

# LATAM METHODOLOGY ON RETURN

## **RN LATAM II**

Red europea y latinoamericana de retorno voluntario:  
para un proceso integral, eficaz y sostenible de retorno  
y reintegración

## **RN LATAM II**

European and Latin American Return Network:  
for a comprehensive, effective and sustainable return  
and reintegration process



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# LATAM

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## Introduction

This Guide is the result of the information collected and the practices developed during the knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities implemented by the European and Latin American partners, associated partners and all other actors involved in the creation and development of the existing Latin American Network on Return. The period covered is from the Network's design and development in its first phase in 2009, to its second experience, which concluded in 2013. European and Latin American participants in the Network have worked for the promotion and the establishment of comprehensive, effective and sustainable Return Programmes; within these, special attention has been paid to the re-integration phases, as well as to the voices of third country social organisations and of the returnees.

From the very start, and in order to meet the principal aim of the projects, it became clear that the Network needed to set up and further develop a common approach for the collaboration between the two continents in the field of reintegration and counselling for migrants wishing to go back to live in their countries of origin; the aim was harmonisation of services in both host countries and countries of origin, and to provide a voice for the returnees<sup>1</sup>.

1 With the term "returnees" in this manual, reference is being made to any migrant who has voluntarily gone back to live in their country of origin, who is in the process of organising that return, or voluntary departure, and to all asylum seekers who have had their application rejected and decide to return to their country of origin.

2010 saw, as a pilot scheme, the appearance of the guide entitled “Training Materials Guide”<sup>2</sup>, which contains information about the proposal for a coherent working model; this model had been applied during the execution of the Latam I project and we believe it could be suitable for any other initiative sharing the same objectives. The document was prepared jointly by the various European and Latin American social organisations which are expert in the provision of services for voluntary return, and was intended to give guidelines for the definition of a common working focus, along with the types of services which should always be guaranteed for end users.

During the designing of the proposal of the second phase of the project, the Network decided to take this line of action further, towards the creation of a shared methodology that could be used as a work tool, an instrument to deepen knowledge and capacities, and a means to collect and spread good practices.

During the implementation of the activities of Latam II, we believe we have managed to reach a significant number of primary sources of information, and with the present document our intention is to propose a comprehensive working method, which is standard and valid for everyone. The actions performed have been wide-ranging: from consultancy and direct assistance to persons who have returned to Latin America, provision of counselling and orientation from before departure in the reception country up to subsequent monitoring and support during the reintegration in the country of origin, to the holding of multi-actor and multi-sector meetings in the

2 To see the Guide please visit: [http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf\\_retorno/materiales\\_de\\_formacion3.pdf](http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf_retorno/materiales_de_formacion3.pdf)

actions have been carried out - and to involvement of all the sorts of actors who may be involved in the process in the discussion: civil society, national, and international organisations, local and state authorities, as well as the returnees themselves, in conjunction with the Latin American migrant communities in Spain, France, Holland and Italy.

The result has been the gathering of direct and up-to-date information about key issues, tools and practices which are being developed around the process of return on both continents and by very varied actors.

This methodological tool is intended to be a practical guide, specifically addressed to professionals offering orientation and providing services to migrants returning in the framework of Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes (voluntary return and voluntary departure) both in the host countries, and in the countries of return, as well as for the returnees themselves. In fact, it represents a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to offer a group of harmonised services to migrants, and aims to support and enhance interventions in different fields, as well as to support returnees in the reconstruction of their new social and professional identity in the country of origin.

All this information is complemented with a document designed solely for recommendations of a policy type, which seeks the improvement of the process and of the programmes for voluntary return, together with the strengthening of the cohesion of decisions at an inter-continental level, and in particular, at a regional level within Latin America itself. Since it identifies the profile of the returnees, the reasons which have led them to make the

decision, and the obstacles which they have encountered both in the European Union (EU) country on leaving and in the country of origin on return, this section's use lies at a level of policy incidence and of awareness raising, giving representation to issues which should be taken into account when taking measures and preparing policies within this sphere.

In order to guarantee the sustainability and the continuity of the contents and of the aims of the Latin-American Return Network, a virtual platform has been created - [www.retornovoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retornovoluntariolatam.org). There is useful and practical information available here, designed for users who may be interested in returning to their country, and it makes the network of institutional relations which have been created around the project visible and more widely known. Useful tools and methods for supplying services to returnees are available, designed for the organisations already working on the subject, those which might be interested in developing this line of activity, or which may already be providing complementary services or be involved in one stage of the process.



# I · Voluntary Return Programmes

Before examining the different stages and actors involved within voluntary return and reintegration counseling in closer detail, we believe it is important first of all to define some key notions to be understood when working in this field.

## 1. The notion of return:

Migrants return to their country of origin for various and complex reasons. The reasons may be linked to their past, or be connected to a present that in many occasions did not respect the expectations constitutive of their migration process. There are cases where migrants face hardships in the host country, and other cases where even though they have reached a satisfactory social position, they decide to return to their country. Return can obviously as well represent the desire to go back home after several years spent in a foreign country, which is one of the options always available for a person within their personal migration process.

Many elements may intervene in the decision to return. Today, and in the specific context of voluntary return between the EU and Latin America (LA), economic reasons play a primary role. Nevertheless, family or other personal circumstances can also be conclusive in reaching this decision. Changes in the legal status of migrants in the EU (regular or irregular administrative status, rejected asylum seeker) are also a key element when assessing this option.

The different motivations can also be analysed through the so-called “push and pull factors” theory. “Pull factors” are the elements that attract the potential returnee away from the host country and back towards the country of origin. Some of these pull factors can include family ties, homesickness and social and patriotic reasons. Tied together with these are “push factors” which oblige the returnee to leave the host country. Such factors include insufficient financial means, insecure residential and legal status, discrimination, integration difficulties and inability to become adjusted to the life style. Studies show that there is no single key motive for the decision to return. Instead, the decision is normally influenced by a number of different elements, which may vary in importance for the potential returnee. However, within the experiences of the RN LATAM project, we have observed that push factors play a more important role, at least in the current economic context.

Return is, in a general sense, the act or process of going back to the point of departure<sup>3</sup>. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilised combatants; or between a host country (either transit or destination) and a country of origin, as in the case of migrant workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, and qualified nationals. There are subcategories of return which can describe the way the return is implemented, e.g. voluntary, forced, assisted and spontaneous return; as well as sub-categories which describe who is participating in the return, e.g. repatriation (for refugees).

3 The notions of return as used in this Guide are the definitions in the OIM’s Glossary on Migrations, 2nd Edition, 2011.



In the same way, depending upon the degree of voluntariness, three different categories can be identified: voluntary return, voluntary departure and forced return.

### **Voluntary return, voluntary departure and forced return.**

It is important not to confuse the three definitions, since the degree of voluntariness of the subject is different, and this fact has strong influence on the process of return and reintegration<sup>4</sup>.

**1. Voluntary return:** *Voluntary return is the assisted or independent return to the country of origin, of transit or to another third country based on the free will of the returnee.* It implies that the person leaves the host country in the absence of any administrative or judicial decision or act. It can however be facilitated by physical, psychological or material assistance. It usually means the end of the migratory cycle.

**2. Forced return:** *Forced return is the compulsory return of an individual to the country of origin, of transit or to a third country, on the basis of an administrative or judicial act.* This procedure is applied to persons who come under a judicial order in the cases stipulated by law, who incur an expulsion order as a result of an administrative decision or who do not have valid authorisation to stay in the EU. The individual is escorted by the police until arrival in the country of return.

4 See also: [http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf\\_retorno/RN\\_Latam-Final\\_Report\\_English.pdf](http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf_retorno/RN_Latam-Final_Report_English.pdf)

**3. Voluntary departure:** *Voluntary departure means compliance with the obligation to return within the time limit fixed for that purpose in the return decision. Return decision means an administrative or judicial decision or act, stating or declaring the stay of a third-country national to be illegal and imposing or stating an obligation to return. This is different from forced return because the individuals are not removed by force but do have to leave of their own accord; they are free during the journey.*

This Guide will only consider Voluntary Return and Voluntary Departure.

As explained earlier, the issue of voluntariness is a key element in assisting returning migrants. The fact is that a person returning of their own free will not only represents the most respectful way to proceed, but also means it is easier to advise them (where there is no physical, psychological, or material pressure), as the person is motivated to return to their country of origin.

Migrants who did not voluntarily choose to return but were obliged to do so either by an administrative decision (expulsion, invitation to leave the national territory) or by circumstances (economic, family, etc.) not only are far more difficult to assist, but also face a harsher reintegration process. In fact, different reports and studies conducted e.g. on Kosovar returnees from Germany, show that forced returnees face great difficulties in adapting to their country of origin which make them unable to manage essential parts of their everyday life. Therefore, it appears that permitting

returnees to have a period of time to get prepared to return, even a short one, both under voluntary and mandatory return, gives them the chance to prepare the decision, and to arrive with at least some motivation to start a new life, increasing their chance of reintegrating successfully into their country of origin<sup>5</sup>.

In view of the considerations presented above, Assisted Voluntary Return would represent by far the best option for all the stakeholders involved (state authorities, non-governmental actors and returnees themselves) being, as has already been stressed, the most decent way to return, and also the least expensive and most sustainable one, in contrast to forced return. The expenses of forced return are far higher and less sustainable than the costs of assisted voluntary returns.

## **2. 2. Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes (AVR)<sup>6</sup>**

Assisted Voluntary Return represents the possibility of returning with logistical and financial support. This solution is usually offered to migrants no longer wishing or able to stay in the host country, and who want to go back to their country of origin. Assistance is provided in order to help migrants to achieve a dignified, sustainable and safe return.

This kind of assistance is handled through what are

5 Danish Refugees Council: Recommendations for the Return and Reintegration of Rejected Asylum Seekers (May 2008, p. 58)

6 Henceforth Assisted Voluntary Return programmes will be referred to as AVR.

known as “Voluntary Return Programmes”. This option is usually available only for migrants returning voluntarily and/or who find themselves in a vulnerable situation. In many countries though, migrants subject to an administrative or judicial decision or act (i.e. voluntary departure) can also be included. However, people returning forcibly usually can't take part.

Assisted voluntary return programmes usually consist of 3 stages:

- Before the departure (PRE-departure) – provision of reliable information to the migrants, counselling, support for the practical organisation and preparation of the journey.
- During the journey – payment for the ticket, booking, logistical support and assistance.
- After the arrival (POST-departure) – reception, assistance and support aimed to facilitate reintegration.

The extent of pre-departure and post-departure counselling depends on the particular programme in place (European, national, regional or local). While certain States finance complete social orientation before and after the departure of the migrant, others may opt not to propose this type of assistance at all.



### 3. Sustainable return

We consider that a sustainable return should represent the aim to be achieved by each AVR project, insofar as it enables returnees to avoid a new migration, which is likely to be unwanted or illegal. The sustainability of the process and the elements that show its achievement can be identified from two different perspectives. From an individual point of view, the sustainability of the process cannot be restricted to migrants not travelling back to European territory in the short or medium term (re-emigration); instead it should be defined as the absence of necessity and desire to leave their country of origin again, as well as the feeling of being reintegrated in the home country.

At a global level, return can be considered sustainable if it is a part of the process of development of the community and of the country, in particular if it improves the economic, social and political context. Finally, a major determinant in the context of AVR is the ability of the returnee to be independent from external actors after the period during which financial allowances and social and psychological support are granted.

As financial independence is directly linked to the sustainability of livelihoods, it is worth drawing attention to the definition provided by the Department for International Development in the UK (DFID) which states that this is the case when they are *“resilient, in the face of external shocks and stresses, are not dependent upon external support and do not undermine the livelihoods of, or compromise the livelihood options open to, others”*<sup>7</sup>. This definition can be applied to

7 DFID, Sustainable livelihood guidance sheet, April 1999

both financial and psychological and social support within the reintegration of the returnee. In this sense, a return would be sustainable when the returnee is independent from their reintegration counsellor, and when their success is positively perceived within the community, and not as discriminatory with respect to the other persons living in that community.

Organisations providing reintegration assistance in the countries of origin play a large role in ensuring the sustainability of the whole process, from the beginning to the end of the support, by helping migrants to achieve a good financial, psychological and social situation in their home country.

Nonetheless, if returnees wish to re-emigrate, either to a previous host country or to another country, in Latin America or anywhere else, and this appears to be legally and economically viable, re-emigration may also constitute a sustainable solution. For this reason, it would be important to allow returnees to return anywhere they have close family or community ties.

## **4. 1. Return, Migration and Development**

If we link the idea of voluntary return to that of sustainability, the returnees themselves are not only contributing to the success of their personal process but are also having a positive influence on the development of their closest community and, in this way, contributing to a wider development. From this perspective, voluntary return is included in the idea of connecting migration and development within a concept of bidirectional -or circular- flows, where



there is existence both of migrants leaving their country of origin and of migrants who return. This would be linked to what some have called “*codevelopment*”.

The original idea of *codevelopment* arose when worldwide migration began to be perceived as stemming from globalisation and, therefore, to be linked to the phenomena of migration and the development of the countries producing those flows. One of the first definitions of *codevelopment* – in a positive sense – was put forward by Sami Nair as a proposal for the integration of immigration and development in such a way that both countries, the country of issue and the country of reception, could benefit from the migratory flows.

What we prefer, and will refer to from now on as a link between migration and development, has been interpreted in two different ways: it could be said that we are facing both positive acceptance and another negative reaction to this relationship. The first acceptance conceives of the migrant as the development vector from the country of origin, the second reaction considers development as a potential instrument in the control of migration.

The benefits of this interaction lead to positive effects both for the country of origin and for the reception country. In the reception country, the *codevelopment* will lead to intercultural enrichment, to cooperation for development undertaken by actors familiar with the society they are dealing with, to channelling the arrival of workers in line with labour market demand, and to greater integration of migrants into the reception country.

This link has also been interpreted as a manner of

managing and controlling migratory flows through investment in the countries of origin; this follows the logic of “the greater the development the less the need to emigrate to other countries”, reinforced on occasions by the use of other instruments such as the signing of migratory or readmission agreements.

Within the EU framework, it was at the 1999 Tampere Council that a vision of migration and development was proposed which would integrate migrations into foreign affairs policies and community policies of cooperation for development, and which would adopt a series of measures with the purpose of optimising their effects on development. From this perspective, this link was conceived with the idea of migratory flows going in only one direction, in the context concerning us here, the arrival of migrants from Latin America in the European Union.

Nonetheless, nowadays, the circumstances are different and as a result of the emergence of countries hitherto considered of lower level of development – and therefore issuers of migration – and of the economic crisis which has particularly affected the countries traditionally receiving migration, the migratory flows must now be considered bidirectional. This mobility is currently dominated by two types of situations: emigration of EU nationals to certain Latin American countries, along with the voluntary return of migrants to their countries of origin.

Voluntary return, reintegration and the link between migration and development are very closely associated ideas, which should be related both in reception countries in Europe through the preparation for return, and in the



country of origin through reintegration actions which the returnee may carry out and which may have a positive influence on the development of the returnee's community and country.



## II · General profile of Beneficiaries

During the implementation of the Latin American Return Network's activities and direct assistance to returnees, several features and characteristics in the profile of the final beneficiaries have appeared repeatedly, and have been identified by the collaborating stakeholders and actors. We believe these recurring characteristics could give important indications about the way to assist and help migrants during the organisation and the implementation of their return; we also believe that they could be a good example of a general Returnee Profile.

### Profile identified through the experiences of the Latam Network:

- Latin Americans deciding to return from an EU member state are principally doing so from Spain and Italy, and, to a lesser extent, from Belgium and the United Kingdom.
- The numbers for men and for women are very similar, and the age range is mainly between 30 and 50.
- The majority of Latin-Americans returnees decide to make the return with their entire family.
- Most of them have sent remittances to the country of origin over the entire migratory period.

- Most of them initially had papers in order, but due to the loss of employment, they have found themselves in an ensuing situation of administrative irregularity.
- Most of the returnees did not find themselves living in the streets, and those who did, lived in that situation for a short period of time before returning.
- There are many cases of people who have been excluded from AVR Programmes for having dual European-Latin American nationality, Spanish and Italian above all, although they did not have the means to return. Some of them finally managed to go back at their own cost, but with great difficulties before and after their departure.
- It has been detected that Latin-Americans mostly arrive in the country of origin without savings, since they will have waited until the economic breakdown point to take the decision to return, and they have used up all their resources in organizing and implementing the journey back.
- When they reach their country of origin, the majority of returnees are well received by their family in their country of origin. It is often the case that they return with their household goods (furniture and household effects).
- More than immediate basic needs, which they manage to cover with the help and support of their families, they have mediation needs such as to find work, have access to education for their children, support and psychological

assistance, and training in order to look for employment.

- Many of the people who have returned do not rule out the possibility of re-emigrating to Europe, or to the United States, or to neighbouring countries.

### **Main Identified Motivations for Return in the experience of the Latam Network:**

- Economic reasons.
- To take care of parents who are growing older or ill.
- To start up a business even though their economic situation in the host country is not too bad.
- Return based on the idea that the economic situation is bad in Europe and what they have been told about how Latin America is growing economically, leading them to make a rushed decision. Then in some of these cases on arriving back in the country of origin, they realise that the economic situation was idealised.
- Growing number of cases where the existence of Family Violence situations has precipitated the return decision, even though it should be mentioned that these reasons will affect the Return Process, above all if there are minors who need the father's authorisation in order to travel.

- To enjoy retirement.

### **Main Obstacles identified during the Return in the experience of the Latam Network**

- Difficulty in obtaining / lack of information about the possibility of assisted return and about Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes.
- Complexity of the AVR Programme's procedures, due to the concentration of most of the services in the capital of the country of origin.
- Lack of proper guidance and provision of country of origin information while taking the decision.
- Deadlines: sometimes the deadlines are too tight/slow, or simply do not fit the returnees' preferred path (for instance, they want to wait until their children finish the academic year but the process is faster).
- Slow pace of bureaucratic process and of required steps in Consulates or other bodies, and high cost of required documents.
- Existence of debts payable in the host country such as: taxes, utilities, fiscal and commercial bills etc.
- Existence of pending legal issues, which could lead to

ineligibility for participation in assisted return programmes.

- Lack of or restricted possibility of returning to a country which is not the country of origin. The most serious cases concern rejected asylum seekers: although their application may have been refused, they are afraid to go back to their country of origin.

As above with general returnees' profiles, specific profiles of more vulnerable groups are highlighted below. Special attention should be paid to these situations as they present special necessities and call for particular assistance and services.

### **Vulnerable Groups**

A vulnerable group or sector of society can be defined as a group that is at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or economic hardship, than other groups within the State; any group or sector of society (such as women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples or migrants) that is at higher risk in periods of conflict and crisis. In the voluntary return field, further vulnerable persons could be people who have lost everything and find themselves with absolutely no resources to start their new life with, people who have lived in very bad conditions for a long period of time before managing to return, people who return because they had fallen ill and need special medical

treatments, unaccompanied children, women who have been victims of family violence, rejected asylum seekers and victims of trafficking who may be afraid of being harmed once back, and worse.

Because of the high level of their vulnerability and of the specific risk assessment they need, particular attention and care must be paid to the two following categories<sup>8</sup>:

### **Victims of Human Trafficking and Rejected Asylum Application**

Victims of human trafficking are people who have been recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs<sup>9</sup>.

8 For further information in greater detail on the subject, see the essential bibliography in the last chapter.

9 Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime.

Because they are specifically vulnerable, their voluntary return and reintegration must be managed with care. Unlike other candidates for voluntary return, victims of human trafficking may face serious risks to their safety or the safety of their family when they go back to their country, and the success of their reintegration is all the more crucial as they risk being re-trafficked if the conditions which led them to be trafficked recur.

Consequently, a pre-return risk assessment must always be conducted before planning any return of a victim of human trafficking. This includes assessment of the economic, social, political and military situation of the country, the types of discrimination minorities can suffer, the possible involvement/participation of state authorities of the community or of the family in the trafficking and other specific features of vulnerability of the returnees (young age, gender, psychological or psychosocial difficulties).

Besides these evaluations, other risks must be assessed: the punishment by national authorities for unauthorised departure or other alleged offences and the concrete risk of violence and intimidation from traffickers – particularly if the returnee had cooperated with law enforcement agencies or has an unpaid debt with the traffickers. Again, if the person collaborates in the prosecution of their traffickers, one must be sure that the return does not jeopardise the completion of the proceedings. In any case, the return should not occur before the victim has had access to solutions to these problems. If there are reasonable reasons to conclude that return would pose a serious risk to the safety of the

victim and/or to the safety of their family, return cannot be an option.

The journey back to the country may be a very critical stage, because it could remind the victim of their transfer from their country to the country of trafficking. Information regarding the procedure and the process should always be fully provided, as testimonies<sup>10</sup> have shown that during the return process and journey some returnees felt as they were being trafficked again because no one explained clearly to them what was going to happen. It is crucial to make sure the returnees understand everything and feel safe, and to accompany them all along the trip, until they reach a place where they are safe.

The voluntary return and the re-integration of trafficked persons should ultimately involve all kinds of actors, in order to prevent and avoid re-victimisation and the risk of re-trafficking.

10 Study on Post-Trafficking Experiences in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy and Portugal, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2010

### **III · Voluntary return orientation**

This part of the guide aims to describe the different steps in voluntary return orientation. It intends to give very practical advice to professionals who work with returnees in the host country and in the country of origin.

First of all, voluntary return professionals agree that information on voluntary return should be provided at the earliest possible point on the migration pathway. The main purpose of this “early information” is to guarantee potential stakeholders the time to process and choose the most suitable migratory option in full knowledge of the facts. In fact, it is not always possible to predict the evolution of the migration process. However, the fear of being misunderstood often pushes professionals to talk about the voluntary return option only when commitment has been made to the migration pathway or when the integration of migrants is at a critical stage; this could lead to the migrant perceiving the return as a personal failure. This might in turn lead to difficulties at the reintegration phase. Therefore, information on the right to return to one’s country of origin and existing supporting programmes facilitating voluntary return should be provided from the time of arrival in Europe (on receiving the first residence permit, when handing in the asylum claim, etc.) or at any other crucial moment in the migration process (rejection of the asylum claim on first applying, arrival in detention centres, etc.).

Besides personal interviews or workshops, the provision of information and counselling can be provided through various channels. Information can be spread through websites containing information on national voluntary return programmes, multilingual information material, frequently asked questions, video spots, etc. and by maintaining different channels of communication open, such as email, telephone, virtual platforms and etc..

In addition, awareness-raising meetings with stakeholders (migrant associations, embassies and consulates, etc.) would promote a positive change in and perception of the voluntary return process.

Voluntary Return Orientation should develop through 4 Phases:

1. Pre-departure
2. Travelling back and arrival in the country of origin
3. Reintegration
4. Monitoring

## 1. Pre-departure

The Pre-Departure phase itself can be divided in turn into two different phases; in general it consists of the provision of preliminary information where voluntary return is only one of the possible options that migrants may choose.

**Phase 1. The first interview: Taking the decision to return**

While some migrants have already taken the decision to return to their country of origin, others may be hesitating, or their decision may not be the result of careful and mature reflection.

The role of voluntary return services should be to give information on the existing voluntary return scheme and to support migrants so that they can take an informed decision over whether voluntary return is the best option in their situation.

Thus voluntary return should not represent the only solution, but one of various different options<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the interviewer has to examine whether the migrant has taken all the existing possibilities into consideration and whether these are feasible and/or adequate.

Organisations assisting migrants should not try to “sell” voluntary return and raise false hopes concerning this possibility. Furthermore, the potential returnee should not be expected to take a decision immediately after the preliminary interview. On the contrary, they should take the time needed to assess their options for themselves before finally choosing one of them. The initiative to get back in contact with the voluntary return counsellor should therefore only come from the returnee.

This phase is of particular importance in order to prevent hasty decisions determined by particular and present situations. It is important to avoid decisions about voluntary

11 Another option could be integration in the host country if this is possible. This includes regularisation for irregular migrants, enrolment in projects facilitating integration for regular migrants or referral to social services or reception programmes for migrants in vulnerable situation.

return based only on a possible benefit from the financial support offered by the return programme.

Different professionals (other than those specializing in voluntary return counselling) might intervene at this moment to facilitate reflection and provide all the information needed; these might be a legal adviser who could verify whether the person could qualify for legal residence or access to nationality in the host country, or a psychologist who could help the potential beneficiary to understand and consider the emotional process that goes with the decision of return.

An important issue that the returnee should take into account when taking the decision is also the fact that host countries usually ask returnees to sign a document in which the returnee gives their word not to return to Europe during a given period of time; this then implies a Non-Entry Ban on official records on leaving the State under AVR, which means that the migrant will not be allowed to enter European territory during that same period of time. The duration of the Non Entry Ban is decided by the authorities of each country. The returnee must be totally aware then of this implication of their decision, mainly if on returning they leave important personal ties in the host country.

As already mentioned, among the reasons for return we have to give top place to economic questions, and special relevance to the welfare situation being experienced in the reception country. Therefore, in the current context, with Europe experiencing a major economic crisis which is particularly affecting the migrant population, return is becoming one of the few remaining options for many of that population. But there are also many other reasons that



push migrants to leave the host country and make them feel the need to return to their country of origin: the loss of employment and the exhaustion of unemployment benefits; the rejection of their asylum or residence claim; a family breakdown (separation, divorce) that makes life impossible in the host country from a legal or a financial point of view; an urgent need to be reunited with the family in the country of origin (e.g. death or illness of a family member, etc.), etc.

These situations could make migrants feel that, even though they are not subject to forced return, they are de facto forced to return to their country of origin. And when return is not completely freely chosen, it may lead to disappointment. The returnee feels that they did not manage to accomplish what they imagined they would at the moment of arrival. An additional frustration may emerge if the person is not a single adult but has other family members, spouse and/or children, to take care of. They may feel that they have not been able to propose a better future for them. And, later on, not being understood and emotionally supported by the family in the country of origin can be a source of anxiety.

In these delicate cases, the role of the counsellor should be to help the migrant to overcome their disappointment, so that this disappointment does not prevent them from taking an informed decision. In certain cases, managing disappointment might call for the intervention of a psychologist.

Once again, vulnerable cases will require even more assistance from the return counsellor. During the interview, different types of vulnerability should be taken into account and assessed, and the intervention of additional professionals

such as psychologists might be required. In addition, referral to actors assisting returnee migrants in the country of origin could be vital.

During this first interview it would be advisable to involve all family members as well as the returnee, since all of these voices should be taken into account when talking about the motivation for return.

Besides assessing the motivations behind a potential return, preliminary information should be given about the suggested voluntary return scheme (availability, services, entitlements, role of national authorities and NGOs, length of the procedure, etc.) and other potential projects that could complement the assistance.

### **The following information should be collected:**

- Integration pathway in the host country (time of arrival, migration goal, qualifications and professional career before and during the migration, state of health).
- Relevant Documentation (legal issues, current professional and housing situation, social benefits, health problems, psychological problems).
- Degree of vulnerability (victims of trafficking, humanitarian cases, possible diseases, elderly, single parents, families with children, beneficiaries of international protection, unemployment, homelessness, other situations, etc.<sup>12</sup>).

12 For such vulnerable cases, the return counsellor must not hesitate to refer the case to caseworkers/NGOs specialising in the issue.

- Family situation in the country of origin (rebuild along with the migrant networks in the country, if they still have ongoing contacts or not, invite them to renew personal ties to find information about the potential support).
- Psychological aspects (extent of undeclared personal reasons, any factors of “constraint” in the choice).

**The following questions should be addressed at this stage:**

- Why are you interested in voluntary return?
- Do you want to leave the host country?
- What other options might you have?
- Is there anything that is forcing you to return?
- What do you expect from the return?
- Does the whole family, including children, agree about returning to the country of origin?

**DO's and DON'Ts during the interview**

- Carefully choose the place, taking care about the setting of the interview;

- Plan the time available;
- Do not provide incomplete, confusing or inaccurate information;
- Always be attentive to migrants' questions and preoccupations;
- Do not ask closed-ended and leading questions that do not allow the person to freely express themselves;
- Do not make generalisations based on limited knowledge of the country of origin and on the profile of the migrant;
- Do not have a judgmental attitude and think you know what the best solution is for the migrant;
- Do not consider the migrant as someone who lacks autonomy and who is in need of continual assistance;
- Recognise the potential and personal resources of the migrant.

### **Frequent exclusion criteria in EU Return Programmes**

Each voluntary return programme fixes its own rules concerning eligibility. However, a number of frequent exclusion criteria are listed here:

### 1. *Legal situation*

Some programmes are open to migrants with their papers in order. However most of them are reserved for migrants in situations of irregularity. In the first case, this means migrants giving up residence permits.

### 2. *Minimum stay in the EU*

A minimum stay in the EU might be required to benefit from an assisted voluntary return programme. For example, the European Return Fund requires 12 months of minimum stay. National programmes might be more flexible on this requirement.

### 3. *Vulnerability*

Voluntary return programmes are usually aimed at vulnerable migrants who are not able to return by their own means.

### 4. *Criminal records*

In the event of ongoing criminal charges, migrants usually cannot leave the host country.

### 5. *Nationality of a European Union Member State*

Voluntary return is offered to third-country nationals with no specific links to EU host countries, so that they cannot freely re-enter the European Union. As this is not the case of EU nationals, this population group is excluded from voluntary return programmes; this includes those holding double nationality (i.e. citizenship of a Latin-American country together with nationality of one of the European Member States).

*6. The returnee has already benefited from a voluntary return programme*

Having previously benefited from a voluntary return programme might be considered criteria for exclusion.

## **Phase 2. The second interview: preparation of voluntary return**

When the returnee has already decided to leave the host country and to return voluntarily to their country of origin, then the phase of preparation of voluntary return starts.

The counsellor should organize a second meeting where this option is further discussed with the migrant and any family living with them in the host country. A range of questions should be raised to cover each issue which would influence the return, in order to be sure that it is feasible and to make sure the potential returnee is aware of what to expect, and is materially and psychologically prepared for return. Some issues are decisive as they materially prevent the migrant from returning, while others would have an impact on the conditions of return but will not prevent it.

The following verifications and identifications should always be performed with the potential returnee and their family:

### **Eligibility for Voluntary Return programmes:**

- Identification of the voluntary return programme(s) in place for which the migrant is eligible.
- Identification of any other potential complementary return projects and for which the migrant is eligible (e.g. projects funded by the EU or other national or international organisations).
- Verification to find if the migrant could be entitled to a training programme before leaving the host country.

### **Obstacles to leaving the host country:**

- Verification to find if the travel document (passport or laissez-passer) is available. In the event that it is not, the migrant should be advised on how to obtain such a document.
- Verification of specific medical needs for which medical treatment is unavailable or inaccessible in the country of return or which prevent the returning migrant from travelling.
- Identification of any other obstacles that might prevent the migrant from leaving the host country.

### **Country of origin information:**

- Verification of the potential returnee's knowledge of the general situation in the country of origin (living conditions cost of food, cost of living, housing, schooling, etc.).
- Cost of transporting goods back to the country of origin and possibly existing taxes to be paid.
- Employment opportunities.
- Conditions of access to health, education and social security.
- The administrative processes that the returnee has to complete (national ID, registration with local administration or taxation authorities, etc.).
- Possibility of transferring pension rights.
- Possibility of recognition of qualifications.

### **Return to the country of origin**

- Verification of the migrant's network (relatives and friends) in the country of return.
- Identification of immediate needs in the country of return

(housing, schooling of children, medical treatment, other basic necessities, etc.).

- Identification of potential employment opportunities in line with the migrant's qualifications and professional experience, as well as with the economic context in the country of return (if these have to start in the host country, they have to be reevaluated/redefined once in the country of return).
- Assessment of training needs (if these have to start in the host country, they have to be reevaluated/redefined once in the country of return).
- Verification to ascertain if all returnees have the necessary vaccines to enter the country of origin.
- Verification of the security conditions in the country of return for victims of trafficking and beneficiaries of international protection.

Collecting this information should lead the voluntary return counsellor to assess the feasibility of return from different points of view, although once again some issues might call for the intervention of external stakeholders in order to be treated. For example, an essential intervention is that of counsellors in the country of origin as their collaboration begins to be crucial at this stage and for the development of the subsequent phases.

The above-mentioned support, and the possibility of following up the reintegration phase in the country of origin, could depend on the extent of the project, or on whether it includes post-return assistance financed by a local organisation. In this case, interventions performed before and after the return should be coordinated in order to offer the best assistance possible to the migrant.

Besides this, the organisation in the return country can ensure that the migrant and the return counsellor in the host country have realistic information on conditions to be faced in the country of origin. This information is even more important in the case of migrants who left their country of origin a long time previously and/or who do not have a personal and professional network there. In cases where there is no support in the country of return, other possible interventions to obtain up-to-date country of origin information are carried out by consulates in the host country, local non-governmental organisations specialising in return, by migrant associations in the host country and through the offices of International Organisations dealing with return such as the Ibero-American States Organisation (OEI) and the IOM<sup>13</sup>.

In cases when projects do not have post-departure financial support and assistance envisaged, the task of the

13 For country of origin information, the following websites can be consulted: "Fichas País" for Latin American countries of the IOM (<http://www.spain.iom.int>), the Choices website of Refugee Action ([www.choices-avr.org.uk](http://www.choices-avr.org.uk)), the Voluntary Return website of the IOM (<http://irrico.belgium.iom.int/>), the Voluntary Return website of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees ([www.zirf.eu](http://www.zirf.eu)), etc. For non-governmental organisations in Latam countries, please refer to the Latam website ([www.retor-novoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retor-novoluntariolatam.org)). For non-governmental organisations in other countries (in Latin-America or on other continents), please refer to the website of the ERSO Network ([www.erso-project.eu](http://www.erso-project.eu)), the RIRVA Network ([www.reterirva.it](http://www.reterirva.it)) and the Choices website of Refugee Action ([www.choices-avr.org.uk](http://www.choices-avr.org.uk)).



host country return counsellor is far more difficult since no local organisation will be able to continue with and follow up on the migrant after returning. The counsellor is encouraged to give the returnee the address of any organisation (local NGO, state agencies or international organisations) that, based on the services provided and their profile, may be able to provide social and professional orientation in the country of origin.

It is important not to forget that the potential returnee should be free to change their mind whenever they want during the preparation of Return.

## **2. Travelling back and arrival in the country of origin**

After the final return decision has been taken, the return project has to be prepared and implemented to be put in place in the host country. The implementation can either be performed by a civil society organisation, a non-governmental actor, such as an NGO, a State authority or an international organisation (e.g. IOM).

Whichever the actor is, the return counsellor should prepare the returnee's file folder. Besides administrative documents (photocopy of travel documents, of the resident permit (if applicable) and of flight tickets, certificate of eligibility to financial aid, etc.) it could include a "client questionnaire" with the most important data regarding the returnee. This is not only useful for summing up migrants' personal data but also serves as a liaison document for organisations counselling the migrant in the country of origin (if applicable). In addition to this questionnaire, it is recommended that a

receipt for the financial aid received and a document on data authorisation be filled in by the returnee<sup>14</sup>.

The departure might be delayed if the migrant is not in possession of a travel document. In this case, the passport has to be renewed at the consulate of the country of origin. If this is not possible, a single entry travel document or the so-called “laissez-passer” can be issued by the consulate. The issuance of such travel documents may considerably delay the time of departure and this could lead to difficulties such as in the case of the returnees holding regular status in Europe: they may face an overstay on their residence permit. In other cases, potential returnees may take a long time to decide to opt for a voluntary return programme. Special attention should be paid as the migrant might find themselves without financial resources. In certain cases, some voluntary return programmes might offer emergency financial support until the return becomes possible, if this is not the case, migrants might be deprived of any means. Therefore, the return counsellor has to mobilise all resources possible to allow the returnee to undertake their return with dignity. This might include emergency financial support<sup>14</sup> from State, non-governmental institutions (e.g. church, etc.), social services or emergency shelter as well as efforts to bring forward the date of the departure.

Below we are detailing a Reference List of Documents recommended for returnees to take with them on their trip back to their country of origin:

14 An example of these documents used in the framework of the RN LATAM II project can be found in annex.



### Check-list for returnees:

- *Curriculum Vitae* containing all professional experience and qualifications obtained in the host country (if no official certificate is available, a letter from the employer can be useful to prove the professional experience).
- Employment contracts and pay slips which will allow migrants to claim pension rights when retiring.
- Schooling records, diplomas, etc. which will allow returning children to apply for schools or higher education.
- Health records and certificate of vaccination.

## 3. 1. Reintegration and Arrival in the country of origin

Reintegration in the country of origin is the process that leads the returnee to feel at home, by being reinserted into the economic system and the social structures of the country of origin and by readopting its culture<sup>15</sup>: it depends on economic, social and cultural criteria.

It is a complex and long-term process, which is not easy to achieve and which will have a big impact on the psychological state of the returnees and determine their willingness to stay in the country or to leave again.

Ideally, all voluntary return programmes should provide social, financial and psychological assistance not only before leaving the host country but also after arrival in the returnee's country of origin, or at least, if possible, to orient them towards an organisation providing this kind of aid.

Assistance should start immediately after the first reception to examine immediate basic needs and assess the necessity for psychological support. It continues with activities aimed at promoting the migrant's social and economic reintegration in the country of origin. Therefore the counsellor should pay specific attention to the reasons behind the decision to return: the type of assistance will be defined on the basis of these reasons.

But even if the return was carefully prepared from the host country, the reintegration process is not without obstacles. This phase often passes through three different stages. After a first stage when the returnee lacks the necessary information, is confused and separated from their environment, an adaptation starts that later on will lead to a self-development phase<sup>16</sup>.

When reference is made to economic reintegration it usually refers to the ability of returnees to earn their own living by achieving a successful professional project, while social reintegration means developing and/or regaining a personal network of friends and relatives, as well as cultural reintegration and the re-adoption of the values, way of living, language and traditions of the country of origin's society.

16 Presentation by the representative of PeruMigra during the Latam Multistakeholder Meeting in Lima (29 November 2012).



The three aspects are closely linked, because having an employment contract improves living conditions, which makes it easier to feel at home and to meet people, and to participate in activities of socialisation. In the same way, being socially reintegrated facilitates the re-adoption of the cultural codes, and reciprocally, sharing the same culture makes social reintegration easier.

Reintegration is a major issue, as returnees may face social isolation or stigmatisation and may be rejected by their families and communities if they consider the returnee has failed to bring back money, or has left their relatives behind during the emigration, or has been involved in illegal business. Reintegration measures must consist of appropriate physical and psychological health care, housing, educational and employment services<sup>17</sup> to enable returnees to start a new life.

It should be stressed that return does not only imply difficulties but also opportunities that have to be exploited by the reintegration counsellor. In fact, having experience of life in other countries can be a factor in successful social and economic reintegration, besides having previous experience of adaptation.

If the voluntary return programme, or any other complementary projects and initiatives (such as Latam project), provide local assistance, and if the returnee needs it, the local partner could start immediate assistance right on arrival. This includes an airport pickup, assistance in reaching the final destination, support in the case of vulnerable people (young, elderly, people in need of immediate medical

17 Recommended principles and guidelines on human rights and human trafficking, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010

assistance, etc.). Sometimes it has also been necessary – depending on the returnee’s personal circumstances – to have contacted the family to provide information about their relative’s upcoming return. In particular, this step is of great relevance if the family is reluctant to accept the return.

Having focused on the general principles presented above, we will now describe the process of reintegration, structured into and covering the following stages:

- A First contact with the leader agencies or a network organisation
- B Returnee reception, identification and acceptance: opening of an individual file folder
- C Immediate needs
- D Psychological and social and economic support
- E Economic Integration

### **A. First contact with the leader agencies or a network organisation**

The migrant can establish contact with an organisation specialising in reintegration in various different ways:

- *Contact/Referral through a foreign NGO or an international organisation:* the returnee is identified before departure and on arrival is

put in contact with the organisation that, in the country of origin, guarantees specific support for reintegration. In this case, it is advisable to send a brief report where the characteristics of the migratory process already experienced in the host country are outlined, as well as the motivations for return along with the returnee individual or family profile.<sup>18</sup>

- *Contact on the initiative of the migrant:* upon arrival in the return country, the returnee can personally get in contact with the agency, thanks to the communication and information provided in the host and return country.
- *Contact through relatives:* the members of the family living in the country of origin can help the returnee by looking for a suitable reintegration programme which fits their profile.
- *Other channels:* the government and border authorities or the national organisations can also refer ad-hoc individual cases.

The first information received about the case from the host country allows collection of the main data about the subjective and objective circumstances and the current situation, besides the identification – if necessary - of emergency intervention and the definition of the emergency level in each case.

18 As a model, the above-mentioned client questionnaire can be used.

## **Victims of Human Trafficking and Rejected Asylum Application**

In the case of victims of trafficking and/or asylum seekers whose application has been rejected, it may be better to hide the fact that the person has been involved in this process in order to avoid stigmatisation and police interrogation, and in other cases, it is better to explain to avoid abuse and intrusive questions. The role of the country of origin is particularly important for risk assessment and the reintegration process, as it can assess the safety of the person if they were to return. Special measures should be taken if the family is responsible for cases of smuggling, and return home may not necessarily be a solution.

### **B. Reception, identification and acceptance: opening of the individual file folder**

As in the case of counselling before departure, it is important that the reintegration counsellor builds up a relationship with the returnee based on trust.

The person has to feel understood and supported in their reintegration process and the return counsellor should be transparent when presenting the extent and the possibilities of return counselling (project resources, limits and priorities) in order to avoid raising false expectations. It would be advisable to assign each returnee to a single counsellor, as it facilitates a trusting relationship and a global vision of their necessities and difficulties.

The reintegration counsellor should firstly examine whether the case is eligible for support. This meeting is also important to evaluate the returnee's immediate needs and the axis of further intervention. If the returnee is going to be the beneficiary of grants, a contract detailing the nature and the extent of the reintegration support is defined and, if agreed upon by both parts, it is signed. It is to be noted that sometimes returnees have various needs (immediate material needs, need for psychological support, economic needs, etc.) that cannot all be addressed by the reintegration counsellor. What is more, it is often the case that the organisations which give reception to returnees do not have their own resources to accompany them through their reintegration and to be able to provide financial aid – in cash or in kind – to cover the needs which have been identified.

Even in these cases and situations, the help that the social organisation can give is also of incalculable value. For instance, persons who return have needs which do not always call for expenditure: instead they need advice in order to undertake processes to start this new stage in their lives in a country in which they feel disorientated at all levels. In these cases, even without specifically allocated material means, the chance to receive guidance at any level, as well as psychological support which may be offered to them on first arriving, is vital.

### **C. Immediate needs**

As mentioned previously, the first task of the reintegration counsellor should be to make sure that immediate basic needs are met. If the returnee's resources are not sufficient to cover those needs, immediate solutions

should be proposed as their non-fulfilment might jeopardise the success of the reintegration process.

We have considered that is especially useful here to list what have been identified as examples of immediate needs that may arise:

#### Food and accommodation:

Besides food supply, the most crucial thing is to offer emergency accommodation to returnees without anywhere to stay. For the most vulnerable cases where returnees face highly insecure conditions, admission to specialised reception centres might constitute a solution. At a later stage, sustainable and permanent accommodation (purchase or rental, access to civil building programmes, etc.) should also be found for returnees.

#### Health / Education services:

Health is an essential element of reintegration. Assistance for returnees when accessing local medical services and when facing medication expenses may be necessary.

#### Administrative and legal support:

In the event that the returnee returns without all the documents required once in the country of origin, counselling and support have to be provided for the issuance of all the documents needed: identity card, passport, health card, residence permit, voting card, etc. These documents are necessary in order to have all civil

and political rights and they are crucial for access to social services; these are often extremely costly.

In particular, processes relating to residence permits are key in the event that returnees return with foreign spouses, sometimes EU nationals, since, in certain Latin American countries it is difficult for the foreign spouse to get the proper permits for residence in the country to which the family is returning.

Transport to and entry into the country of origin for household goods and personal effects:

Returnees usually have needs with regard to paying for the transport of the goods and effects that they have brought from the country from which they are returning. It is important to provide information relating to duty exemptions applicable in many countries for the transport of personal goods.

Personal security:

Once again, some special measures should be taken when working with vulnerable groups of returnees that may have specific necessities regarding their personal security:

### **Victims of Human Trafficking and Rejected Asylum Seekers**

In the event that the returnees are *former asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection*, continuous

monitoring of the security conditions in the reintegration process is necessary.

In the knowledge that risk factors cannot always be completely evaluated and controlled before the departure from the country of origin, it is important to monitor, when the returnee arrives, that they do not run any risks concerning their personal security, and that the persecution reasons that forced them to migrate are no longer present.

In particular, the reintegration counsellor has to examine whether the geographical areas where the returnee would like to reintegrate present these risks or not. In the event that complete security in specific geographical areas cannot be guaranteed, the reintegration counsellor has to search for alternative locations.

In the case of *victims of trafficking*, the same type of assessment is to be made and preventive measures are to be taken to avoid re-trafficking. The fact that the returnee has been subject to trafficking should not be revealed to anybody without their explicit consent. If needed, the returnee can settle in another city, and can be lodged in a social shelter. In these particular cases the capacity for organisation in the country of origin is particularly relevant in providing long term assistance covering legal, financial, employment and health needs, and monitoring the case as long as is necessary.

#### **D. Psychological Support for Social Integration:**

Once immediate needs are covered, the returnee's

psychological state needs to be analysed. Just as with the non-fulfilment of basic needs, not addressing psychological problems can also jeopardise the success of the reintegration process.

As mentioned, returnees can encounter complicated emotional situations when they face the reality of the country of origin. For cases where psychological support is needed, meetings with a psychologist should be planned.

At this stage, the counsellor should consider all those elements that could make the reinsertion of the returnee in their social context difficult: rebuilding relationships with family members and friends, readapting to a new neighborhood and reintegrating into the social and economic structure.

The person who has lived through a long period of voluntary or forced migration often develops an idealised image of the country of origin, connected to the past, and often very different from the actual reality. The longer the absence from the country of origin has been, the more the image of the country of origin is likely to be idealised. This could lead to disappointment upon arrival and initial frustration.

In addition, during the migration pathway, the values and the personality of returnees may also have changed. In these cases, the counsellor should also represent the role of cultural mediator, making the returnee feel comfortable again with details and features of their country of origin. Facing a different cultural and social context can in fact lead to a reevaluation of the cultural values of the country of origin.

Some difficulties should be taken especially into account with regard to children's adaptation in respect of the

language, culture, and high school and university education costs, or with regard to women who may face particular difficulties in fitting back into gender pre-established roles which they are no longer used to. There could also be cases of family split-ups after returning, and difficulty in finding the support of relatives.

There are other obstacles as well that may also be faced regarding the relationship with the family, that could lead to a negative reception by the returnee's family. Sometimes, if the returnee benefits from economical and socio-professional support, it could be perceived by the family and the community as discriminatory and serve as an element for increasing the existing tension.

It is also important to facilitate the person's reintegration into the local structure by constructing links with the local community through local associative structures such as sport or cultural associations, associations for women, children, parents, elderly, etc., and participation at public events, etc.

## **E. Economic Integration:**

Once basic needs are considered properly covered, the next and central step of the reintegration process in most of the cases concerns the returnee's labour insertion. Their employment situation within the society has been commonly identified, by returnees as well as by the professionals working and involved with them on the return process, as a key tool for their social integration when this allows the returnee to be financially independent, to strengthen a positive image of



themselves and to maintain contact with the local community.

Help linked to labour insertion for the returnee may consist of – in general terms – two types of support: help in seeking employment as an employee or support in the creating of Financial Income Generating Activities. The search for employment as an employee can also include measures which are more training-oriented, such as participation in professional workshops or professional courses.

And in either case, both as an employee or as someone who is self-employed, a very important part of the reintegration plan should be to look for the reconstruction of the returnee's skills, personal and professional competences and experiences.

In any case, and in order to help the returnee to define a professional objective, the reintegration counsellor has to take into account:

- skills and competences of the returnee
- the characteristics and the needs of the local economy
- the possibility of recognition of qualifications
- the possibility of availability of funding towards taking up employment or launching a professional activity

Once the previous elements have been identified, actions need to be taken, such as:

- Measures supporting the search for employment: this includes all the specific resources aimed at achieving

- professional reinsertion for the user.
- Labour guidance: to reconstruct the user's professional profile. This could be developed alongside work guidance centres.
  - Professional training: if necessary, users can sign onto professional training activities organised by public or private professional training centres, or courses given directly by the organisation. Alongside training in the classroom, other types of on-the-job (practical) professional training activities or distance learning training (e-learning) could be promoted.
  - Employment guidance services (public or private).
  - Direct contact with businessmen and women to encourage direct placement.
  - Promotion for the development of business practices.
  - Guidance services for the process of design, launch and management of a business.

## 4. Monitoring

Monitoring returnees represents a crucial phase to ensure sustainable return and support, as it enables the organisations to provide flexible assistance, adapting to the changing necessities, and to learn from each case, in order to improve sustainability in future initiatives.

As reintegration is a long-term process, it would

be advisable for the monitoring to last at least 12 months. This process should enable the organisation to adapt the assistance to the new challenges faced over time, and to provide returnees with long-lasting psychological support, so they do not feel abandoned. Besides, the feedback from each experience of return is important in order to attain a better understanding of the challenges.

To measure the sustainability of assisted voluntary returns, it is of great importance to assess the success and the difficulties encountered by each process. Once again, this analysis should compare individual subjective and objective indicators. Subjective criteria to be assessed are the necessity or the desire to re-emigrate, the perception of the returnee's own socio-economic status and the feeling of security; while objective criteria are actual re-emigration of the individual or their family, employment, income level, receipt or not of humanitarian assistance, access to education and to healthcare, and actual threats and violence. On a more global scale, the level of emigration, of poverty and well-being and of persecution, conflict and violence in the community or the home country can be monitored over the years to verify if it has had influence or not, and also to put the individual indicators in perspective<sup>19</sup>.

There are also personal features that could influence the sustainability of return: the characteristics of returnees (age, gender); their experience before leaving their country of origin (education, employment) and in the host country (alone or with family, language acquisition, education, employment, accommodation, income, perceived value of experience

19 Richard Black, Saskia Gent. Sussex Centre for Migration Research, *Defining, Measuring and Influencing Sustainable Return: The Case of the Balkans*. 2004

abroad, legal status); the conditions of return (alone or with family, financially, socially, psychologically assisted or not, followed-up by an organisation or not, willingness to return, reasons for return, information before return)<sup>20</sup>. Apart from these details, there are also external factors that can compromise or slow down the whole process, such as the quality or availability of health and education systems, and the level of perception of security in the country.

For these reasons, in order to evaluate the effective sustainability of the process, many kinds of factors should be taken into account. Good material conditions are not enough: they must be linked with social and psychological well-being. Indeed, the acceptance of the family, of the friends and of the community should be considered as essential to make the return sustainable, as well as the personal acceptance of return and the overcoming of the feeling of shame and frustration that might be experienced. Organisations providing AVR should try to play a role in preventing stigma, rejection and self-deprecation, by raising awareness in the family and community, acting as a mediator and providing social and psychological support for the returnee.

It would be advisable to monitor the process of reintegration on at least two occasions, 6 and 12 months after the aid was given, or 12 and 18 months afterwards, depending on if the help has been more immediate to cover basic necessities, or of more medium term, for instance in order to carry out a micro-project. Depending on the degree of help and on the vulnerability of the person, one monitoring visit alone may be enough. To ensure the frequency of the

20 Black, Richard, Khalid Koser. *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation and Reconstruction*, 1999.



monitoring, enough funds should be dedicated to this activity, so that travel to the returnee's place of residence and the reporting work can be funded. The most advisable practice is for the monitoring to be carried out through a face to face interview; it is also preferable, if possible, for it to be the counsellor who goes to visit the beneficiary in order to check their living conditions. Monitoring should consist of visiting the returnees regularly to exchange impressions with them, assess the success and the needs, provide support if needed and report on the economic and psycho-social situation of the returnee, at each monitoring session. During these sessions, it is important to take photos and make videos, in order to illustrate the achievements of the project. This material could be used as a communication tool to inform potential returnees, donors and partners about the project and the profile of the returnees.

When visits are not possible due to long distances or security conditions, monitoring can be done by phone, and the beneficiary can be asked to send photos and documents, and to visit the headquarters of the organisation when possible. If the reintegration aid has consisted of an Income Generating Activity, it is particularly important to be able to make a visit to the project in question. At this stage, the potential interviewer must ensure a comfortable atmosphere, creating a feeling of trust so that the beneficiaries do not feel as if they are being subjected to an exam, and so that they can tell the real story of how things have gone over the period in question, both if reintegration has gone well during that time and if it has not. There are models which can be used as guidelines for this interview, but it is advisable to carry them out spontaneously. An example of a "Monitoring model" can be found as an appendix.

Monitoring can be more difficult with people who have had bad experiences with return, and do not want to stay in touch with the organisation. It is important to keep those returnees in mind even if they do not appear in the monitoring stories.

In either case, it is no easy task to evaluate the success or failure of a reintegration process. The person may have managed to find their place socially, but still not have done so in employment terms, or vice versa. In the case of financial reintegration projects, success or failure may be easier to evaluate objectively. Experience in numerous cases of reintegration shows evidence of projects which have not managed to take off. It is important to be aware that it is quite normal for this to happen and that this does not mean the total failure of the reintegration.

### **Main obstacles identified by returnees within Latam Projects**

- Validation of qualifications and studies: it is frequently the case that the country of origin does not recognise the academic qualifications obtained in the country of migration. If it does recognise them, official translation of the qualifications is needed, which is costly.
- Difficulty in the validation of professional experience: upgrading of professional titles (i.e. professors).
- Difficulty in access to credit and loans: for returnees this is very difficult due to their lack of recent bank history.

- Difficulty in accessing pensions: returnees may have a right to receive a pension, and on returning to their country of origin they may cease to receive it if there is no agreement between the two countries.
- Non-national relatives: people returning with family members who are not nationals of the country of origin encounter many obstacles; the steps to go through are very slow and difficult.
- Long and complicated customs duty exemption or reduction procedures.
- Administrative difficulties: difficulty in obtaining all the national documents needed (access to national ID, registration with national authorities, etc.).
- Job seeking and labour reinsertion made difficult by the lack of recognition of previous professional experience and lack of contact network.
- Difficulty and high costs of access to education, healthcare, social services and safety.
- The processes and paperwork to go through are in general very costly (e.g. sworn translation).
- Problem of centralisation of all the services in the capital city: return is all the more difficult if it is not to the capital city.



## IV · Good Practices Identified

This part of the guide aims to give visibility to Good Practices developed by various levels of institutions and organisations in the different fields regarding and dedicated to Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes. The following activities have been highlighted by collaborating stakeholders who have picked them out among others, as representing added value; this is because of the special assistance they give in empowering migrants and returnees, and in making the returnees play a central role in the sustainability of their own return process and in the development of their local communities.

- **Networks of Organisations specialising in Voluntary Return:**

**RN Latam: The Latin American Return Network** works to enable return and reintegration. The Network is established in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and in France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain, and aims to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the whole voluntary return process. [www.retornovoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retornovoluntariolatam.org)

**Erso: The European Reintegration Support Organisations** is a network of several organisations working closely together in the field of migration and development. The ERSO network's

objective is to exchange and collect expertise, best practice and information concerning voluntary return and reintegration in Africa. [www.erso-project.eu](http://www.erso-project.eu)

**Rirva: The Italian AVR Network's** objective is to improve available information and the performance of the Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)'s measures within Italy, and to enable the individualisation of cases of potential users in the operative realities at a local level. [www.reterirva.it](http://www.reterirva.it)

**Vren: Voluntary Return European Network (VREN)** is a web-based platform designed to facilitate the exchange of information among stakeholders in EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway on issues related to assisted voluntary return of third country nationals in their countries or origin. [www.vren-community.org](http://www.vren-community.org)

#### • Return and Remittances

**Nantik Lum:** This Spanish foundation generates processes to channel migrants' remittances towards repayment of micro-credits which are given to their family members in the country of origin. These micro-credits are designed for the setting up of small businesses. <http://www.nantiklum.org/index.php?sec=2&ssec=23>

**Rumiñahui - REDES CAP Project :** is a codevelopment project lending support to Ecuadorian citizens living in Spain, and to their family members in Ecuador; it gives help in the process of return to the country of origin for those who wish to do this. <http://www.ruminahui.org/index.php?limitstart=20>

**Puentes Global - (Global Bridges) – “Franchise for a better future” Project:** This Spanish initiative offers consultancy services, comprehensive training and ongoing support to migrants who decide to become franchise entrepreneurs abroad, at the same time as contributing to the international expansion of small and medium Spanish franchise businesses and to their being carried out in a more sustainable and profitable way both for their franchisees and for the communities where they are set up. <http://www.puentesglobal.org/alcanza-tus-metas/retorno-voluntario-con-franquicia/>

- **State level:**

**Spain - Recognition, Assessment and Accreditation of Qualifications.** This programme sets procedures to recognise, assess, and give accreditation to the professional competences acquired through work experience or any other type of non-formal learning. The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications serves as an objective reference in this procedure [http://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice\\_recAcr\\_ing.html](http://www.educacion.gob.es/educa/incual/ice_recAcr_ing.html)

**Ecuador - SENAMI.** The National Secretariat for the Migrant promotes and defends return which is voluntary, dignified and sustainable through a process based on the reincorporation of brother migrants in the construction of Ecuadorian society. It offers specific programmes such as Plan Tierras or the Teacher Return Programme. <http://www.migrante.gob.ec/acompanamiento-en-el-retorno-al-pais/>

**Argentina - Plan RAICES (ROOTS):** The Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation has 3 funding systems

for the repatriation of Argentine scientists and technologists abroad: <http://www.raices.mincyt.gob.ar/>

**Colombia - Programa Colombia Nos Une (Colombia Unites Us):** For people wishing to develop productive projects in alliance with the National Service of Apprenticeship, to train them in entrepreneurship through the SENA Entrepreneur Units, and to give guidance about sources of funding for entrepreneurial projects in line with current institutional capacity [www.redescolombia.org/colombianosune](http://www.redescolombia.org/colombianosune)

- **At social organisation level:**

**RETALE Programme:** This is a programme offering support, from Spain, for Colombian and Ecuadorian nationals wishing to set up a small business in rural zones of Ecuador and Colombia. <http://www.retale.info/>

**Information Project on Return Countries and Vulnerable Groups (CRI):** The purpose of this Accem project, and of the manual which has been generated, has been to exchange experiences, good practice, capacities and potential of the grassroots community organisations, within the context of information transfer, on the possibilities for reintegration for possible returnees from the immigrant communities in Europe. It presents key aspects for collaboration with immigrant communities. [http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf\\_retorno/folleto\\_informativo\\_cri.pdf](http://www.accem.es/ficheros/documentos/pdf_retorno/folleto_informativo_cri.pdf)

- **At international organisation level:**

**OEI – PTRSI project:** This uses support resources already in existence in the region and which respond to the demands

of its growing market, aiming to offer emigrants effective opportunities for return, with pathways for training and labour reinsertion. [www.oei.es](http://www.oei.es)

- **From other organisations:**

**FIAPP- EU-LAC project on Migration:** The EU project “Strengthening the dialogue and cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to establish management models on migration and development policies” aims to participate in the process of cooperation between the EU and the CELAC region and to contribute to the strengthening of regional and national capacities in the LAC countries to support the permanent exchange of information and good practices between these countries, as well as between the EU and the CELAC region.

- **From the Chambers of Commerce:**

**Fundación INCYDE.** Productive voluntary return programme: This consists of business training for those immigrants who, legally resident in Spain, wish to return to their countries of origin with a business plan. It is carried out through cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce in the destination and origin countries. <http://www.incyde.org>



## V · Final Recommendations for an Efficient and Sustainable Voluntary Return

### HOSTING COUNTRIES:

- Return programmes should be tailored to offer specific support to **vulnerable persons**.
- Return **informative services** should be always foreseen and reinforced.
- Return Programmes should foresee **professional counselling and work assessment** during the pre-departure phase.

### COUNTRY OF RETURN:

- **Specific Laws on Migrants Return** should be established, with reference to different aspects involved in the field and facilitating returnees' the access to rights.
- Return programmes and services should be **delocalised**
- Return programmes should connect returnees'

### **reintegration and local development.**

- Return programmes should take into account **individual stories and competencies** of returnees
- Re-integration services should include **network** of associations, institutional services supporting different aspects of the assistance
- Social and administrative services in the country of return should never be substituted by services offered under AVR programmes.

### **COOPERATION BETWEEN HOSTING AND RETURN COUNTRIES**

- Assisted Return Programmes should be harmonised to offer and identify **Minimum Standard Services and Assistance** that should always be guaranteed in working with returnees.
- The return process should be **“integrated”** in terms of programmes and services provided in the countries of return, as well as in terms of networking and connections with hosting, return and transit countries.
- Cooperation between the parts should be based on a continuative exchange of **Country of Origin information (COI)**

- Productive return should be enhanced and promoted
- Pension rights should be guaranteed.
- Bilateral recognition of qualifications and titles should be guaranteed



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## **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION (COI)**

### **International Migrations Organisation Belgium**

<http://irrico.belgium.iom.int/>

### **International Migrations Organisation Spain**

<http://www.spain.iom.int>

### **Choices Project of Refugee Action**

[www.choices-avr.org.uk](http://www.choices-avr.org.uk)

### **Erso**

[www.erso-project.eu](http://www.erso-project.eu)

### **Rirva Netowrk**

[www.reterirva.it](http://www.reterirva.it)

**Latam**

[www.retornovoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retornovoluntariolatam.org)

**German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees**

[www.zirf.eu](http://www.zirf.eu)

**Vren**

[www.vren-community.org](http://www.vren-community.org)

**Refworld**

[www.refworld.org](http://www.refworld.org)

**European COI Network**

[www.ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net)

**RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS:**

**Accem (Spain)**

[www.accem.es](http://www.accem.es)

**Aesco (Colombia)**

[www.aescocolombia.org](http://www.aescocolombia.org)

**Aesco (Spain)**

[www.ong-aesco.org](http://www.ong-aesco.org)

**Asociación Idas y Vueltas (Uruguay)**

[www.idasyvueltas.com.uy](http://www.idasyvueltas.com.uy)

**Consiglio Italiano per Rifugiati (Italy)**

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**European Reintegration Support Organizations**

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**Red Unitas (Bolivia)**

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**Rete Italiana RVA**

[www.reterirva.it](http://www.reterirva.it)

**RN Latam**

[www.retornovoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retornovoluntariolatam.org)

**Senda (Perú)**

[www.sendaong.org](http://www.sendaong.org)

**Soleterre Strategie di Pace (Italy)**

[www.soleterre.org](http://www.soleterre.org)

**VREN**

[www.vren-community.org](http://www.vren-community.org)

**Refugee Action**

[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

**UK Voluntary Return Service**

[www.choices-avr.org.uk](http://www.choices-avr.org.uk)

## **VII · ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1:**

Latam Project Identification Form .

### **Annex 2:**

Latam Project Reintegration Grant Receipt.

### **Annex 3:**

Latam Project Reintegration Grant Expenditures Breakdown.

### **Annex 4:**

Latam Project Monitoring Form .

### **Annex 5:**

Frequently Asked Questions.



**Identification Form:**

**ID CODE:**

**INSTITUCIÓN:**

(Institution)

**INFORME EMITIDO POR:**

(Report written by)

**FECHA:**

(Date)

**MOTIVO DEL INFORME:** Retorno Voluntario al país de origen

1. DATOS DEL/DE LA SOLICITANTE:

**APELLIDOS:**

(Surname)

**NOMBRE:**

(Name)

**FECHA Y LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO:**

(Date and place of birth)

**LUGAR AL QUE SE HA RETORNADO**

País/Ciudad

(Place of return: country/town)

**PAÍS Y CIUDAD DESDE EL QUE SE**

RETORNA

(Place of destination: country/town)

**NACIONALIDAD:**

(Nationality)

**ESTADO CIVIL:**

(Marital Status)

**TELÉFONO:**

**MÓVIL:**

**PASSPORT/ D.N.I./ Others (Indicate type of document and nº):**

**FECHA EN QUE LLEGO EL/LA DEMANDANTE:**

(Date of arrival of the applicant)

Annex 1. Latam Project Identification Form



European Return Fund

European Union cooperation and solidarity on migration



Maatwerk bij Terugkeer



2. SITUACIÓN DEL/DE LA DEMANDANTE EN PAÍS DE ACOGIDA:  
(Situation of the applicant in host country)

- Solicitante de Asilo (Asylum Seeker)
- Solicitante de Asilo denegado o inadmitido (Refused Asylum Seeker)
- Inmigrante en situación irregular (Migrant: irregular situation)

3. COMPOSICIÓN FAMILIAR (Family structure)

**MIEMBROS DE LA FAMILIA *en país de retorno***  
(Family members in country of return/of origin)

APELLIDOS Y NOMBRE (Name and surname)	PARENTESCO (Relatives)	FECHA DE NACIMIENTO (Date of Birth)	LUGAR DE RESIDENCIA (Place of residence)	SOLICITA SER RETORNADO/A (He/She applies for return)

4. DOMICILIO COMPLETO DE LA FAMILIA EN EL PAIS DE RETORNO (Calle, número, piso, localidad, provincia y país):

(Full address of family members in country of origin)

5. TELÉFONO (incluyendo todos los prefijos):





6. MOTIVO DEL RETORNO:

(Reasons for returning)

7. EXPONER BREVEMENTE EL ITINERARIO LABORAL Y DE INTEGRACION SOCIAL DEL/DE LA DEMANDANTE EN EL PAÍS DE ACOGIDA:

(Briefly describe the labour itinerary and integration process of the applicant in the host country)

8. SITUACIÓN SANITARIA: (Si el/la demandante o algún miembro de la familia está enfermo/a, indicar su enfermedad y dónde le están tratando):

(Health situation: If the applicant or any relatives is/are ill, please indicate illness and treatment)

10. IDENTIFICACIÓN DE NECESIDADES PARA LLEVAR A CABO MEDIDAS DE REINTEGRACIÓN:

(Identification of needs in order to implement reintegration measures in country of origin)

11. VALORACION DEL CASO:

(General assessment of the case)





**RECIBÍ/RECEIPT**

Nombre del Beneficiario:

*Name of the Beneficiary:*

Tutor Legal (En su caso) :

*Legal Tutor (in case)*

Nº de Documento :

*Number of document*

ID CODE :

En calidad de beneficiario del proyecto: **RN LATAM II: Red Europea y Latino Americana de Retorno para un proceso integral, eficaz y sostenible de retorno y reintegración** con numero de referencia HOME/2010/RFX/CAI1015 y ABAC nr 30-ce-0465723/00-71.. Financiado por la Comisión Europea como parte del Fondo Europeo de Retorno y acciones de la comunidad 2010.

*As a beneficiary of the project: RN LATAM II: II Phase of a Return Network in Latin-America for comprehensive, effective and sustainable return programme including re-integration, with reference number HOME/2010/RFX/CAI1015 and ABAC nr 30-ce-0465723/00-71, funded by the European Commission as part of the European Return Fund Community actions 2010.*

**DECLARO  
I declare that**

Que he recibido la suma de \_\_\_\_\_ equivalente a \_\_\_\_\_ €, según cotización del día \_\_\_\_\_ en concepto de ayuda económica de reintegración, de la entidad \_\_\_\_\_ con y domicilio fiscal en \_\_\_\_\_. Así mismo, me comprometo a justificar los gastos por el importe recibido.

*I have received the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ equivalent to \_\_\_\_\_, Exchange rate of \_\_\_\_\_ in concept of reintegration assistance, on behalf of the organisation \_\_\_\_\_ with registration number \_\_\_\_\_ and located in \_\_\_\_\_. Also, I compromise to justify the expenses by the amount received.*

Forma de pago (payment by):

Done in \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_

EL Beneficiario/ The Beneficiary

La organización/ The organisation



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**Ficha de Seguimiento RN LATAM II**  
**Monitoring Form RN LATAM II**

Deberá ser completada por la organización asociada en estrecha colaboración con la persona beneficiaria de la reintegración.

*To be filled out by the local partner organisation in the country of origin in close cooperation with the returnee*

**A. El beneficiario (*The returnee*)**

Nº de Expediente del beneficiario:

Nombre <i>Name</i>	
Lugar de destino <i>Place of destination</i>	País, Ciudad <i>Country, town</i>
Fecha de llegada <i>Date of arrival</i>	

**B. Antecedentes (*Background information*)**

Por favor, exponga su impresión sobre la situación y comunicación con la persona retornada (reuniones con el beneficiario, decisiones tomadas, etc.).

*Please provide an impression about the situation and the communication with the returnee (please describe briefly the meetings with the beneficiary, the conclusions of the discussions and the decisions made).*

Inmediatamente tras la llegada:  
*Directly after arrival:*

Seguimiento:  
*Follow up:*



**C. Descripción sobre la ayuda de reintegración**  
*Detailed description about the reintegration assistance*

Annex 4. Latam Project Monitoring Form

Situación en su llegada (necesidades identificadas) <i>Situation upon arrival (need of the returnee)</i>	
Asistencia prestada <i>Determined assistance</i>	
Duración de la asistencia <i>Duration of the assistance</i>	
Resultados esperados <i>Expected result</i>	
Resultados tras 6 meses: <i>Result after 6 months</i>	
Resultados tras 1 año <i>Result after 1 year</i>	

Observaciones:  
*Remarks*

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#### D. PRESUPUESTO

Descripción de la ayuda económica de reintegración  
*Description of the Allocated Reintegration Assistance*

DIVISA UTILIZADA:  
*USED EXCHANGE RATE*

Nº factura	Fecha de compra	Tipo de asistencia <i>Type of reintegration assistance</i> (especifique)	Montante transferido <i>Allocated amount</i>		
			1) Moneda local ( <i>local currency</i> ) / 2) EURO		
1			Subtotal		
2			Subtotal		
3			Subtotal		
4			Subtotal		
5			Subtotal		
6			Subtotal		
7			Subtotal		

#### E. EVALUACIÓN DEL PROYECTO RN LATAM II

1. ¿Qué es lo que más ha valorado en el servicio ofrecido en este proyecto?
2. ¿Ha recibido usted ayuda previa y posterior al retorno por parte de RN LATAM II?
3. ¿Qué aspectos ha echado en falta?
4. ¿Encuentra alguna propuesta de mejora para estos servicios?



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## FAQ\*

*The exact answers to these questions may differ from one country and programme to another. However, this annex intends to give a list of questions that have frequently emerged during the assistance to returning migrants. It as well aims to provide a general overview on the answers that local counsellors should be able to collect.*



### **1. What is the legal situation of the migrant while waiting for return?**

When migrants are enrolled in a voluntary return programme, national authorities usually provide a certificate allowing them to stay legally in the host country even if they overstayed their residence permit. However, this certificate might not entitle them to benefit from social allowances. As a consequence, returnees might find themselves without any resources. In these cases, the counsellor is invited to find a complementary assistance.

### **2. How to bring back extra luggage?**

Voluntary return programmes usually take in charge a limited number of luggages. However, migrants who leave a country, especially after a long period of residence, have more weight to transport (furniture, clothes, kitchen

\* A list of frequently asked questions specialized on return to Latino-American countries can be found on the RN LATAM II platform: [www.retornovoluntariolatam.org](http://www.retornovoluntariolatam.org)

utensils, children's toys, etc.) and they need to contact a private transport company. The fees for such transport might be high. The counsellor is therefore invited to advise the migrant on his or her choice.

### **3. Will it be possible to return later to the host country/the European Union?**

Unless the AVR programme's contract stipulates the contrary, the enrollment in a voluntary return programme doesn't prevent anyone from going back to the European Union in the future.

If the migrant wants to return for a short or a long stay, he/she will have to request a visa. Having previously participated in a voluntary return programme, though, may be difficult for the migrant to obtain a new entry visa.

It should be stressed that most AVR Programmes ask to sign a document in which the returnee commits that he/she won't come back to Europe during a given period of time, which then implicates a Non-Entry Ban on official records at leaving the State under AVR, which means that the person won't be allowed to enter European territory during the same period of time. The duration of the Non Entry Ban is decided by the authorities of each country.

### **4. In case of double (non-EU) nationality, is it possible to choose the country of destination?**

If a person has dual nationality, voluntary return programmes

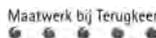
usually allow him/her to choose the country to where he/she wants to return. However, the migrant must be able to prove his or her nationality with a valid travel document (passport or laissez-passer).

### **5. Is it possible to return to a country, which is not the returnee's country of origin?**

Sometimes, migrants prefer to return to a country where they have stronger family or personal ties, which is not their country of origin. If their choice is motivated, voluntary return programmes usually allow migrants to return to such countries on the condition that they will have residence permit.

### **6. Is it possible to renounce to voluntary return?**

Changing one's mind might result problematic faced to authorities in charge of return procedures. First, if the migrant is in an irregular situation, he/she might be more easily identifiable. In addition, if he/she renounces to participating in the AVR programme, in case authorities have already incurred in expenses for the preparation of the return (For example flight ticket), he/she might be excluded from applying to similar programmes in the future.



LÍDER / LEADER

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SOCIOS / PARTNERS

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ASOCIADOS  
ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

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CONSULTORÍA EXTERNA  
EXTERNAL CONSULTANT

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