

RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN SUCCESS STORIES

June 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.

Naim* begins a new life in Kabul

Naim first found out about the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme at an information meeting at a Danish reception centre early-February 2005. IOM Helsinki staff, together with the Danish Refugee Council, provided information to unsuccessful Afghan asylum seekers about the option of voluntary return. Later, once he had decided about his return to Afghanistan, he was able to contact IOM through the Afghan helpline and received answers in Dari to questions he had about the programme.

Naim left the reception centre early on 23rd May 2005 and was taken to the airport by Red Cross reception centre staff. At the airport he and two other Afghans, who had decided to return voluntarily, were met by staff from the Danish Immigration Service to help them with check-in and to give them their tickets and passports. After check-in, the group was on their way to Dubai where IOM staff assisted them with transit. The returnees finally arrived in Kabul on the 24th May where they were received by IOM staff and taken to their final destination by car.

Two days after his arrival, Naim went to the IOM office in Kabul to pick-up his Danish reintegration grant. At the same time he also received his first counselling session on what kind of reintegration assistance was available to him under the RANA programme. Before leaving Afghanistan, Naim had been involved in his studies. While studying, he used to work part-time in a money exchange market in Kabul.

However, when he returned to Afghanistan, he decided to do something entirely different and start a business that sells spare-parts

for vehicles. After a couple of weeks, he submitted his business plan to the RANA team and identified a very good location for his spare-parts business.

Naim rented a shop in Kabul and, through the RANA programme, IOM was able to finance the purchase of the initial stock of spare-parts. Naim opened his shop in early-June and is already very satisfied with his daily income.

He was not involved in this business before, but his firm determination and good marketing strategy gave him confidence in his new business venture. He is optimistic that he will be able to further expand his business and perhaps employ an additional worker in the future.



Naim in his new spare-parts business © IOM Kabul 2005

Through the AVR programme, Naim managed to create a small business and re-establish his life in Afghanistan. As a successful businessman he has very good prospects to socially and economically reintegrate into Afghan society. IOM 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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