



# **Mediation Agency for Tailor made Return**

## **Maatwerk bij Terugkeer Cordaid**

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## **Cordaid**

- Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid  
International development organization which supports a large worldwide network of organizations
- Part of Caritas Internationalis network
- Working relations with other worldwide networks such as International Catholic Migration Commission, Jesuit Refugee Services, International Organization for Migration and others



## **Dutch context**

- 80% of asylum request denied
- Options: migrate on, live as an undocumented migrant or return to country of origin (CoO)
- Dutch government: repatriation is one's own responsibility. Little consideration for individual problems that may hinder return



## **Dutch context (2)**

- Cordaid Netherlands supports vulnerable groups in the Netherlands such as rejected asylum seekers
- Supports organizations in the Netherlands working with this group and undocumented migrants
- Start of Mediation Agency for Return December 2001 with CMC and IOM



## **Aims of the project**

- To contribute to humane (voluntary) return
- Remove obstructions that returnees expect to face upon their return in their country of origin (CoO)
- Re-establish relations of returnee with CoO and offering assistance by making use of organizations connected to Cordaid
- Stimulate returnee to take responsibility for their own lives, to learn to use (work) experiences and achievements when returned



## **General criteria**

- Rejected asylum seeker is main beneficiary
- Requests should be practical, small scale and fitting within local context. Financial support is possible but not the aim
- Actual support concentrated in CoO



## **Working method**

- Client submits request for assistance which cannot be solved by his or her own network
- MAR acts as a broker and contacts organization in CoO with requests
- Organisation provides answers, gives advice to MAR from within local context. Occasionally direct contact with returnee before return. If applicable assists after return
- Client's own responsibility what to do with offered information and assistance



## **Possible mediation requests before return:**

- (temporary) housing, health care, employment and education, setting up a small business, etc

## **Examples of assistance after return:**

- Assistance at the airport upon arrival, help with documentation and registration, advice and support re. employment and education, practical assistance in setting up business, general advice and support, link with MAR, if necessary
- If financial assistance: payed by organization in CoO





## **Examples of cases:**

- Georgia
- Bosnia and Herzegowina
- Guinee Conakry



## **Results**

- Total number of files: 1010 (around 2500 people)
- 250 files per year
  
- Return assisted by MAR: 23 %
- Files closed for several reasons: 50 %
- Open files: 27 %



- **Few numbers**

- In 2003 Requests for assistance to:
  - Angola: 37/ Guinee Conakry: 23 / Bosnia Herzegowina: 20
  - Returnees to: BiH: 7/ Angola: 6/Serbia Montenegro: 5
- 2005:
  - Angola: 31/Sierra Leone: 13/Guinee Conakry: 12
  - Returnees to: Angola: 8/BiH: 6/Guinee Conakry: 6
- 2006:
  - Angola: 42 /Guinee:18 /Afghanistan: 12
  - Returnees to: Angola: 6/BiH: 5/Afghanistan:4



## **Funding (2001-2006)**

- Cordaid
- European Refugee Fund
- Dutch Ministry of Justice
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Others



## **Lessons learned:**

- Worldwide approach effective
- Needs of returnees and organizations working with them, are met
- Monitoring and follow-up needs more attention. So far results ad hoc depending on needs of returnee. Extensive research is being done.
- In certain countries finding a partner organization difficult



## **Added value of MAR**

- Reliable worldwide network (ngo's) can offer services in CoO.
- Information from CoO by *local experts*. Give advice and support within local context.
- Offers perspective and development in CoO (individuals and organisations)
- Quality instead of quantity (individual approach, starting point is people face problems regardless of reason for leaving CoO)
- Individual approach is time consuming but results **tailor made**



## **Recommendations:**

1. Linking refugee/migrant initiatives with development is a prerequisite for successful return and reintegration
2. More support is needed for capacity enhancement of partners in the South (support for returnees, reintegration efforts and monitoring) and less in European countries

