

## RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN SUCCESS STORIES

August 2005

IOM Helsinki, in cooperation with the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), offers a comprehensive return and reintegration programme from Denmark to Afghanistan. IOM provides pre-departure information to returnees, makes travel arrangements, and arranges IOM transit assistance in Dubai. In addition, IOM arranges transport of returnees' cargo boxes from Denmark to Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, participants can profit from the EU-financed RANA programme that offers returnees reception and information at Kabul airport. After being picked-up at the airport, returnees receive onward transportation to their final destination. As well as reception assistance, RANA offers reintegration assistance such as counselling sessions for further professional development, educational or vocational training courses (computer, English, carpentry, electrician training and so on) or financial support to start up a small business.

### Returnee from Denmark opens up new shoe shop in Kabul

When Jalal attended an information meeting in early-February 2005 at a reception centre in Denmark, he did not imagine that in a few months time he would be a businessman in Kabul. IOM Helsinki staff, together with the Danish Refugee Council, provided information to unsuccessful Afghan asylum seekers about the option of voluntary return at the meeting. Later, Jalal was able to contact IOM through the Afghan helpline and receive answers in Dari to additional questions he had about the programme.

After leaving the reception centre on 8th June 2005, Jalal was met by staff from the Danish Immigration Service to help him with check-in and to give him his tickets and passports. Shortly thereafter, he was on the plane to Dubai, where he was met by IOM staff who assisted him with transit. Jalal arrived in Kabul on the 9th June where he was picked up at the airport and received onward transportation to his final destination in Kabul.

Three days after his arrival, Jalal went to the IOM office in Kabul to receive his first counselling session on what kind of reintegration assistance was available to him under the RANA programme. He used to work as a teacher in one of the local schools in Kabul. After teaching, to support his family and earn more money, he went into business, something he was to continue for the next 15 years before leaving Afghanistan.

Since Jalal had prior experience in business he decided to use this experience – but this time he chose the shoe retail business. He therefore rented a shop in Kabul, invested some of his own money

into inventories and requested IOM's assistance for purchasing his first stock of necessary shoes and sandals for his business.

In mid-July, Jalal inaugurated his new shoe shop in Kabul. He is very confident his business will prove successful very soon.

He plans to further expand his business and employ some workers in the near future. Through IOM, Jalal managed to start his business and provide an income for his family. He is able to support his family and has encouraged his children to focus on their studies.



Jalal in his new shoe shop © IOM Kabul 2005

Through the AVR programme, Abdul Jan has returned to Afghanistan and created a small business and a new life for himself and his family. IOM in Afghanistan continues to monitor his business and follow its progress.

*\*Returnees' name has been changed.*

For more information, call IOM Helsinki's Dari, Pashto and English-speaking operated helpline. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00-11:30 and 12:00-15:00 (service available to callers in Denmark only):  
**80 20 16 00**

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