
**Return and Reintegration Assistance
External Evaluation**

Country Study Guinea

Final Report

July 2013

Contracting Authority
Federal Migration Office
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List of Abbreviations

3AEntreprises	Agence Autonome d'Assistance Intégrée aux Entreprises
AFODE.	Association de Formateurs pour le Développement de l'Entrepreneuriat
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
FOM	Federal Office of Migration
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Acknowledgements

The evaluation in Guinea could not have been realised without the support of a local assistant, Nounkoumba Doumbouya. She organised the meetings with the persons to be interviewed, was very helpful with managing transportation and with arranging translation services. Thanks also go to IOM, both the office in Conakry and the office in Berne, who have greatly facilitated the evaluation process and especially the access to returnees. Thanks are extended to the two FOM representatives who were on a mission in Guinea when the evaluation visit took place: they bore with the presence of the Swiss evaluator, permitted him to participate in meetings organised for FOM and shared transportation facilities (when the car the evaluator had rented broke down) as well as their views and experiences with return and reintegration. Thanks finally and very especially go to the returnees and their families who were willing to meet the evaluator and who – despite their sometimes difficult situations – openly discussed sometimes intimate matters with him.

Daniel Kessler

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Country Study

The present report forms part of the evaluation of the Swiss Return and Reintegration Assistance programmes mandated by the Federal Office for Migration (FOM) in 2012. It is to contribute to reaching the evaluation's objectives and providing answers to the three principal evaluation questions (see box) by presenting data and experiences from Guinea and by proposing recommendations for this specific context. At the same time, the report on the Swiss return and reintegration assistance for persons from Guinea is a document in its own right, it is designed to be understood by readers without the necessity to consult additional documents, including the six other country studies (Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Turkey) and the overall and synthetic evaluation report.

Evaluation Objectives

- a. Determine the range and extent of outcomes of selected instruments of the Swiss return assistance for different target groups and countries of origin.
- b. Make an overall independent assessment of the outcomes achieved against the objectives envisaged.
- c. Identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for the optimisation and further development of Return Assistance, especially with regard to different target groups and different native countries.

Central Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and Individual Return Assistance ... promote voluntary return ... ?
2. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and individual Return Assistance ... contribute to the process of social and professional reintegration of returnees and thus sustainable reintegration ... ?
3. To what extent and how do country specific return assistance programmes and individual Return Assistance ... contribute to an improved cooperation of Swiss authorities and authorities of the country of origin?

1.2 Evaluation Methods

An analysis of the reports made available by FOM and IOM on the AVRR programmes since 2005 as well as of reports on other European countries' AVRR programmes in general and on Guinea specifically was the first step in the evaluation process. This desk study was followed by interviews with actors in Switzerland – representing IOM and FOM mainly, but also representatives of other Federal and cantonal administration units and NGO – involved in the realisation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration in Guinea. The evaluation visit in Guinea by Daniel Kessler in December 2012, allowing for realising interviews with returnees from Switzerland, with the local IOM office and with Guineans who have not migrated, was the main method for data collection, especially so since the evaluation's terms of reference highlight the necessity to present the AVRR programmes from the perspective of the persons most directly concerned, the potential returnees and the returnees. The access to the returnees to Guinea was facilitated by IOM: a random and anonymous selection of 60 persons realised by the evaluator allowed the IOM Office in Conakry to contact returnees and ask them for their consent to be contacted by the evaluator. Finally, the IOM office in Conakry presented a list of 21 persons (returned both in the framework of the country programme and with individual assistance) of whom 19 were interviewed – either by a visit or, in one case, by phone. Three additional returnees, not originally on the list, were contacted together with the FOM and IOM delegation in Koundara. The contacts with persons who have not

migrated were established, without previous planning, by the evaluator during his visit to Guinea: opportunities to talk to (mainly) males in their late teens or in their early twenties were seized in the public sphere (markets and beaches of Conakry, Youth Centre at Koundara). Local organisations involved in AVRR and representing both authorities and civil society were also consulted, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Catholic Church, a company providing training services for returnees in order to improve their entrepreneurial skills, and an association promoting the establishment of enterprises.

It is to be noted that the assessments presented in this report, especially those from chapter 3 onward, in addition to reports available from IOM and FOM, are based on a very limited empirical basis. The selection of returnees was a random one, but it is not, in any way, representative. With two exceptions, all returnees interviewed are either from Conakry or from Koundara. Also, the preparedness of returnees to talk to the evaluator indicates that their experiences with the return and reintegration support were rather positive. It is quite imaginable that a different set of interlocutors would have shed a different, more negative light on the Swiss AVRR programme for Guinea.

2 Short Presentation of the Programme

2.1 Structure, Duration, Context and Logic of the Programme

The Swiss return and reintegration assistance for persons from Guinea was started in 2009. Prior to this date, AVRR to Guinea was realised in the framework of a programme targeting Western Africa in general. The decision to create a specific programme for Guinea was motivated by the large number of Guinean nationals – as compared to representatives from other countries from the region – both among asylum seekers in Switzerland and among returnees. Initially, returnees had been entitled to receive 1,000 CHF (500 CHF per child) upon arriving in Conakry, and up to 3,000 CHF for the realisation of a revenue generating project. The support for such projects was increased since to 4,000 CHF. Additional support, in the form of a training offer, can be provided to returnees whose project requires entrepreneurial competencies. Since 2012, a new partner, AFODE, is mandated to offer respective support. Guinea has also profited from structural aid as early as 2005 – through the realisation of capacity building for local authorities involved in migration management and, from 2007 onwards, through the prevention of irregular migration, especially of youth (by running a micro-credit scheme for young unemployed graduates). The situation in Guinea, since 2009, has evolved timidly in a positive direction. Political stability has increased, and the transition period from late 2009 to December 2010 with General Sékouba Konaté allowed for preparing a new, post-dictatorial normality. Meanwhile, Guinea remains one of the poorest countries of the world (166th of 180 listed countries according to the World Bank in 2011) and ranks 178th (out of 186) in UNDPs Human Development Index in 2012. Over 500,000 Guineans live abroad according to the World Bank, contributing (in 2009) 68 million US\$ to the GNI of 4.2 billion US\$ (for the same year, the World Bank indicates an outward remittances flow of 56 million US\$). These frame conditions obviously make it easy for

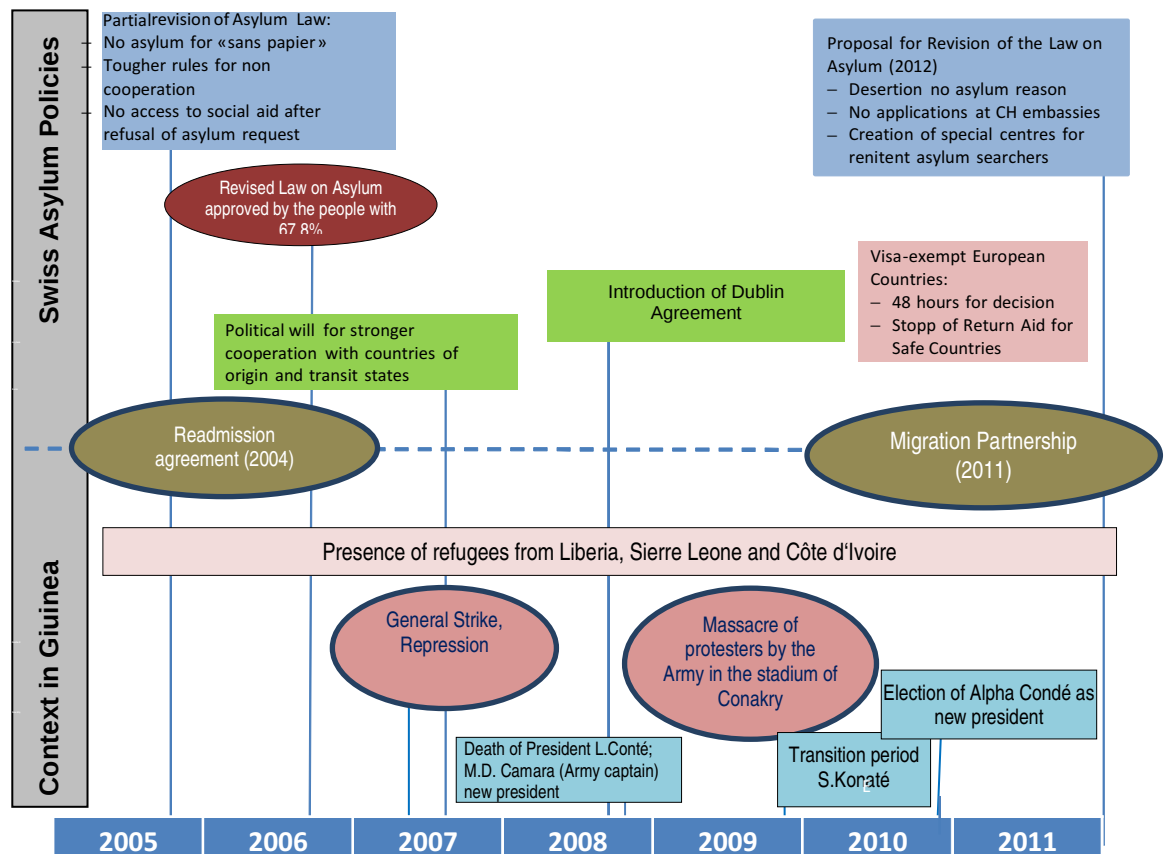
Swiss Structural Aid for Guinea: micro-credits

2007-2009: Kindia and Labé: creation of 101 micro-enterprises

2009-2012: Boké, Koundara, Pita, Mamou, Faranah, Kankan, N'Zérékoré: 300 beneficiaries of micro-finance support

young Guineans to take the decision to seek an improved livelihood abroad – in the region or, preferably, in Europe.

Besides being a country generating migration, Guinea is also a country of transit and of destination for migrants, from Western Africa mainly. Refugees from neighbouring countries having suffered from wars and migrants on their way to Europe or living with family members they have in Guinea are present and contribute to create an atmosphere conducive to migration.



2.2 Frame Conditions of the Relations Switzerland – Guinea

In 2004, a working group representing the two countries signed an agreement regarding the reception of returnees from Switzerland by Guinea. In 2011, finally, the two countries decided to establish a bilateral agreement on migration issues (the document remains to be ratified). Amongst other, the two agreements allow Switzerland for sending back to Guinea persons who have not enrolled as voluntary returnees. The possibility of forced return adds to the possibilities to convince potential returnees, especially those whose asylum request was not approved. The signing of an agreement was possible thanks to Swiss actors' insistent negotiating, and to Guinea's interest to present itself on the international stage as a reliable partner. Economic relations are of no importance for the two countries: Guinea exported goods worth 100,000 Swiss Francs to Switzerland in 2011, its imports from Switzerland amounted to 9 Million CHF (mainly paper, printed

products, machinery and vehicles). The provision of structural aid (see above, paragraph 2.1) also does not seem to be a major reason for Guinea's interest in its partnership with Switzerland).

The Ministerial staff contacted by the evaluator – but this is obviously not the official Guinean view of the matter – perceives the cooperation between the two countries regarding migration mainly as a possibility to visit Europe. The cooperation of course is not limited to identification missions – organised for identifying the nationality of asylum seekers in Switzerland beyond doubt – but these are highly appreciated and regarded as a fringe benefit for working with the Government.

2.3 Other Return Assistance Programmes in Guinea

IOM Guinea has organised or is organising voluntary return programmes for 24 countries. In addition, there may be additional AVRR programmes, but these are certainly comparably smaller than the IOM operated activities. Returnees from Switzerland represent a significant part of the overall number of persons returned to Guinea with IOM support. There are relatively more voluntary returns from Switzerland to Guinea than from other European countries: The share of voluntary returnees from Switzerland to Guinea (15.5%) is bigger than Switzerland's share of asylum seekers from Guinea in Europe (6.5%: In the period from April 2010 to March 2011 alone, 5,115 persons have registered as new asylum seekers in the EU countries, as against 338 new asylum seekers from Guinea in Switzerland in 2011).

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
IOM operated assisted voluntary returns overall ^{*)}	70	66	97	80	146	110	161	730
IOM operated assisted voluntary returns from CH ^{**)}	7	14	16	18	11	19	28	113
%age of IOM-AVRR from Switzerland	10%	21%	16.5%	22.5%	7.5%	17.5%	17.5%	15.5%

^{*)} Source: IOM: Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. Annual Report of Activities 2001.

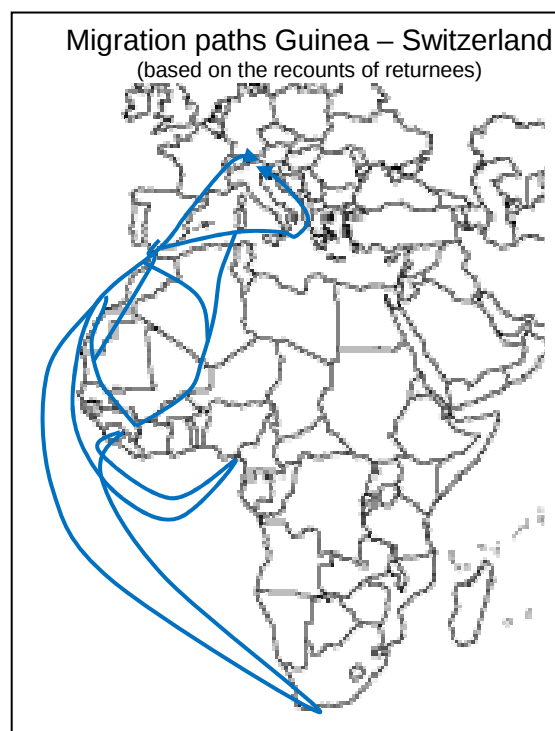
^{**)} Source: IOM Conakry.

The following table, besides confirming that returns from other European countries to Guinea are smaller than from Switzerland, provides some basic (but very incomplete) information on efforts to promote return and to support reintegration of selected European countries realised through IOM. Interventions of European states are not limited to return and reintegration assistance. They are also comprised of other forms of support. Belgium, for instance, has realised – through IOM – in 2012 a six months awareness campaign that “is carried out in close partnership with the Guinean authorities, civil society and media. It aims to fill an information void that exists among the general public and more particularly among young people who regularly embark on dangerous clandestine journeys in the hope of studying or working in Belgium and Europe.” (www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2010/pbn-listing/information-campaign-in-guinea-highlight.html)

Country	Name / Type of Programme	Type of Assistance	Number of returnees (in year ...)	Remarks
France	– Aide au retour – Aides à la réinsertion économique – Fonds européen pour le retour	Aide au retour: 500€ per adult, 250€ per child Aides à la réinsertion économique: max. 4,000€ ???	?	
Belgium	Programme de retour volontaire.	Aide au retour : 250€ per adult, 125€ per child. Programme de réintégration :	2005: 12 2006: 13 2007: 6 2008: 8 2009: 7 2010: 10 2011: 22 Total 2005-11: 78	
Netherlands	REAN – Return emigration Aliens from the Netherlands HRT - Herintegratie Regeling terugkeer (Return and Reintegration Regulation)	REAN support: max. 500 € per adult, 100€ per child. HRT support: 1,750€ per adult, 800€ per child	?	REAN is accessible to asylum seekers (+ additional categories of persons) HRT is accessible for most (ex-) asylum seekers.
Austria	Unterstützung freiwillige Rückkehr aus Österreich		2005:3 2011: 3	
Germany	Rückkehrhilfe	"Starthilfe": 300€ per adult, 150€ per child.	?	

3 Dynamic of Returns

Voluntary return of migrants is one aspect of migratory movements. It is a small part, but it is a very interesting one, because thanks to the assistance offered for returning and for reintegration, it is more structured and accompanied than usual forms of migration of Guineans. And it is a much safer form of migration. The returnees' journeys, on the other hand, had very often been hazardous, sometimes life threatening – there are recounts in Guinea of persons who die trying to make their way to Europe, drowning in boats too loaded or starving during walks through the desert are possible outcomes of the attempts to reach Europe. Also, the social and emotional investments in migration are very important. And the financial investments made for (hopefully)



reaching Europe are considerable. They amount to at least the sum received through the Swiss AVR programme, and in some cases they were said to be higher, reaching 6,000 and even 8,000 Swiss Francs.

3.1 Data Overview

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Total Stock								
Number of persons eligible ^{*)}	696	450	251	211	226	173	223	n.a.
New asylum seekers from Guinea ^{**)}	238	88	104	239	301	281	338	1,589
Number of persons with approved asylum	0	0	2	6	0	1	7	16
Departures								
Number of voluntary returnees IOM figures ^{***)}	7	14	16	18	11	19	28	113
Number of voluntary returnees FOM figures ^{****)}	15	15	16	11	22	12	26	117
Programme	6	14	14	11	4	9	20	78
Individual	9	1	2	-	18	3	6	39
Forced return to Guinea	29	55	66	173	36	31	14	404
Forced return to third states	4	2	3	4	9	5	8	35
Uncontrolled exits	133	117	75	112	124	136	60	757
Other exits	0	0	0	13	20	56	24	113
Proportions								
Ratio asylum seekers – voluntary returnees								
IOM figures	1%	3.1%	6.4%	8.5%	4.9%	11.0%	12.5%	5.1%
FOM figures	2.2%	3.3%	6.4%	5.2%	9.7%	6.9%	11.7%	5.2%
Ratio voluntary return – forced return (to Guinea and to third countries)								
IOM figures	0.21	0.24	0.23	0.10	0.24	0.53	1.30	0.26
FOM figures	0.45	0.26	0.23	0.05	0.49	0.33	1.20	0.27

^{*)} Persons in the asylum process (asylum seekers and provisionally admitted persons). Source: Asylstatistik 2005-2012

^{**)} New entries, resumed presence, births

^{***)} Figures provided by IOM Conakry

^{****)} Figures provided by FOM. The differences with the figures provided by IOM can be explained, partly, by the fact that not all returns may have been organised by IOM. Where the IOM figures are higher than the FOM figures, allocation of single cases to a specific year may also be the cause for diverging values.

3.2 Discussion of Data

Between 2005 and 2011, 117 (or 113?) persons re-migrated from Switzerland to Guinea in the framework of assisted voluntary return. During the same period, more than 14 times as many persons from Guinea requested asylum in Switzerland. On a modest

level, the number of returnees has increased constantly over the last years, with the exception of 2009, when a massacre at a Conakry Sports stadium further destabilised the already fragile political situation and momentarily reversed the tendency. The Swiss AVRR efforts' effectiveness has therefore increased over time. This is especially true if figures of voluntary returns are compared with the overall number of Guineans in the asylum process: although very irregularly, the respective population has decreased by more than two thirds. Still, it is also evident that migration from Guinea is not diminishing: Only 5% of the eligible population participates in the AVRR programme (or benefits from individual reintegration assistance). It is noteworthy that almost four times as many persons Guinea left Switzerland under constraint of the authorities – most of them returned to Guinea, 10% of the 449 individuals were sent to third countries. It must be stressed, though, that the ratio has importantly improved since 2008 (diminishing numbers of forced returns, increasing numbers of voluntary returns).

It is also noteworthy that uncontrolled and other exits are much higher than voluntary and forced returns. This shows the limits of migration management: Most migrants manage themselves, take decisions – even though they might be influenced by authorities' measures (e.g. through the threat of forced return) – which cannot be controlled by states, their laws and their representatives.

As was shown in paragraph 2.3, voluntary returnees from European countries are also counted by the dozen, not by the hundreds – despite of comparably bigger numbers of asylum seekers from Guinea in those countries. If the number of returns is the criterion to assess effectiveness, the Swiss AVRR efforts for Guineas can therefore be evaluated very positively.

3.3 Assessment

Even if the figures of voluntary returnees are small if compared to the number of potential returnees, the possibility of assisted voluntary return clearly does promote return to Guinea, and it importantly contributes to the quality of return.

Without the offer of assisted return and reintegration, fewer Guineans would probably return to their country of origin. The financial return and reintegration assistance helps potential returnees to take the decision to leave Switzerland – but it is to be noted that the financial incentive does not appear to be decisive for the returnees' respective decision. And the return and remigration assistance importantly improves the conditions under which the return to Guinea takes place.

The assisted return to Guinea (regarding the number of returnees) shows results within the overall performance of Swiss return assistance but below the planned figures.

The project documents planned up to 60 voluntary returns for the years 2009 and 10, about half this number of persons returned with IOM support. For 2011, a figure of up to 30 returns was targeted, and the figure was almost reached. When comparing the figures of voluntary returns with new arrivals of Guineans in Switzerland who ask for asylum, the figures of voluntary returns are also rather limited – the ration is almost 14: 1. Among the seven countries included in the evaluation, the share of persons returning to their home countries of the total eligible population is 8% (for the period 2005-2011). The respective share for Guinea is slightly over 5 per cent.

In selected cases, the decision for assisted return depends, but this is not specific for Guinea, on the possibility to realise forced return.

Given the rather small figures of returnees, forced return is not a means to effectively and efficiently promote voluntary return. It appears that the threat of forced return is not effective enough a threat for persons who could profit from AVRR, to take this option. Who prefers to remain in Switzerland (or in Europe) does so by disappearing from official registers.

Information efforts about assisted return and reintegration is a constant necessity.

The returnees interviewed all confirm that they had been well informed about the programme for assisted return and reintegration – through official channels or through migrants' networks. They also highlight that their trust in the promised assistance was not necessarily big. Their experience with governance and the behaviour of state authorities in their country of origin does not make them receptive for promises expressed by official administrative bodies.

4 Individual Returnees

In total, 22 formal interviews were realised with returnees – in two cases, two brothers from Koundara who had re-emigrated, most probably to Senegal – a discussion was realised with the two young men's parents. Meetings took place either at the home of the returnees (Koundara mostly), in public places (restaurants), or on the site of the revenue generating project the returnees operate (shops mostly, a bakery in one case). The following short portraits present a selection of returnees from Switzerland to Guinea.

I. M., Conakry	no picture taken
Male, over 40 years (the evaluator estimates his age at over 50)	
Married	
Has a shop in Conakry's Malina market with car appliances	
Returned in 2009	

Migration Trajectories

The returnee is a double Liberian-Guinean citizen. He was born and raised in Liberia and had left the country when his mother was killed during war. He says he's travelled through Mali, Niger and Libya and finally arrived in Lampedusa. After a journey through Italy, he arrived in Switzerland where he hoped the Red Cross would care for him and his war trauma. He stayed in Switzerland for 6 years and 1 month, first at the Centre in Vallorbe, then in Winterthur and later on in Zürich.

Motivation for assisted Return

I.M. highlights he was granted asylum in Switzerland. Still, he decided to return to Africa because he wanted to change his life. Before leaving Switzerland, he had been well informed about return and reintegration assistance.

Reintegration

He says he used the funds granted to him for a shop where he sold car appliances. Currently, the shop is operated by a kin of his. I.M. himself mainly works around his house, in the garden where he cultivates crop and vegetable. He has to do so because the profits from the car shop are not sufficient to make a living. Later in the conversation with I.M., it was less clear whether the shop in Malina market is still open. A major difficulty of his reintegration consists of his ailing health: Very high blood pressure and other worries make it difficult for him. Asked whether he had requested support for his health care from IOM, he informs that he was aware of this possibility and was considering to check respective possibilities, but had not yet formally applied.

Plans

I.M. has no plans to migrate again. His major problem being his health, he mainly has to take care of this.

A.D., Conakry	
Male, 24 years	
Single	
Had bought and sold textiles	
Returned in 2010	

Migration Trajectories

Mr D. – who informs that he somewhat regretted he had allowed IOM the evaluator to contact him – would not share how he reached Europe, nor why he left Guinea in the first place. He does inform though that he had arrived in Switzerland from France (where he had only been for a very short time). In Switzerland, he lived twelve weeks in the reception centre of Vallorbe, then in Lucerne, and had been in Switzerland eight months in total.

Motivation for assisted Return

A.D. didn't want to live in Switzerland illegally. This is why he decided to return to Guinea after he had received a negative response to his asylum request. He had been well informed about the possibility of assisted return, and also about forced return, but the money was not the reason for his decision, it was the perspective of living in illegality, he repeats.

Reintegration

A.D. returnee finds his reintegration process difficult. There are pressures on him he prefers not to name or to explain. He had stopped the textile business after three months, because it had not been profitable. Later, he had been active with selling telephones for a while, but that didn't turn out to be profitable either. The returnee prefers not to say what he is doing now, he hints at occasional work he does for someone who does textile wholesale, though. The merchandise is mainly from China and then dispatched to clients in Conakry who are retailers. The returnee had also lived in his parents' village during three months, but then, two months ago, he decided to come back to Conakry, he clearly prefers living here.

Plans

Mr D. wants to leave Guinea again, but not in the short run anyway. He says he can't go back to Switzerland for at least five years because his asylum request was answered negatively, and this makes it difficult to go back to Europe. Other European countries are not an option for him, because opportunities there for a decent life appear to be even smaller, he has heard. His dearest wish is to get a chance to study somewhere. This would give him a better position, he could get a job, possibly even for a foreign company, and earn enough money to lead a decent life. He says he's still young and the option of studying somewhere is still valid.

I. B., Conakry	no picture taken
Male, in his early 30ies	
Married, children	
“cambiste”	
Returned in 2007	

Migration Trajectories

I.B. says he had left Guinea because he was fed-up with the difficulties of everyday life and didn't see any perspective for himself. He left his country by bus and later by ship to first arrive in France and then in Switzerland. He says he doesn't remember how much money he invested in his trip to Europe, but it had been a lot anyway, and he had been enforce to indebt himself.

Motivation for assisted Return

The returnee highlights that he was not brought back to Guinea by force, but that his return was voluntary. He preferred to come back to Guinea, after five years spent in Geneva, because he didn't see a perspective in Switzerland and his life was stressful. He found life in Switzerland hard, and had also seen fellow Guineans selling drugs, “they do so because they cannot prostitute themselves”. He himself never sold drugs. And he didn't get married either – although he could have. This would have allowed him to stay in Switzerland and have a good life. Except that he didn't love the women, so his life would not have been so good after all.

Reintegration

His Swiss-funded reintegration project consisted of a shop he ran for some time in Conakry and then put a friend in place to operate it. He's still the owner of the shop and receives some money from the person who operates it. But he was never really interested in the shop, he wanted to make a living of changing money from the start. This proposal had not been accepted by IOM, he therefore consented to open a small shop. He is now mainly active as a “cambiste”, but his two resources of income – the profit from changing money and the rent he gets from the shop – are hardly sufficient to cover his living costs. Ibrahim Bah says he would need 4 Million Guinean Francs (approximately 550 Swiss Francs) to satisfy his family's needs. His marriage and the children were the best thing that happened to him after his return. The sum received by Switzerland (1,000 Swiss Francs upon returning and 4,000 Francs for setting up his shop) was good to take, but he stresses that this sum would be worth more now in Guinean Francs. He also says that Switzerland should continue supporting him, by paying a rent; after all, he had lived several years in this country. Nothing, no form of support can be expected from Guinea.

Plans

The returnee says he will not migrate again, he's just hoping that something will happen to make his life easier. He also says he knows no such thing will happen, so he has to continue his miserable life.

Y.D., Conakry	
Male, 26 years	
Married, 2 children	
Shopkeeper	
Returned in 2010	

Migration Trajectories

Mr Y. says he left Guinea for two reasons: because his father is active politically, the family suffered from persecution, and then, he needed medical aid after post-operational problems with his left foot. His father-in-law helped with the money he needed to bring him to Morocco and from there to Europe and finally to Switzerland. He asked for asylum in Geneva and then was placed in the Vallorbe reception centre. From there, was sent to Aarau where he lived in a flat for less than a year and where his foot was looked after. He says that this was the best thing about his travel to Europe: he is well now and his foot doesn't bother him anymore.

Motivation for assisted Return

After he'd received a negative response to his request for asylum, he decided to return. The political situation was more relaxed in Conakry, and he had a perspective since he knew he could participate in the shop a relative of his runs. The return was smooth: He flew from Zurich to Paris and from there to Guinea where OIM was at the airport to receive him. He also saw that he would not be able to repay his father-in-law if he stayed in Switzerland, since he was not allowed to work there. And, most importantly, he missed his family, his wife and his child. He had been in contact constantly over the phone with his wife while in Switzerland, and she begged him to return, because she was bored of living without a man.

Reintegration

As planned, Y.D. invested the money for his reintegration in the shop of his relative. They mainly do wholesale of comestible goods for small shops in the area of Bambeto (Conakry), where he had lived before leaving for Switzerland already. Meanwhile, he has two children, which makes him very proud. His wife and children partly live in the village of their parents, but he sees her at least once a week, and then, his wife and children are also in Conakry during longer stretches of time. And sometimes, he stays in the village for a week or so as well, during this time, his relative takes care of the shop. He is currently in the process of repaying his debt, this will take some more time, but the father-in-law is patient, and he's also happy to receive some money regularly. Y.D. did not take the training offered to him by IOM, he is happy with the shop, although business could be better and clients do not always pay immediately what they buy. Also, the money received for reintegration, 4,000 US\$, did not permit to make a real investment in the shop; it was used just to buy goods.

Plans

His biggest wish is to buy a big refrigerator. This would allow him to store perishable goods and to sell cold water and soft drinks. Leaving Guinea is not an option for him. He remembers how homesick he was while in Switzerland and does not want to go through this again.

M.D.B., Koundara A. B., Koundara	
Males, in their twenties	
Single	
Farmers	
Returned in 2011	
The interview is not realised with the two B. brothers, but with their father and his second wife (who is not the mother of the two sons). The two young men's mother lives in her husband's second house, The father is mayor of the municipality of Sambailo. He has other sons also not living with him, one in Conakry and two in Spain.	
Migration Trajectories The two sons of a farmer in Koundara have reached Europe by ways unknown to their father. He says they have lived there, amongst other in Switzerland, for almost two years.	
Motivation for assisted Return The two young men's return had been announced to their father, but he was rather astonished to hear that they would come back. Only once they were back in Koundara did he learn that they could not remain in Switzerland, because "they could not get the necessary papers".	
Reintegration The money received for reintegration was invested in a small shop selling telephone cards, cigarettes, candies, and some food and articles for the household. The farming activities of the numerous family – production of rice, peanuts, and corn, 40 cows – did not need additional hands. The family was very grateful for the support offered, allowing for diversifying the family's incomes. The two sons ran the shop to their satisfaction. But they had always said they wanted to migrate again. Then, the shop was lifted, causing a major financial damage. It is now re-opened, and other family members, including cousins of the two brothers, operate the commerce.	
Plans The two brothers are currently not in Guinea. The parents were vague at first about their whereabouts, and then said they probably are in Senegal, where they have found work. They also might travel on, trying to get to Europe again. Their father and his second wife hope that they will make it again and will have more luck, finding jobs, possibly also wives, and contributing to the family's economy by sending money, as the two sons living in Spain do.	



O.S., Conakry	
Male, approximately 50 years of age	
Married twice, two adult children	
Cosmetics Shop in Conakry's Madina Market	
Returned in 2006	

Migration Trajectories

Mr S. had left Guinea for the Ivory Coast on the road, from there, he took a ship that brought him to Italy where he spent only a few days to travel on to Switzerland: He says he wanted to be somewhere where people speak French. After a short time in the Vallorbe reception centre, he was transferred to the canton of Neuchâtel where he lived both in a centre for asylum seekers and, together with other persons from Africa, in an apartment. He says he did have an odd job once in a while in Switzerland which allowed for sending a little money to his family.

Motivation for assisted Return

The returnee says his asylum request had received a negative answer, and he says the lawyer who helped him with things demanded for a revision of the verdict too late. O.S. therefore decided to return to Guinea, he didn't want to live in Switzerland illegally. It was this perspective that made him return, not the 4,000 US\$ he received in total to return and restart his life. The sum had been smaller than what he had initially invested in his trip to Europe, he says.

Reintegration

The shop where O.S. sells cosmetics (impressive quantities of products that bleach the skin and for straightening hair are on the shelves around him) – both to individuals for their own consumption and to other small shops – hardly permits him to live. Another problem he has is hypertension. He didn't ask IOM for medical support and can't afford to pay for the medication he would need. But on the other hand, he did get married again after the divorce from his first wife, and he has friends he sees. One of them had also lived in Switzerland and was brought back to Guinea by force.

Plans

Mr S. doesn't make plans any more, and certainly not for migrating again. His health doesn't allow that. But he also says that if he was given a visa for a French speaking country, he would leave Guinea again immediately, but only if he also was sure he would also get a permit of residence and the right to work. Meanwhile he continues his life in Conakry, hoping that God will help him and grant him a long life.

I. B., Conakry	
Male, 28 years	
Married	
Operates a jewellery shop in Conakry's Madina market	
Returned in 2010	

Migration Trajectories

The returnee says he had arrived in Spain with a visa where he lived for three years near Madrid and worked in agriculture – a very hard job very poorly paid. While in Spain, one of his children died at age three. He then travelled on to France where he was looking for jobs also and finally to Switzerland. There, he was put in a reception centre and later in St. Gallen; in total, he lived during three or four months in Switzerland.

Motivation for assisted Return

I.B. was aware about the possibility of assisted return early on, because he had been informed about it in the reception centre; but he says he took his decision together with his wife with whom he had been in contact over the phone throughout his journey in Europe.

Reintegration

The informant started his jewellery shop in a big market of Conakry in 2011. He is quite satisfied how things go, although he highlights the important competition. He likes the jewellery business because it is clean and not physically heavy. He had had the idea of a jewellery shop long time ago already, and he is very happy that this idea finally materialised. He still has friends in Europe, who occasionally call, but he doesn't envy them, he recalls the hardship of his time in Spain too precisely. He is well with his small family now and hopes to have another baby soon.

Plans

Mr B's biggest wish is that his shop works well and that it permits his family to lead a decent life, even better than currently. Leaving Guinea again is not an option: "Life is hard anywhere, so I better live where I belong", the informant says. Eventually, he will not work in the shop himself anymore, but hire someone to sell the jewellery, that would free him for other economic activities – which, he is not sure of yet. Opening a second jewellery shop in another market would be an option, but for the time being, he can't afford to pay a second rent for a shop.

M. D.D., Conakry	
Male, approximately 30 years of age	
Married, 3 + 1 children	
Runs a shop where he sells wood for constructions	
Returned to Guinea in 2011	

Migration Trajectories

Mr D. says he left Guinea because he suffered from politically motivated persecution. He reached Switzerland after having travelled to Turkey by plane (where he embarked in the plane was not revealed), and from there, on foot, to Greece. His further journey to Switzerland took place in cars and lasted several days and was not interrupted by stays in other countries. Once in Switzerland, he deposited a request for asylum and was placed in the centre at Vallorbe where he stayed for one month. Finally, M.D. was transferred to Delémont. He indicates that the duration of his stay in Switzerland was 1 year and 7 months. During his stay in Switzerland, Mr D. maintained contact with his family through occasional phone calls.

Motivation for assisted Return

A first negative decision regarding his request for asylum was delivered with the information that he will be sent back to Greece. M. D. clearly did not wish to return to Greece where he had suffered from the living conditions. When his appeal was not accepted, he decided to come back to Guinea, also because he was keen on living with his family again.

Reintegration

Well aware of the return and reintegration assistance, M. D. had immediately planned to continue his former trade: the commerce of wood. He started his commerce at a five minute walk from his house. He rents a small shop where he sells plywood and other sorts of wood for construction purposes. Since over a year, this commerce is his only source of income. His stock is small though, and transportation of the wood to the clients' places is often a problem. Mr D. is happy to be with his family again, and even the fact that his wife has had a child with another man when he was in Europe – he only learnt about its existence once back in Conakry – does not bother him. He says he'd rather have this child living with him than him living in Europe, far away from his wife and children.

Plans

His biggest hope are to be able to rent more space for stocking his goods, to have more wood to sell, and to have a possibility for transporting sold materials – a pickup would be ideal. Migration is not an option for him anymore, now that he's seen the hardships of the trip to Europe and of the life as an asylum seeker.

M.C., Conakry	
Male, over 43 years	
Married	
Runs a shop in Conakry-Taouyah with plumbers' appliances	
Returned in 2012	

Migration Trajectories

Mr C. had first gone to Italy – by Bus first, then by boat – where he says he lived for five years, in Treviso. Life was difficult there, he couldn't hardly send any money back home. Also, his father died in Guinea, while he was in Italy. There, he had done occasional jobs for employers who hired him without any formal contracts. Tired of the many difficulties, he left Italy and arrived in Switzerland by train and was assigned to the reception centre in Chiasso. He spent a total of five months in Switzerland and finally decided to return to Guinea when he didn't see a perspective for himself.

Motivation for assisted Return

But in Switzerland things didn't get any better for him. He also felt an important cultural difference, making things even more difficult. And the climate in Switzerland made him suffer additionally. He therefore made the decision to return to Africa. The money he received for realising a reintegration project was very welcome, but he says he had taken the decision even before he learnt about assisted return.

Reintegration

M.C.'s reintegration project consists of a shop where small construction companies buy plumbing materials. He operates the shop together with a friend whom he met by coincidence and who accepted to cooperate with him. The profits from the shop hardly make his family live. He thinks he can run the shop, it's the clients who are the problem: there are not enough of them. Mr C. had not participated in a training course offered to him by IOM, he thought he knows everything he needs to know about running a job.

Plans

Currently, M. C. has no plans whatsoever. He just hopes his shop with the plumbing material will work well. Migrating again is not an option for him.

A.B., Conakry	
Male, 23 years	
Single	
Runs a shop by the “cimenterie” at the outskirts of Conakry together with a friend	
Returned in 2012	

Migration Trajectories

Mr B. had left Guinea for Senegal from where a ship brought him to Italy. He then arrived in Switzerland, a thing he hadn't really planned, he just wanted to try his luck in Europe. From Geneva, where he reported to the police, he was sent to the reception centre in Vallorbe where he stayed for about a month. He says he can't remember how much time he spent in Switzerland. A. B. mentions that he had lived abroad before: In 2008-2009, he had been in Ivory Coast, also for “trying his luck”. This didn't turn out well, se he came back to Guinea and then gave it another try.

Motivation for assisted Return

After his request for asylum was rejected, A.B. decided to return to Guinea. The hardships of requesting support and of not being able to support his parents back home weighed too heavy.

Reintegration

After four months in Guinea, he invested the money for his reintegration project in the cement selling business of a friend of his. The 3.000 Swiss Francs he had received for supporting his reintegration in Guinea were not enough to start a cement selling business on his own. This would have been his preferred project, though. Next to his shop, there are other similar businesses. Small construction companies come buy cement here, in the vicinity of the cement factory. The rent for the shop is 400,000 Guinea Francs per month (approximately 550 Swiss Francs), A.B.'s says. His future wife he's met after his return lives in a village near Conakry. Unfortunately, he can only see her once a week or so.

Plans

A.B.'s dearest wish is to get married, but he first needs to find an apartment where he can establish himself with his wife. A way to achieve this would be to have a cement shop of his own; he then wouldn't have to share profits with his companions. Also, if he had one, better even: two trucks to bring the cement to clients, his income would importantly increase. It is very difficult for him to buy even one truck, because he doesn't have access to a credit with would allow him for buying a vehicle. Also, A.B. says he's afraid of having debts he might not be able to repay.

5 Reintegration

Successful reintegration is in the interest of the returnees themselves – they can live decent lives, feel useful and recognised by their context, ideally can use the experiences of their months or years abroad for building themselves a social position – and of the Guinean society: smaller numbers of marginalised persons result in increased social cohesion. And successful reintegration is in the interest of Switzerland: the better the integration, the lesser the probability of new attempts for irregular migration.

5.1 Frame Conditions for Reintegration

Political and security conditions: Guinea, after its transition phase, is politically more stable than a few years ago. The multi-ethnic state and society show divisions that might result in generalised unrest and turmoil, including armed conflict, again. Further disintegration of the Guinean society would be an important handicap to reintegration, and it would result in larger groups especially of young men leaving the country. Despite the officially recognised relevance of migration, including by the existence of the “Ministère des Guinéens de l'Étranger”, the State does not really provide services for returnees; support for their reintegration, if required, is provided by family mainly. It does invite Guineans abroad to contribute to the country's economy, and to participate in national reconciliation.

Economic conditions: An important challenge for reintegration is the economic situation of the vast majority of Guinean families. There are few job opportunities, and the labour market operates according to local standards: family first, skills and capacities are not the first criteria for employers to hire staff. It is therefore plausible that most returnees contacted in the framework of the evaluation are active in micro-enterprises or are self-employed, and that they have mainly engaged in revenue generating projects in the field of commerce. The livelihood offered by such activities is usually limited – because of the huge competition, and also because of the difficulties of such endeavours to evolve from micro-enterprises into more sustainable SME. These difficulties result from the limited entrepreneurial skills of persons who realise an economic reintegration project, and they result from the obstacles to access credits required for the successful operation also of small enterprises.

Social conditions: The country's poverty is the main cause for migration. Access to basic services (education and health in the first place) in good quality is not guaranteed for large parts of the population. The importance of familial relations usually permits migrants to return and reintegrate into networks without ado. Still, migration episodes that are regarded as economically successful make it easier for returnees to come back into a context where they can enjoy, at least for a time, the prestige of someone who' has shown his capabilities abroad.

5.2 Assessment of the Quality of the Reintegration

The success of supported reintegration is assessed in the following paragraphs according to its effects in time, and, although respective data is limited, in comparison

with AVRR programmes of other countries. It is to be noted that reintegration can be looked at from different perspectives. To be well integrated in Guinea does not necessarily mean to live there on a permanent basis. A person from Guinea living in Europe or in North America or in an African country during long years, paying occasional visits to his family and friends, may still be very well integrated – especially if he or she is able to contribute to the family's livelihood through remittances. Remigration of returnees from Switzerland does not mean in every case that reintegration has failed. Also, the measurement of the sustainability of reintegration can use a series of indicators, among them the economic success of a revenue generating project, obviously, the livelihood of the persons participating in this project, the civil status of the returnee – does he have the possibility to establish a family? Can he provide adequate housing for this family, etc. – the social role a returnee plays thanks to the reintegration efforts he has produced with the support of the Swiss support, the evolution of his health status, etc. The simple fact that a person is still in Guinea can also be an operational and valid indicator for assessing the success of reintegration.

Short term outcomes: The most important short term outcome of Swiss support for reintegration is the – compared with returnees from other countries – privileged starting situation from which returnees can start their reintegration process. Regarding its short term outcomes, Swiss AVRR support can therefore be assessed very positively and as fully in line with the foreseen outcomes. All returnees visited have utilised their reintegration allocation to start a small enterprise or to realise an investment in the family's agricultural activities (both horticulture and cattle). Except for very recent returnees (2011 and 2012) and for very few exceptional cases – e.g. one person very successfully commercialising beverages and a baker – none of the interviewed returnees are active in their initial revenue generating project. A major problem the visited projects in Conakry are faced with consists – amongst other – of their specialisation in commerce and the big competition (shops are opened where there are already very many other shops selling the same articles). The one “productive” project visited in Conakry, a bakery located not in the city's centre, is being operated very successfully since years. A very critical aspect is also the problem of accessing credits. With more liquid money, their shops would have better chances for success. Credit schemes are generally inaccessible to returnees: the interest rates are prohibitive (and indebtedness is a major risk anyway) and the collaterals cannot be offered by the persons who need the credit.

Medium term outcomes: Even if an income generating project is not durable, its realisation is an important means for the returnees to start their reintegration in the Guinean society. Without such a project, they might be less motivated not to remain idle. And, very important for young single men, their chances to get married might diminish. It was notable that several of the young returnees (in their early twenties) interviewed have established their own families shortly after they returned to Guinea. At least in two cases, they made an explicit link between their getting married and the reintegration assistance. Their status as married men, then, will contribute to their stabilisation, at least for a time, in Guinea and keep them from planning a next attempt to leave the country again in search of an improved livelihood. An additional medium term outcome of reintegration assistance is the medical support returnees who require such assistance profit from. This type of support importantly contributes to their and their families' living conditions, the possibility to work and to see to themselves.

Long term outcomes: The durability of the effects of reintegration support is obviously most difficult to assess. Based on the interviews realised in Guinea, no evidence based

statements can be made. Still, the local IOM office can provide two types of information hinting that there are examples of very successful reintegration that can be attributed, at least in parts, to the Swiss support. Some investments in agriculture appear to be sustainable, for the family in any case: it could increase the number of its livestock and / or produce more marketable fruit and vegetable and thus improving its livelihood. And then there are examples of durably successful economic activities on a larger scale – e.g. a man commercialising beverages; another one realising commercial activities (textiles) on a regional scale. Such enterprises are not exclusively familial anymore, and they create employment of which the country is in dire need.

Since Switzerland is one of the very few countries offering support for reintegration, its effects are difficult to compare with **AVRR activities of other (European) countries**. Respective data is not available from reports, but based on the results of interviews with local actors involved in the reintegration, and especially with the local IOM office, it appears that the Swiss support provided to returnees for their reintegration is especially effective. Two reasons allow for making this assessment: the volume of the support and the monitoring which lasts longer and which also a form of accompanying the project. It is also to be noted that the monitoring is a basis for decision making by IOM and FOM: Not funding taxi projects anymore was such a decision, taken based on the findings that the projects didn't work well.

5.3 Effects on and Perception of non-migrant Populations

Most of the returnees interviewed underline the fact that, knowing what they know now, they would not attempt to go to Europe anymore. The benefits from the months or years lived in Europe are too small to weigh out the hardships undergone during journeys and during the months and years in European countries, including Switzerland. But these experiences hardly enter public awareness. As more than one informant put it: "One successful migration story outweighs a hundred stories of migrants failing to achieve what they hope for, or even worse." The **perception of migration** is not shaped primarily by the experiences and recounts of returnees. Especially male Guinean youth is inclined to leave the country anyway and "will take any opportunity to do so". Very young Guinean males may dream of a career as football players in European clubs – they are continuously practicing the sport on the beaches of Conakry, in schoolyards and other playgrounds around the country, hoping to be detected by scouts that are said to visit Guinea regularly, searching for talents they can contract and transfer to clubs. And when hope is not vested in a career as a football player, the idea of getting a steady job in a wealthy country and of being able to send some money to the family is still enough of a motivation for trying to leave Guinea for a Northern destination.

Pull effects of the Swiss AVRR efforts on Guinea's resident population cannot be found. Support for reintegration is not a reason for young (or less young) Guineans to leave their country. The push effects resulting from the economic situation, in addition to stories of successful integration of Guineans in Europe, are the motors for emigration. Returnees are not faced with jealousy based on the AVRR support received from Swiss authorities. Since money is rather owned by the family than by individuals, envy within the family is not really an issue; and neighbours and friends do not comment upon reintegration assistance – of which they are not always aware – but on the fact that a person has migrated and was able to try his luck in Europe.

5.4 Assessment

The programme clearly supports **social reintegration** of returnees.

Returnees do not come home with empty hands. They themselves and their families do have a short term perspective thanks to the reintegration support. This importantly facilitates the social reintegration of returnees; they are not tagged as unsuccessful returnees, but as persons who – although not coming back wealthy – have profited from their time spent abroad.

The programme allows returnees for having a perspective for starting their **economic reintegration**.

The revenue generating projects are to be considered as a means for the returnees to have a perspective, not to be idle. Only in second priority is the economic viability of their projects to be taken as a criterion for their successful economic integration. Returnees interviewed highlight that even more substantial financial contributions provided in the framework of the AVRR programme would allow for realising more solid projects that also have better chances for sustainability.

The **sustainability** of the AVRR support in view of reintegration is limited if the criterion is the durability of the initial reintegration project.

The most obvious evidence for limited sustainability of reintegration support – if it is understood as the stabilisation in the country of origin – are the cases of re-migration of returnees. Also, most of the returnees visited are not active in their initial reintegration project, started with Swiss support, anymore. At the same time, the sustainability of support is a delicate issue: The AVRR programme cannot be (held) responsible for the successful reintegration of returnees, and even less so in a long term perspective. And returnees are not persons who will be assisted over time. Rather, they become actors in the local economy – as entrepreneurs, as self-employed persons, as farmers, as employees, etc. – based on their own capacities and initiatives. Sustainability of reintegration is not to be measured against the initial reintegration project, but it is rather to be assessed by criteria such as (i) permanent residence in the country of origin (or in the region), (ii) possibility to establish and raise a family, (iii) social integration in general, (iv) status above or below the national poverty line.

The decision not to allow reintegration projects consisting of operating a **taxi** anymore was a good decision.

With this decision – based on the experience that taxis bought were regularly sold after a rather short period, and on the assessment of costs required for purchasing (and operating) a taxi – IOM and FOM have shown that they actively manage AVRR for Guineans, that their monitoring produces results and that they use monitoring results for making strategic decisions.

The successes of the Swiss AVRR efforts are due, in part, to the **flexibility of their implementation**.

IOM, who has an overall view on the AVRR programmes of European (and other) countries identifies the Swiss programme for supporting reintegration as clearly a very successful one. This is to do with (i) the volume of financial reintegration assistance, (ii) the additional support offered to returnees – in the form of training for entrepreneurship, for instance, but also regarding the provision of help to persons with special needs, e.g. medication for persons with health problems, and (iii) the resources invested in the monitoring of the integration of returnees – at least two contacts (usually there are many

more, necessitated also by the preparation and the realisation of the reintegration project), the last one consisting in a visit in situ by OIM staff, taking place usually six months after return. A very important aspect of success is therefore the flexibility with which the Swiss funded reintegration activities are realised. The IOM office provides services in a friendly manner, and they respond, in the framework of IOM's possibilities, to the needs arising during the process of the realisation of the income generating project and of reintegration overall.

The training offer for developing entrepreneurial skills is only very timidly used.

The training offer which returnees can access if they feel they might have bigger chances for successfully realising their reintegration programme is not systematically used. The utility is not obvious to many candidates for participating in the offer – despite the fact that a new service provider has been mandated who works with methods specially tailored for a target groups with little or no experience as entrepreneurs and who therefore needs very basic forms of support.

6 Cooperation Switzerland – Guinea

Guinea and Switzerland do not maintain intensive economic ties; migration is the most important field of cooperation between the two countries. Switzerland does not have an Embassy in Conakry, and the Swiss Consulate is currently not staffed. The cooperation regarding migration consists of regular visits of FOM representatives in Guinea – to visit returnees, to inform authorities about evolutions in the Swiss migration and asylum policy, etc. – and of Guinean representatives in Switzerland – in the framework of identification missions. In addition, contacts over the phone or by email permit to organise matters to be attended to.

6.1 Assessment by the Guinean Authorities

The Guinean representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacted are well aware of the cooperation with Switzerland in the domain of migration and assess it as a most welcome basis for discussions and decision taking (on forced returns and on the identification of Guinean citizens living in Switzerland, mainly) together with the Swiss partners.

6.2 Assessment by the Swiss Authorities

The Swiss representatives clearly are the motor of cooperation with Guinea in the field of migration. They contact their Guinean partners if need be, i.e. when forced returns are to be organised, when information about the infrastructure projects is to be passed on, or when identification missions are to be planned. Swiss authorities are confident that the migration agreement is to be signed soon.

6.3 Basis of the Cooperation

Two documents are the regulatory basis for the two countries cooperation in the field of migration, i.e. an agreement on the reception of returnees from Switzerland by Guinea (2004) and a bilateral agreement on migration issues (2011, still to be signed).

6.4 Assessment

The agreements for cooperation between the two states in the field of migration are in place (although still to be finalised), and they provide a satisfactory contractual basis for all activities.

Based on the existing agreements the two states organise their cooperation on an ad hoc basis. Forced return and assisted voluntary return and reintegration can be organised to the full satisfaction of both partners. The structural aid for Guinea is an additional element of the cooperation which, timidly, adds to the attractiveness of the Swiss contribution to the cooperation. The discussions between the two countries do not appear to target strategic dimensions of migration or development. These two topics are not linked in a way that allows for producing documented results that can be and further strengthen cooperation.

7 Conclusions

The following paragraphs present conclusions which emerge from the assessments displayed in the above chapters. They are an attempt to focus on central points that, together with the recommendations, are to be taken into consideration when planning and implementing future AVRR activities.

Before proposing conclusions regarding the three main topics of the evaluation, attention is drawn to the following aspect relevant for migration from Guinea.

Migration, especially for young males in their late teens and in their twenties, is a well accepted practice in Guinean society

Migration is motivated firstly by the country's economic difficulties, but then also by what meanwhile has become a feature of Guinean society and culture: Migration is a way of living, 85% of all Guineans are younger than 45 years, and half of the population of over ten million is younger than 15 years. Leaving the country, at least temporarily, has become a way of living especially for young men; these are prepared to organise their journey to Europe, mainly, against many odds. And their families are prepared to invest in the endeavour.

7.1 Return

As the departure from Guinea, return is not a decision taken by the person individually, it is a collective decision.

Migration is not planned and realised individually. Even if a single person migrates – or returns to Guinea – the decision to do so is taken after consultation with friends and, mainly, the family.

Financial incentives are not decisive for Guinean asylum seekers' decision to return to their country of origin.

Financial support is obviously welcome, but none of the interviewed returnees made his decision based purely on this aspect of AVRR. Rather, personal and / or familial reasons are the strongest motivation for return – these may include fatigue with the living conditions in Switzerland and sickness or death of a parent remained in Guinea. And the threat of forced return can also be a major element motivating to enrol in the AVRR programme. Several of the interviewed returnees have compared their initial investment in migration with what they received in the framework of Swiss AVRR – stressing that they would not do such an investment (higher than the return and reintegration assistance) again.

The most important quality of return and reintegration assistance is not the number of returnees, but the quality of conditions under which migrants return from Switzerland to Guinea.

The numbers of voluntary returns to Guinea are comparably small: between 2005 and 2011 three times more Guineans returned to Guinea by force or were brought to other countries, than there were participants in the AVRR programme. And in the same period seven times more Guineans left Switzerland uncontrolled or had other ways of exiting Switzerland. The importance of AVRR resides in the conditions under which participants return home: these permit for returning safely and for starting reintegration with support, permitting to have a positive perspective on the first months.

Returnees and (potential returnees) are well informed about AVRR.

This is due to the fact that information is provided by different actors (FOM reception centres and headquarters, Cantons, IOM, NGO) and through different channels (in written and orally, with videos also).

The shorter the duration of migrants' stay in Switzerland the higher the probability of successful reintegration – at least in most cases.

Switzerland undertakes significant efforts to shorten the time asylum seekers spend here – by organising the asylum process more efficiently, by allowing assisted return from the reception centres, by showing flexibility in the granting AVRR. Returnees contacted who have lived in Switzerland for longer periods, but without having access to the labour market, highlight that their experiences in Switzerland did not allow them to establish themselves there and they now feel they've lost their time. A quicker decision by Swiss authorities would have helped them to clarify their ideas about their future and would therefore have been welcome.

7.2 Reintegration

The potential returnees are well aware of the reintegration assistance they are entitled to, and they do realise the planned projects, but they don't necessarily use the whole of the support offer.

The realisation of an income generating project is an excellent way to start and structure reintegration. And the motivation of returnees to commit to their plans appears to be high. Motivation is less important for accessing the additional support offer consisting of training preparing them for different aspects of their future activities as project managers and entrepreneurs.

The Swiss reintegration assistance for returnees to Guinea is, compared to the assistance provided by other countries, substantial.

The volume of financial support provided in the framework of the Swiss reintegration assistance compares very well with the provisions of other countries' AVRR programmes. And with training offer for entrepreneurship, the assistance is also comprised of additional forms of support.

Nevertheless, returnees suggest that the support for income generation projects be increased in order to enhance their chances to be successful.

Returnees' experiences show that the volume of the support does not allow for establishing a business autonomously and operate it during a first critical phase of several months without mobilising additional financial resources. As a rule, the projects last a few months, possibly up to 18; then, the returnees usually have terminated it (mainly due to the absence of financial success), having found or hoping for another activity allowing them for having a decent livelihood.

Expectations regarding reintegration, and especially about its sustainability, need to be formulated in realistic terms.

AVRR helps returnees to have a decent start in their old / new context, but it cannot guarantee durable solutions for their livelihood. Income generation projects are often terminated after about a year. But this does not mean that returnees remain inactive. They start other types of activities – either on their own or together with others, possibly also as employees.

7.3 The Cooperation between Switzerland and Guinea

The cooperation between Switzerland and Guinea in the field of migration is based on agreements allowing for regular exchanges and concrete cooperation.

Based on the existing agreements the two states organise their cooperation on a regular basis and with mutual visits (for information and monitoring purposes for Swiss Government officials, and for identifying countrymen for their Swiss colleagues).

8 Recommendations

8.1 Preconditions and their Shaping

⇒ The migration partnership with Guinea is to be ratified, kept alive and further developed.

The existing agreement between the two countries mainly allows for realising identification missions to Switzerland (permitting the identification of Guinean citizens)

and to realise forced returns. Guinea's interest in the partnership is to be increased, amongst other by creating more awareness among decision makers and technical level staff of the MoFA about the structural aid (micro credit scheme) Switzerland is offering. Also, senior staff of the MoFA and representatives of Swiss authorities are to join efforts in view of explaining the purpose of the migration partnership to relevant staff of the MoFA.

8.2 Incentives for Return

⇒ Efforts for informing about the conditions of return and reintegration need to be continuous, and they are to make use of the potential returnees' social networks.

The information system appears to be well in place, and potential returnees are reached through different information channels (reception centres, cantonal administration, NGO). Current practice of IOM and FOM to work with returnees back in their country for informing potential returnees about return and reintegration can increase the trust in the promised measures. Video messages of returnees that are shown to potential returnees (in centres, wherever Guineans gather), but also investments in the communication through the social networks of potential returnees to Guinea are also worthwhile and promising measures. This can be realised, for instance, through Diaspora organisations, through key persons from the Guinean community who are trained and paid for their services, etc. Information about return is even more thoroughly to consist of the demonstration of lacking perspectives in Switzerland and of the perspectives opening in Guinea thanks to the reintegration assistance.

8.3 Realisation of Return

⇒ Information about AVRR – as is the case already – is to be provided through different communication channels in the future as well.

Well informed potential returnees are liable to agree to voluntary return more quickly. Information in written and orally is to be provided by reception centres, by cantonal services or mandated organisations specialised in return counselling, by other organisations in contact with asylum seekers. Also, the networks of migrants themselves can be used for the dissemination of information on AVRR.

⇒ Current practice of the organisation of return is to be maintained.

The active involvement of returnees in the preparation of return (access to travel documents from their Embassy), the attempt to realise return quickly after the decision for return is taken, the reception of returnees at the airport of Conakry, the payment of the return assistance money upon arrival in Guinea are all good practices that are to be continued.

⇒ Obviously within the regulations in place and respecting all of the rights of asylum seekers, return is to be realised as quickly as possible.

The longer the stay in Switzerland and the uncertainties that go with it, the more complex, and often also: the more desolate the situations of the asylum seekers get. It is therefore important that return takes place as quickly as possible after the arrival in Switzerland, and without hazarding the diligent processing of the asylum request.

8.4 Implementation of Reintegration Assistance

⇒ In order to make returnee's economic reintegration more effective, the respective amount granted would have to be significantly larger. FOM is invited to check respective possibilities.

The financial incentives do not appear to be decisive for the decision to return. Still, the amounts reserved for economic reintegration projects allow for an initial investment in an economic activity, but they do not permit the realisation of medium term projects. Granting significantly larger amounts for economic reintegration would obviously (further) enlarge the gap between the Swiss reintegration assistance and AVRRR programmes of other countries.

⇒ The designing of reintegration projects in Guinea should continue to be possible.

Projects conceived after return may risk having a slower start, especially if the person lives in areas far away from Guinea. Still, it is probable that planning in Guinea can result in more realistic, and therefore also more successful projects.

⇒ The training programme offer for returnees who want to improve their entrepreneurial skills is to be evaluated as a basis for possible adaptation, and for the decision whether to maintain it.

The added value of such an additional support for reintegration consists of its practical utility for returnees who set-up a small enterprise. The currently operated training offer is still a young one and its effects cannot yet be assessed. What is obvious, though, is that so far, only few returnees have participated in trainings preparing them for their economic activities. In 2014, when more returnees will have been trained in entrepreneurship, a joint assessment of the mandated organisation and of IOM is to establish a basis for FOM's decision on continuing such a training offer. Such an assessment is also to consider the exchange it facilitates between returnees who participate in the training and that can be a form of mutual support.

⇒ The possibilities to establish a link between the AVRRR programme and structural aid are to be evaluated.

Persons who have returned to Guinea in the framework of the AVRRR programme do not have access to micro-credits offered in the framework of Switzerland's structural aid. Returnees who operate micro enterprises generally deplore the fact that financial institutes do not consider them as potential clients. Access to financial resources is therefore always The returnees from Switzerland who are aware of the micro-credit scheme suggest it be made accessible also for returnees – to Conakry or to other parts of Guinea.

8.5 Follow-up of Reintegration

⇒ The monitoring of reintegration is to be continued as of now.

A more intense monitoring is not liable to be more productive. If, nevertheless, more data on the returnees should be gathered over a longer period, FOM and IOM are to be prepared to make the necessary financial investments and investments in working time required.

⇒ Flexibility in accompanying returnees with special needs is to be continued.

Returnees with medical conditions, for instance, are to profit from support that addresses also their health problem. Such support is to be provided based on a plan defined jointly by IOM and the returnee and competent medical staff.

8.6 Other

⇒ The realisation of awareness raising regarding migration or the participation in such efforts together with other (European) and local actors is to be considered by FOM.

The prevention of irregular migration should be part of the migration policies – both of receiving countries and of the countries of origin. The knowledge and know-how present in FOM and IOM can be important contributions to the design and the implementation modalities of awareness raising campaigns realised by local actors, possibly with the support and close cooperation of multilateral organisations specialised in migration.

⇒ The link between assisted return and Guinea's development can be addressed more explicitly.

Mostly implicitly, and ideally, returnees who have a working experience in Switzerland and who have benefited from return and reintegration assistance can contribute to Guinea's development. Respective expectations are to be realistic, but they can influence the design of the AVRR activities for Guineans more directly. A first step could consist in linking AVRR more closely with Swiss structural aid for Guinea (i.e. the micro credit scheme, which could be made accessible for returnees as well) (see also above, paragraph 8.4).

⇒ The communication about results of AVRR is to be continued – both in view of the Swiss public and of potential returnees.

AVRR only reaches its scope if its results are made available to potential returnees – convincing them that assisted return and reintegration is a valid option for them

⇒ IOM Guinea's wish to mandate studies allowing for understanding the motivation for migration even better is to be taken into consideration by FOM.

Knowledge about migration, including its causes, is required for organising AVRR programmes. The rationale for promoting voluntary return as well as the design and implementation of providing assistance for return and reintegration can be oriented by knowledge about migration; and so can attempt to raise awareness about potential migrants regarding the risks of irregular migration.

Persons interviewed in Switzerland and in Guinea

Returnees

22 persons in Conakry and Koundara

IOM

Kabla Amihere
Marie-Louise Haba
Annika Lenz

AFODE (organisation providing entrepreneurial training for returnees)

Diallo Mamoudou Talibé

3A Entreprises

Alhadj Abdourahmane Bah
Sadou Condé

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A. Konté

Caritas Guinea

Mansare Adama
Abbé Mathieu Loua

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