

## 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.

### Mirwais\* makes a new start through costume design and retail

In early-February 2005, Mirwais along with other Afghans, attended an information meeting at his Danish reception centre. There he listened as IOM Helsinki staff, together with the Danish Refugee Council, provided information about the option of voluntary return. Later, when he wanted to ask more questions and find out more about the programme, he was able to contact IOM through the Afghan helpline and receive answers in Dari.

After Mirwais and his family had decided that they wanted to return to Afghanistan. IOM made all the travel arrangements and organized for the family to take cargo boxes. Throughout these preparations, Mirwais called IOM on the helpline to receive more information along the way. When the day of departure arrived, the family was taken to the airport and met by staff from the Danish Immigration Service to help them with check-in. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, Mirwais, his wife and two daughters arrived in Kabul and were received by IOM staff there.

After Mirwais and his family members returned to Afghanistan they were able to reunite with Mirwais' parents in Kabul. Before going to Denmark, he used to run a shop for selling and designing costumes. Employing two experienced workers, he proved himself and his business to be very successful. Upon his return, he requested IOM's assistance for re-establishing his former profession as he realized there was still a high demand for both retail of costumes and designing costumes.

Thus, he identified and rented small business premises in his area of residence in Kabul and with IOM's assistance he was able to

purchase the first supply of products, employ a worker and start his own business.

In mid-July 2005, Mirwais inaugurated his new venture. Out of his first profit he managed to rent a warehouse, expand his business to a very sophisticated costumes shop, and attract many customers within a short period of time. In addition, Mirwais is confident he will be able to yet further expand his business by renting a shop in a better location and employing additional workers.



Mirwais in his costume shop © IOM Kabul 2005

Through IOM's assistance Mirwais managed to plan his costume design and retail business well right from the beginning. As a result of setting up a business, the family now has a good chance to socially and economically reintegrate back into Afghan society. IOM in Afghanistan continues to monitor Mirwais' business in order to 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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