him in working out an appropriate business plan, which is then approved by the FOM. In addition, he hopes to receive accrued money from the pension fund.

Ramakant Prasad wastes no time. As soon as on 7 January 2010, he sits in the airplane for Kathmandu. Shortly after, he starts to realize his plans on site. Towards the end of June 2010, the people from IOM Kathmandu travel to the Chitwan region for a monitoring visit. Ramakant Prasad states that he is in a position to live from his income. He wants to stay in the region and at the time of the visit, he already employs 7 staff members.

Recently, an employee of the hotel at Lake Zurich met Ramakant Prasad in Kathmandu. He reported to the RKB St. Gallen that Ramakant Prasad was fine. That he has married in the meantime, is now father of a little girl and set for expansion in his carpentry business. To further improve his income, he has started up an additional project: a car rental business with small cars. The man also mentioned that Ramakant Prasad unfortunately had only been able to stay away from his business for 2 days. He seems to be required in his company to make sure that the employees really are about their work; unlike him, they have not yet had the opportunity to experience the Swiss working mentality.

* Name has been changed by the RKB editor

I O M – International Organisation for Migration



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IOM is the leading international organisation for migration. It was founded in 1951 and currently lists 132 members as well as 17 observer states and some 460 offices in 130 countries. Its headquarters are located in Geneva.

Objectives:

- Assist governments and states in meeting the growing operational and conceptual challenges of migration management.
- Advance understanding of migration issues.
- Encourage social and economic development through migration.
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

IOM Bern exists since 1993. As the Swiss coordination office, it is the contact and liaising service for national and international migration issues in Switzerland. At the time, the International Organisation for Migration had concluded a first master agreement in the domain of Return Assistance with the Federal Department of Justice and Police. The purpose of the treaty consisted in the promotion of voluntary return of asylum seekers, provisionally admitted persons and recognised refugees.

An example: last year, 95 persons out of the asylum sector within the Canton of St. Gallen left Switzerland voluntarily and with the support of Return Assistance, of whom 40 individuals and 15 families. Serbia was leading with 22 individuals, followed by Kosovo and Nigeria with 16 individuals each, and Iraq with 10 persons. In 52 of a total of 55 cases, IOM was involved in these people's voluntary return. As most of the returnees wished to implement a small business project at home, IOM's task consisted as a first step in assessing the living costs, the market potential and the material costs on site. Furthermore, IOM mostly took charge of the flight booking, the transit assistance, the arrival assistance in the country of return as well as the individual counselling and assistance in the setting up of the individual projects. In some cases, IOM organised medical assistance for vulnerable persons in the country of return.

Therefore the domain Return Assistance continues to be the main focus of IOM Bern's activities. In addition, IOM Bern is the contact for the Swiss federal authorities for further migration-related issues such as combating migrant smuggling, structural assistance in the countries of origin, secondary movement, family reunification, migration and health, as well as cooperation with the European Union in migration-related issues. Beyond this, IOM Bern is committed in the field of research and knowledge transfer and endeavours to stimulate a differentiated dialogue on migration.

Outlook

Will I really receive the additional assistance promised to me by the FOM after my voluntary return? This is a question that those responsible of the RKB St. Gallen are frequently asked during the counselling interviews. We will check about this!

The Return Counselling Office (RKB) of the Canton of St. Gallen

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