

Returning Home: Reintegration Success in Afghanistan



Qader*, a 23 year old Afghan man, traveled to Norway in 2010 to find work and apply for asylum. When his father suddenly passed away, however, Qader made the decision to return to Afghanistan and take care of his family.

Reintegrating back into one's home country after living abroad can be challenging. Through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, Qader was able to receive reintegration assistance tailored to his specific needs and background, helping him to find a place to live, become a partner in a successful business and continue his education.

**Name changed for security reasons*

IOM's reintegration assistance starts the moment a returnee arrives back in Afghanistan. Programme beneficiaries are received at IOM's office in the Kabul airport, and arrangements are made for a counselling session with AVRR staff. During the counselling session, different reintegration assistance options are discussed to build a tailored reintegration package that meets the needs of the individual returnee.

Qader had previously taken computer courses in Norway, and had a friend in his home town who owned a computer shop. Working with IOM staff, Qader developed a business plan for becoming a partner in his friend's shop. The plan looked at the financial prospects for the shop compared with Qader's needs, as well as risks, potential competition and other relevant factors. IOM reviewed and approved the plan, and Qader was provided with initial funds to invest in the business partnership.

In addition to funds for his business plan, Qader also received a housing stipend and an education allowance. This assistance package allowed Qader to quickly reestablish himself in his community and provide for his family.

Four months later, Qader's computer shop is doing well. Stacks of laptops and accessories for sale are attractively displayed behind the counter, and customers are frequently visiting. The shop has even hired two salespersons, bringing additional income into the community.

"I'm very grateful for the assistance I received when I returned to Afghanistan," Qader told IOM staff. "The income I make every month is enough to cover my family's expenses, and I'm using my education allowance to take more computer classes and better understand my products."

Qader's story shows how tailored reintegration assistance can benefit returnees, their families and their communities, helping to ensure the sustainability of returns.