



Management and Reintegration of Return Migrants: The Role of Return Programmes

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Overview

- Voluntary Return Programmes
- VARRP
- Return to Sri Lanka
- Questions for Discussion

Voluntary Return Programmes

- Vary according to
 - Status of migrants targeted
 - Amount of money offered
 - Means of transfer of money
- Research findings always similar
 - Extremely small uptake
 - Resulting behaviour change limited
 - Development effects irrelevant

Migrant worker return: European initiatives

- Netherlands
 - REMPLIOD (1974 - 1986)
- France
 - Aide au retour (1977-1981)
 - Aide a la reinsertion (1983-)
- Spain
 - Returns (2008 -)

Migrant worker return: country of origin initiatives

- Bangladesh
 - Return migrant support (2005 PRSP)
- Philippines
 - Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (www.owwa.gov.ph)
- Sri Lanka
 - Focus on credit schemes through state banks (SLBFE)

VARRP

- Provides travel support, relocation grant (£500) and in kind support
- Asylum seekers, rejected asylum seekers and people with ELR or discretionary leave are eligible.
- ‘Return and Rebuild’ component specifically for Afghanistan and Iraq
- No overall statistical picture available

VARRP in Sri Lanka

- 989 returnees Dec 2002 to Jan 2008
- Security situation initially positive but deteriorating
 - Ceasefire Feb 2002
 - State of Emergency declared Aug 2005
 - GoSL withdraws from CFA Jan 2008
- Rising cost of living/transport
- Shrinking 'humanitarian space'

Returns to Sri Lanka



Returns Dec 2002- Jan 2008

Why return?

- Family
 - Majority of returnees interviewed married men migrated alone
- Improvement in political situation
 - Numbers of returns follow political context
- Lack of success of migration project
 - Would not have returned if claim had been successful

Why return on VARRP?

- Documentation problems
 - Return otherwise near impossible
- Reintegration assistance
 - helpful, but not significant enough to prove decisive
- Positive contact with IOM
 - Almost universally praised
- Possibility of Return
 - Widely misunderstood

Impact on development

- Business development very low success rate
 - 80% VARRP funded ventures failed or failing
 - 10% able to sustain themselves
 - 10% too early to judge
- Other problems typically overwhelming
 - particularly for Tamil/Muslim returnees

Issues for Discussion

- What is the goal of voluntary return programmes?
- Which actors have an interest in the design of return programmes?
- What concerns might these actors have?
- What policies might address these concerns?