

Sustainable return migration

The return of Iraqi and Mongolian families under the assistance of the IOM



Master thesis Renske Habets
Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen



IOM • OIM

'At this moment my family and I are in serious doubt about returning to Iraq. The mental pressure that we experience has prompted us to seriously consider return and in particular on how we can rebuild our future in Iraq where we can become self-reliant again and realize future prospects for our children who are at the beginning of their lives' (interview family Al-Nasiri, own translation)

Sustainable return migration

The return of Iraqi and Mongolian families under the assistance of the IOM

Renske Habets

October 2012

Master thesis Human Geography

Specialization 'Globalization, Migration and Development

Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Supervisors:

J. Schapendonk

R. Oahalou



Table of contents

Table of contents:	1
Glossaries:	3
Glossary of terms:	3
Glossary of acronyms:	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
1.1: Introduction	5
1.2: Research Objective & Question	5
1.3: Structure	7
1.4: Social/Societal relevance of the project	8
1.5: Scientific relevance of the project	8
1.6: Methodology	9
1.6.1: Research population & place	9
1.6.2: Research Methods	10
1.6.3: Timeframe	12
1.6.4: Reflections of the researcher	12
Chapter 2: Theory on return migration	13
2.1: Introduction	13
2.2: Return migration	13
2.2.1: Voluntary vs. Involuntary return	13
2.2.2: Mobility: incentives to remigration:	14
2.3: Sustainable return migration and development	16
2.3.1: Definition and measurability	16
2.3.2: Physical, socio-economic and political security –Embeddedness	17
2.3.3: Home & belonging	18
2.3.4: Return reintegration assistance and sustainability	19
2.3.5: Return migration and development	20
2.3.6: Monitoring	21
Chapter 3: The return process in The Netherlands and the actors involved	22
3.1: Return migration in The Netherlands	22
3.1.1: The Dutch asylum policy on return	22
3.1.2: Return of families with underage children	22
3.1.2: Iraqi migrants in The Netherlands	23
3.1.4: Mongolian migrants in The Netherlands	24
3.2: Involved organizations	24
3.2.1: All the players in the field	24
3.2.2: The IOM	25
3.2.3: The AVR-FC project	25
Chapter 4: The return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families at the pre-departure stage	27
4.1: Introduction	27
4.1.1: Introducing the families	27
4.2: Incentives to voluntary return or not to return	28
4.2.1: Passiveness and activeness	28
4.2.2: Push factors on micro- and macro-level	28
4.2.3: Pull factors on micro- and macro-level	28
4.2.4: Stay factors on micro- and macro-level	29
4.2.5: Deter factors on micro- and macro-level	30

4.2.6: Voluntary return in practice reconsidered.....	31
4.2.7: Concluding: Determinant factors on return.....	32
4.3: The perspectives of the families and the IOM project officers at the pre-departure stage.....	33
4.3.1: The assistance provided at this stage.....	33
4.3.2: The perspective of the families on the assistance at this stage.....	33
4.3.3: The perspectives of the IOM officers on the counseling in the AVR-FC project.....	37
4.3.3: Conclusion.....	38
Chapter 5: The return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families at the transportation stage and the post-arrival stage	39
5.1: Introduction.....	39
5.1.1: Introducing the families	39
5.2: Sustainable return migration	39
5.2.1: Physical sustainability	40
5.2.2: Socio-economic sustainability.....	40
5.2.3: Political security sustainability	41
5.2.4: The three aspects of sustainability.....	42
5.3: The perspective of the families and the desk officer on the assistance at these stages	43
5.3.1: The assistance provided at this stage.....	43
5.3.2: The perspective of the families on the assistance at this stage	44
5.3.3: The perspective of the desk officer on this stage.....	44
5.3.4: How the families made use of their cash and in kind assistance.....	45
5.3.5: Conclusion.....	46
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	48
6.1: Conclusions: Theory & practice.....	48
6.1.1: Introduction.....	48
6.1.2: incentives to return: A voluntary return?.....	48
6.1.3: Sustainable return migration and return assistance.....	49
6.2: Recommendations for the AVR-FC project.....	50
6.2.1: The pre-departure stage.....	50
6.2.2: The transportation and post-arrival stage.....	51
References.....	52
Appendix 1.....	56
Interviewguide: Families in the Netherlands	56
Interviewguide: Iraqi families in Iraq	58
Interviewguide: Questionnaire Mongolian families in Mongolia.....	60
Interviewguide: IOM project officers.....	63
Interviewguide: Desk officer.....	66

Glossaries

Glossary of Terms

Assisted Voluntary return	The provision of (logistical, financial and/or other material) assistance for the Voluntary Return of a returnee. Assisted Voluntary Return is a narrower term of Voluntary Return. Often (financial) support is provided by a Member State, either directly or via funding of other entities. The European Return Fund is also another source of funding (EMN 2011, 16)
Country of Return:	The country to which a person is returned. This may be their country of origin, of former habitual residence, or to transit countries (EMN 2011, 16)
Non-Refoulement principle	Protects refugees from being returned to places where their lives or freedoms could be threatened (Rodger 2001)
Reintegration:	Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his/her country of return (Home Affairs)
Returnee:	A non-EU/EEA (i.e. third-country) national migrant who moves to an EU/EEA either voluntarily or following a return decision (EMN 2011, 16)
Return Decision:	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 (EMN 2011, 16)
Return Programs:	Programs to support (e.g. financial, organizational, counseling) the return, possibly including reintegration measures, to the returnee by the State or by a third party, for example an international organization (European Commission)
Voluntary Departure:	a TCN voluntarily complies with a return decision within a given time period (up to one month) (as per Return Directive) (EMN 2011, 16)
Voluntary Return:	assisted or independent return to the country of return transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee either without any legal obligation to leave or under legal obligation (European Commission)

Glossary of Acronyms

ACVZ	Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken)
Asylum status	A residence permit based on art. 29 of the Vw 2000
A-status	A residence permit based on art. 29(1)(a) of the Vw 2000
AZC	Asylum centre (Asielzoekerscentrum)
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
AVR-FC	Assisted Voluntary Return for Families with Underage Children
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Program
COA	Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers)
CoO	Country of Origin
DT&V	The Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer & Vertrek)
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst)
PDT	Platform on sustainable return (Platform Duurzame Terugkeer)
PO	Project Officer
TVcN	Interpreters and translation centre the Netherlands (Tolken- en Vertaalcentrum Nederland)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Introduction

From the 1970s onward, return migration became of the interest to policy makers, as a result of the increasing inflow of immigrants and due to the more and more restrictive asylum policies in Europe (Van Houte, De Koning 2008, 4). It has not only increased the attention of policy makers but it has also increased the attention of governments and international organizations to the processes of return (Ruben, Van Houte and Davids 2009, 909). The Dutch minister for immigration and integration indicates that policies to promote return are an integral part of the migration policy and is essential for the support for and credibility of the admission policy (Ministerie van Vreemdelingenzaken, 2011b, 2). The UNCHR shares this view and states that ‘...the efficient and expeditious return of persons found not to be in need of international protection is key to the international protection system as a whole, as well as to the control of irregular migration and prevention of smuggling and trafficking of such persons...’ (UNHCR 2003) and ‘...the credibility of individual asylum systems is seriously affected by the lack of prompt return of those who are found not to be in need of international protection...’ (UNHCR 2003).

In the Dutch return policy it is clear that the own responsibility of the migrant is paramount (Ministerie van Vreemdelingenzaken 2011b, 2). According to the Dutch minister of migration and integration, minister Leers, asylum seekers whose residence permit is rejected should return to their country of origin. He states that the only perspective these migrants can have is return, though he realizes that this often very difficult (Volkskrant 15-05-2012). Migrants have the option to leave the country independently or when he or she does not want to leave the country of residence on his own, the return can be forced upon him. However, when deportation is not an option, in case of the Iraqi migrants where Iraq does not comply with involuntary return, return itself becomes rather tricky. The protests by a group of 60 failed asylum Iraqi refugees in a tent camp at the application center in Ter Apel (Groningen) in May 2012 illustrates the difficulties of return and shows once again one of the weaknesses of the immigration policy. The protest was against the imminent return to their country Iraq (Volkskrant 09-05-2012); according to a spokesman for the group is not safe in central Iraq, where most refugees come from. They claim that the only option the Netherlands offers them is between returning to Iraq or a life on the streets. However, they do not want to return because they believe death awaits them in Iraq (Volkskrant 09-05-2012). These failed asylum refugees fall between two stools due to maladjusted return policy. This is why the opposition believes that Iraqi asylum seekers should be treated more humane (Volkskrant 15-05-2012).

1.2: Research Objective & Question

In the government agreement in 2011 it was announced that measures would be taken for more a effective implementation of the return policy. One particular measure that is taken is the voluntary return assistance. The migrant is able to voluntarily return with financial support or through in kind assistance in the country of origin (for example by setting up a business, education) or a combination of both (Ministerie van Vreemdelingenzaken, 2011b, 3). The in kind assistance is based on the fact that the return needs to be foremost a sustainable return which includes the reintegration of the individual returnees in their home societies and the wider impact of return on macroeconomic and political indicators (Black and Gent 2006, 15). To enhance the sustainability of the return the return will be assisted by non-governmental organizations and the International Organization for Migration

(IOM) who will provide the families with cash and in kind assistance.

The government agreement emphasizes the return of minors and of families with underage children. As result, the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V), the Ministry of foreign affairs and the IOM have set up a project to foster the return of families with underage children: the Assisted Voluntary Return for Families with Underage Children project (AVR FC-Project) which will be the focus of my research. These families need a well suited return reintegration project to create opportunities for these families to enhance their reintegration in their country of origin. This leads to my research objective:

‘To conduct an in-depth study on voluntary return of Iraqi and Mongolian families who applied for the AVR FC-project in order to get insight in the return process of migrants’

By following these families who applied for the project through their return process I will gain insight in their perspective on the return process. My focus is only on the Iraqi and Mongolian families who are two of the three largest groups who applied for the AVR-FC project. In the return process the IOM plays an integral part, as the IOM will assist these families through the whole return process. The IOM AVR-FC project strives to assist the migrants in order to make their first steps towards their reintegration (IOM 2004, 3). My goal is to see if and how this assistance enhanced the sustainable reintegration of the Iraqi and Mongolian applicants. This will be researched at every stage of the process; the pre-departure stage where information dissemination and counseling, provision of return-related, origin country information, medical assistance and transport assistance arrangement including travel documentation are central; the transportation stage where the assistance is based on departure assistance, transport and medical assistance; and the post-arrival stage where the assistance will provide reception, inland transport, health-related support, disbursement of return or reinstallation grants, reintegration assistance as well as monitoring follow up (IOM 2010a). Evaluating the assistance at each of these stages will enable me to see if the assistance has enhanced sustainability in the country of origin and will provide the IOM with recommendations for their AVR FC-project. My research question is as follows:

‘What does the voluntary return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families who applied for the AVR FC project entail and to what extent has the project enhanced the sustainable reintegration in the country of origin?’

Some sub questions can be derived from the above which will provide the information needed for answering my main question.

The policy framework on migration and development is set out by the Policy Memorandum on International Migration and Development and has been written by the Minister for Development Cooperation and the State Secretary for Justice to create a policy framework for The Netherlands for Migration and Development policies and projects (Ministerie van Buitenlandse zaken 2008). This memorandum on migration and development focuses on six key policy priorities aimed at areas in which the Netherlands can make a difference. The sixth priority is of importance for this research: ‘encouraging voluntary sustainable return and reintegration of ex-asylum seekers’ (Ministerie van Buitenlandse zaken 2008). Their focus is on voluntary return, although this is a very contested concept by many scholars and actors in the field especially in the Netherlands where the concept has been translated into the Dutch word ‘vrijwillige terugkeer’ which would imply an open choice.

Voluntary return migration is linked by the policy memorandum with development; it deals with the interface between migration and development. Voluntary return and reintegration are believed to be enhancing development in the country of origin. This is why assisted return reintegration is funded through the development budget, for which the budget is EUR 9 million in 2011 (Ministerie van Buitenlandse zaken 2008). This leads to my first sub question.

‘What is voluntary sustainable return migration and how does it contribute to development?’

Subsequently, the voluntary return migration process in the Netherlands will be discussed which will form the background of my thesis. Insight should be given into the Dutch asylum procedure on the return process and on all the organizations involved in this process. In addition the perspective of the desk officer of the ministry of foreign affairs will shed light on the hot topics and debates. My second is as follows:

‘In what way is voluntary return migration embedded in the Dutch migration policy and what actors are involved?’

Then we will continue with the empirics: the perspective of the migrant on his voluntary return migration will be covered. This reflects a broad awareness in the academic literature and amongst policy-makers that return migration is not a simple and straightforward process (Black et al. 2004, 25). My third sub question:

‘What does the process of voluntary return migration entail from the perspective of the migrant?’

As already stated above, the return needs to be sustainable. The sustainability of return has been defined by many scholars taking into account the physical, socio-economic and political security aspects of sustainability, as well as considering these from the subjective perception of the returnee, the objective perception of the individual and the aggregate conditions of the home country (Black et al. 2004, V). There are many factors influencing a sustainable return such as the characteristics of returnees, the experiences before exile, the experiences in country of asylum, the public policy on asylum, the conditions of return and the decision to return. Assisted return reintegration programs are one of these factors influencing the reintegration as these programs are striving for a sustainable return which is particularly reflected in the in-kind support (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken 2008). To measure if and how the assisted return program has enhanced the reintegration of the families, the indicators of sustainability should be clear:

‘How sustainable is the reintegration of the Iraqi and Mongolian families in their country of origin?’

This research examines one particular assisted return project the AVR-FC project. Taking the previous sub questions into account the AVR-FC project could be evaluated.

1.3: Structure

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter two discusses theories related to the return migration process. Chapter three will describe the return process in the Netherlands and all the actors involved in this process. Chapter four and five are based on my empirical data which is related theory

addressed chapter two. Chapter four will go into incentives of voluntary return and on the perspectives of the families and the project officers on the return assistance provided at the pre-departure stage. Chapter five will then discuss the physical, socio-economic and political security sustainability of the reintegration of the families. The perspective of the families and the desk officer at the ministry of foreign affairs on the AVR-FC project will be shortly highlighted as well as the use of the cash and in kind assistance. Chapter six holds the most important conclusions and recommendations of this thesis.

1.4: Social/Societal relevance of the project

Increasingly restrictive asylum policies in Europe, as well as a growing emphasis on the return of rejected asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants, created new interest amongst governments and international organizations for the suitable conditions of return migration (Ruben, Van Houte, and Davids 2009, 909). Return migration has become an important part of the migration policy and the complexity of migration has resulted in a more pressing need for international brokering of cooperative approaches between origin, transit and destination countries (IOM 2008b, 2). Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland and the Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (ACVZ) confirm this by arguing that the groups of migrants who have to return to their country of origin are still an integral part of the asylum system, stating that even though these migrants may not be entitled to protection in the Netherlands, the Netherlands still has the responsibility for a safe return under the non-refoulement principle (Ivackic 2010 and ACVZ 2004, 8). The value of assisted voluntary return programs are now recognized by more and more states as an essential component of an effective and humane migration management framework (IOM 2010a, 1). It is not only an human alternative to deportation for the migrant but also EU policies give their preference to voluntary return over forced return due to cost, efficiency and sustainability (Becker 2005, 10). However, not only EU policies and the Dutch government benefit from assistance voluntary return programs, but also the rejected asylum seekers gain from this (Leerkes, Galloway and Kromhout 2010, 13). They will prefer voluntary return over deportation, as voluntary return will offer more possibilities for a 'dignified' return and a more successful reintegration in the country of origin (Leerkes, Galloway and Kromhout 2010, 13).

Return itself is no longer enough, it needs to be 'successful' and more important it needs to be 'sustainable' (Black and Gent 2006, 25). However, sustainability is a concept which has been used in so many different contexts that the concept itself has almost become meaningless (Black en Gent 2006, 25). As stated above, sustainability needs to be measured taking into account the three different perspectives. Assessing the sustainability of returns requires a strong monitoring process and follow-up mechanisms, optimally years after the return (Chu et. al 2008, 14). As following up on the returnees will help to understand more clearly what influences the patterns of reintegration and the broader sustainability of the return process (Black and Gent 2006, 32). Researching what happens to returnees, whether return is sustainable, and what contributes to the sustainability of return remain underexplored areas (Black and Gent 2006, 31).

1.5: Scientific relevance of the project

As argued, return migration is a significant topic in the current policy discourse and a focus on return migration is according to Boccagni (2011, 461) relevant to get a better understanding of emigrant policies. The return migration is a long term process which begins in the country of residence and will continue in the country of origin. This is mostly seen from a perspective from above, as an act of removing aliens from the European territory (Cassarino 2008, 97, 98), while the perspective of the

migrant and the migrants' post-return conditions are often not taken into account (Boccagni 2011, 462). Therefore, the relative importance of the possible explanatory factors of voluntary return (for example the societal circumstances in the country of origin) in comparison with another explanatory factor (for example the health of the migrant) is still unclear. As a result, the true main determinants of stay and return intentions are also unclear (Leerkes, Galloway and Kromhout 2010, 13-14). In this research I will take a perspective mainly from below, from the perspective of the migrants themselves, though the perspective from above is also touched upon. Many scholars from various disciplines have explained the manifold factors which shape the migrants' patterns of reintegration in their country of origin (Cassarino 2008, 100). The perceptions of migrants regarding their return are influenced by the returnee experiences before their return in the country of asylum, public discourses regarding asylum, the return conditions, and the decision-making procedures for return (Ruben, Van Houte, and Davids 2009, 913). By not only taking into account the view of the migrants but also interviewing the IOM project offices and the desk officer I will be able to get a more comprehensive view of the return process and of the sustainability of the return reintegration process.

In the literature there are doubts about the sustainability of return assistance which is discussed in the social/societal relevance. This is related to the misinterpretation by policy makers that return migration is a process of going 'home' (Ruben, Van Houte and Davids 2009, 918). There prevails a dominant underlying conceptualization of return; it is assumed to be a positive thing, they are returning 'home' (Black and Gent 2006, 20). Hammod criticizes the concept of 're-root' which assumes that the cycle will be ended in the country of origin and that the returnees will be spiritually, culturally and economically better off as they are returning 'home' (Black and Gent 2006, 20). This conceptualization has a problematic result that the attention to refugees may be abruptly and artificially ended at the point of repatriation and too little assistance is offered (Black and Gent 2006, 20). In addition to this, the feeling of home has also its implications on the embeddedness in the country of origin.

1.6: Methodology

This research is conducted in cooperation and with the assistance of the IOM in the period March until half September. It is a practical scientific research with its purpose to increase knowledge about the subject but this knowledge contributes at the same time to societal goals ('t Hart, Boeijs, and Hox 2005, 73). Its aim is to conduct research in order to develop, implement and evaluate solutions for practical problems that exist among organizations ('t Hart, Boeijs, and Hox 2005, 72).

1.6.1: Research population & place

My research is based on a multi-actor approach. My main target group are the Iraqi and Mongolian families who have applied for the project 'Assisted Voluntary Return for Families with Underage Children' who are still living in the Netherlands and the Iraqi and Mongolians families who already returned to their country of origin with the IOM assistance. By studying these families of two different nationalities which are two of the three largest groups who applied for the AVR-FC project I will be able to compare them with each other in order to write recommendations on the AVR-FC project. I chose these two countries because Mongolia and Iraq are very contrasting cases; the two countries are quite distinct, where Iraq is a post-conflict country, Mongolia is benefiting from an economic growth. Because of the distinctiveness on social, political and economic grounds, the return assistance should be in line with the country of return.

The IOM has a database of all the families who applied for the family project which I used to

get in contact with the families. I will speak of families as unit of analysis instead of individuals because during the interviews with the families in the Netherlands the whole family took part in the interview. Though, the father would mostly do the talking, however he would always speak in the name of the family.

The place of data collection differs, as most families will reside in asylum centers, family shelters or they have a house somewhere in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands the period of applying for the project and the actual departure will differ and will take some time. During this timeframe the interviews with families who still reside in the Netherlands took place. I visited three Iraqi families in their own house in Amsterdam, Driel and Noordwijkerhout. Two Iraqi and one Mongolian family I have visited in the AZC where they lived, in Alkmaar and Ter Apel. The IOM locations where the consultations hours take place are at various locations throughout the country. I have visited some of these locations and also some of my interviews took place in these IOM locations. The remaining families, one Iraqi and two Mongolian families I have visited in the IOM offices in Utrecht and s' Gravendeel. The interview with the Desk officer took place in the building of the Ministry of foreign affairs.

1.6.2: Research methods

Literature review:

The first stage of the research was to conduct a review of the existing literature which has been conducted in order to place the following concepts within a wider context. The first concept is 'voluntary and forced return' and as discussed above there prevails a lot of discussion around these concepts. The literature study on the second concept 'sustainable return' has provided me with a definition on sustainable return migration and theories on how to measure and monitor the sustainability. Thereafter, I have studied the concepts of 'home and belonging' in relation to return migration. These concepts do not always have to relate to your country of origin which will therefore have their effect on the reintegration of the families. Then, return migration in relation to development is studied and finally the return reintegration assistance has been researched. Publications, data sets and other statistical sources were also reviewed. Analyzing the literature, publications and other data of the IOM has provided me with a theoretical framework on the subject.

Interview, questionnaire and observations: The families

My main source of data collection is the in-depth interviews with the Iraqi and Mongolian families. An in-depth interview makes it possible to explore the behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of people in social situations ('t Hart, Boeije & Hox 2005, 274). I have interviewed six Iraqi families and three Mongolian families who are in the pre-departure stage in the Netherlands and three Iraqi families in Iraq who are in the post-arrival stage in their country of origin. The Mongolian families could not be reached by telephone, this is why the IOM personal in Mongolia called these families and asked them the questions stated in the questionnaire I send them. The interviews are conducted according to the 'interview guide approach'. The issues which are discussed during the interview are beforehand determined, but still gave me and informant relatively much freedom to deviate from these topics or add some topics.

One Mongolian and three Iraqi families spoke well enough Dutch or English that there was no need for a translator. Two interviews with Iraqi family has been translated by an IOM officers who both speak Arabic. Two interviews with an Iraqi and Mongolian family have been translated with the help of a friend who spoke English/Dutch. Two interviews with two Mongolian families has been

translated by a translating telephone service which is called 'interpreter translation center (Tolkenvertaalcentrum). The IOM is a client of his service which you can call and within a few minutes a translator in the language you need is on the phone. The telephone is put on speaker and placed in the middle of the table.

The services of the IOM project can take up to a maximum of 12 months after arrival in the country of origin. It is therefore of use to interview the families in the post-departure stage. However it was not possible for me to visit these families in the countries of origin; I had to interview them by telephone. I first called the Iraqi families in Iraq together with Ahmed of the IOM to see if these families spoke well enough Dutch or English so I could arrange an appointment and interview them by myself. We made appointments for the following week and I called the three families back and interviewed them telephonically. In the IOM office in the Hague I have called another family. I started the interview in English but the interview went very stiff due to the language barrier so an IOM employee translated the rest of the interview.

All the families agreed to recording the interview with a memo recorder. The interviews are paraphrased in documents. The interviews are analyzed; the data is processed into results and recommendations. This is done by accurately going through the collected data. The names of all my informants are made anonymous.

It was not possible for me to interview the Mongolian families in Mongolia by telephone due to costs and the language barrier. The IOM Russian native counselor who was able to commune with the Mongolian families was too busy to help me with these telephonic interviews. In addition, it is very difficult to interview someone telephonically with a translator. That is why I made use of a questionnaire for the Mongolian families in Mongolia. This questionnaire consisted of open ended questions about their return.

During my fieldwork I have made some observations concerning the return process of the families. I have followed and observed Iraqi and Mongolians families during their return process by visiting the COA locations where they reside and the IOM consultation offices. Observing the COA locations gave me an impression of the situation these families are living in before their departure. During their stay they can make appointments with the IOM for consultations about their return process. I have attend some of these meetings, which gave me information on what questions are asked and what the IOM can offer them. I also visited the family shelter in Katwijk, which gave me an impression of the living condition there. This all provided me with information about the process of return in practice.

The interviews with the POs and the desk officer

In addition I performed informative and exploratory interviews with IOM project officers and the Desk officer who works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Migration and Development department. These informative and exploratory interviews took place during my fieldwork when I also carried out my qualitative research by means of in-depth interviews.

The IOM project officers work at the IOM locations and give consultants to the families who applied for the AVR-FC project. They are aware of the situations of the families and their struggles to return. I first constructed a questionnaire with open ended questions and emailed this to five project officers. However I got a lot of non-response, which prompt me to call the Project officers to do the interview telephonically. Two POs with whom I shared an office space I have interviewed in person. I only got one response, that's why I called two POs to asked them the questions through telephone

and I interviewed two POs in person. The interview with the Desk officer was set up by email contact and made an appointment to interview her in person.

1.6.3 Timeframe

Begin March I started my internship at the IOM which was planned to last three months, until half June. However, the research took longer than expected due to difficulties with interviewing families in their country of origin. The research continued until begin October as I still needed to receive the questionnaires from the Mongolian families in Mongolia in that month.

In the first weeks of my internship I finalized my research proposal and made a clear chapter division, structuring all the topics and sub questions which will be addressed in my thesis. In the second and third week of March I gathered as much information on my research topics as possible in order to be well-prepared for the actual fieldwork. In the fourth week of March I constructed my different interview guides and made some appointments with Po's to attend consultation hours and the family shelter and to interview Iraqi families. From April until the end of May I interviewed all the families in the Netherlands and the Desk officer and transcribed my interviews. In the last week of May I submitted my theoretical framework. My supervisor of the IOM guided me through my research by giving me information on the IOM, searching for my informants and by giving me feedback. My thesis supervisor mainly give me feedback on the structure and content of my master thesis.

1.6.4. Reflections of the researcher

A research is never completely objective. The researcher will because of his or her background and preconceptions have certain ideas about the research subject ('t Hart, Boeije, and Hox 2005, 285). The informants will too, behave in a certain way towards him or her because of these features ('t Hart, Boeije, and Hox 2005, 286). These aspects will influence the results of the research, also in my research.

I have introduced myself to all my informants as a student conducting a research for the IOM. The reason for introducing myself as a student instead of an employee of the IOM is because this would give me a more neutral role. Since the interview was partly about the role of the IOM and how they could of improved their assistance; it is easier to give critique to an objective person than to someone from the organization itself. A limitation to my research related to this is the problem of the translators. Most Iraqi families whom I have interviewed could speak Dutch or English well enough that there was no need for a translator. Though two Iraqi family I have interviewed with an IOM officer who functioned as a translator. This will certainly affect the objectivity of the interview. The families had to indicate what they thought about the assistance provided by the IOM while their IOM officer had to translate this. In two interviews with two Mongolian families I was able to make use of the TVcN which provided me with an independent translator. However this interview took place in the same room as the IOM officer sat, which meant that she could hear the whole interview. At the consultations hours when I observed the conversation, I sat next to the PO and only observed.

Due to language difficulties it was much harder to arrange an interview with Mongolian families than with Iraqi families as Iraqi families often spoke Dutch or English and I could interview them by myself. However the Mongolian families speak almost no English let alone Dutch. In this case I first had to call an PO if I could come to the consultation hour where the family will be and the PO will arrange a translator through the TVcN.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1: Introduction

There are many different migrants and types of migration. One distinction can be made between forced migrants and voluntary migrants according to Castles and Miller (2009, 188). Forced migrants are referred to as refugees or asylum seekers who flee their homes to escape persecution or conflict while voluntary migrants are migrants who moved for economic or other benefits (Castles and Miller 2009, 188). Refugees have applied for refugee status in the country of destination or have been granted a refugee status permit. This refugee protection status is based on the 1951 Geneva Convention which is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. Asylum seekers are those migrants who left their country of origin for various reasons and applied for a protection status, whether this is a refugee protection status or on another protection status (Geraci 2011, 13,14). In this research, the migrants who have to return to their country of origin are mainly rejected asylum seekers which is defined by the UNCHR and IOM as 'a person who after due consideration of his claims to asylum in fair procedures, is found not to qualify for refugee status, not to be in need of international protection and who is not authorized (any more) to stay in the country concerned' (IOM 2008a, 19). However, the term which I will be using in my thesis for the returnees will be 'migrants' as this is the most neutral term. Return migration can then be defined as '[...] the process of people returning to their country of place of origin after a significant period of time in another country or region (King 2000, 8)'.

2.2: Return migration

2.2.1.: *Voluntary vs. Involuntary return*

'Voluntary return' is a much used term in migration policy. Though, there is much ambiguity on the concepts of voluntary and involuntary return. There are no clear definitions that distinguish voluntary return from involuntary return or forced return. The widest definition that can be used of voluntary return is the absence of force in return (Black et. al 2004, 6). However, there is still a broad spectrum of the voluntariness of return and different degrees of 'voluntariness' can be identified. Concerning ex-asylum seekers, the term voluntary return is not totally correct, as these migrants often do not have a open choice. The Desk Officer of the Ministry of foreign affairs prefers to talk about independent return, translated in Dutch 'zelfstandige terugkeer', instead of voluntary return, translated in Dutch 'vrijwillige terugkeer'. Though, she realizes this term is also not correct, because assistance is offered to every migrant who wants to return which makes it no longer an independent return. The reason the ministry of Foreign Affairs does use the term voluntary return is because in this way they can use the development budget funds to help these return migrants, which is according to desk officer a valuable reason.

The UNCHR and the IOM differ in their definition of voluntary return. The UNHCR states that voluntary return can only be possible when the refugees are legally recognized and therefore their rights will be protected and allowing them to settle (UNHCR 1996, 10). The IOM, however, defines voluntary return as 'the return of an individual to a country of origin, transit or a third country based on the free will and well informed decision of the individual and in the absence of coercive measures' (IOM 2010b, 29). The decision is assumed to be taken out of own free will without any psychological coercion or psychical threat and is taken in the presence of relatively accurate and objective information allowing him to take the most favorable decision (Kraniauskas 2010, 10). In practice, the migrants who return to their country of origin with the assistance of return assistance projects are

those who are at the end of their temporary protection status, rejected asylum, or unable to stay, or choose to return at their own volition (IOM 2008b). For this reason, the desk officer of the ministry of foreign affairs does not completely agree with the IOM definition of voluntary return. She states that the return is not without psychological coercion; there exist mental pressure the moment the authorities tell the migrant to leave the country (interview Desk officer, own translation). Furthermore, the IOM assumes that the person who leaves the country has the correct and objective information. However, no one can ever be sure what the situation will be like when someone returns to that specific area. The definition of the IOM which includes 'free will' would be correct if a person is allowed to stay in the Netherlands but nevertheless decides to return to his country of origin. This is not the case with ex-asylum seekers and therefore the definition of the UNHCR would be more appropriate. Though, the IOM acknowledged this and states that it is true that rejected asylum seekers have a limited choice to decide whether they return or not, they do however still have their own agency about what they perceive best for their future (IOM 2008a, 20). The definition provided by the IOM will be the definition which will be used here.

2.2.2.: Mobility: incentives to remigration

There are many approaches to conceptualize cross-border mobility, however most of these approaches focus on the mobility while Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011) in their article focus first on the immobility instead. Houtum and Van der Velde (2004, 103) state that action and willingness to move has been overestimated while the non-action is drastically underestimated. They relate immobility to the concept of 'a bordered space of belonging'; the importance for people to belong somewhere or to feel at home in a specific locality or region (Van der Velde and Van Naerssen 2011, 221). Important motivators for non-action are then 'the avoidance of uncertainty and wish to border oneself and identify with an existing socio-spatial category (Houtum and Van der Velde 2004, 103). Through this process of belonging a space of indifference is created 'a space that impacts on the decision to cross borders' (Van der Velde and Van Naerssen 2011, 221). Important in the framework of Van der Velde and Van Naerssen are the mental thresholds the migrants have to overcome. The process starts in the space of indifference (passiveness) and when migrants overcome this threshold they will enter the space of difference, the active attitude part in which cross-border mobility is taken into full consideration. This phase of the framework is very similar to the approach of Van Wijk in his study for the IOM on the decision-making process on voluntary return of irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers (IOM 2011b, 18). Both approaches employ the widely used

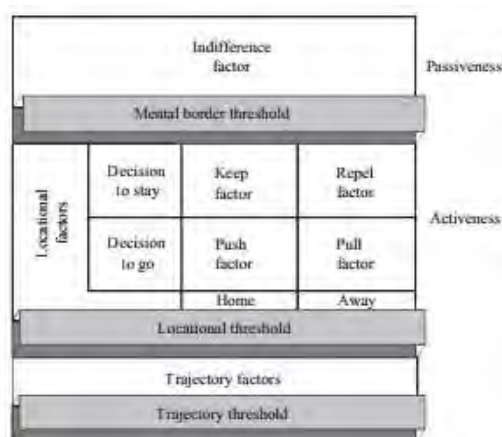
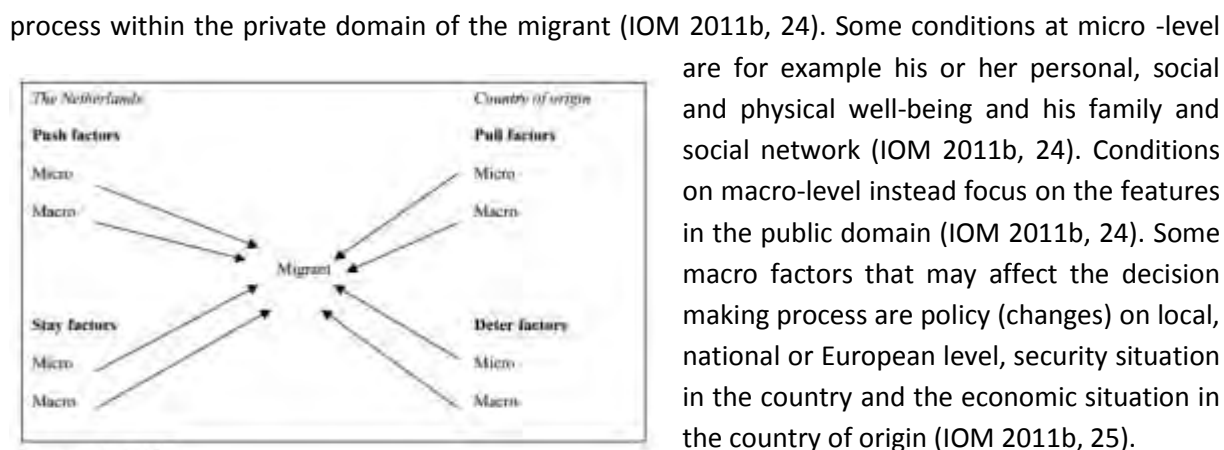


Figure 1 Factors and thresholds for spatial migratory behavior
Source: Partly based on Van Houtum and Van der Velde (2004)

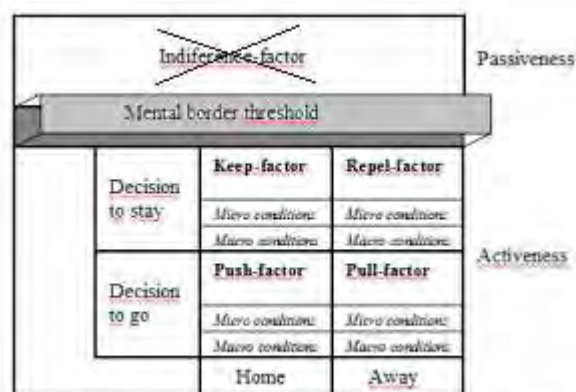
push- pull-paradigm which gives insight in the decisions to move, while often factors that make people decide not to move are neglected, these approaches described above do take these factors into account. In the situation of return, these factors are of great importance, it are those factors that make a person wanting to stay in the country of asylum, the 'stay-factors', and those factors that withhold a person to return to his/her country of origin, the 'deter'-factors (IOM 2008a, 24). According to Van Wijk (IOM 2011b, 24) it is useful to make a division between conditions on a micro- and on a macro-level. Conditions on a micro-level are those conditions that shape the return



micro and macro factors. These factors will be taken into consideration and will lead to the decision to become mobile and cross borders or stay put. The migrant will then roll into the second threshold, the locational threshold where the migrant is searching for a suitable destination. After this, the trajectory, the route to take still has to be determined.

These two approaches combined will be my framework for the return migrant decision making process. Both the approaches add different elements which are useful for the decision making process of the return migrant. Van Wijk (IOM 20122b) distinguishes between micro and macro factors in the decision making process which specifies the decision making framework. In addition the approach of Van der Velde and Van Naerssen (2011) introduces the passiveness and the activeness and the thresholds which prevail in the decision making process.

However, my study is based on mostly rejected asylum seekers which requires an adjusted approach for the decision making process. This, because regular migration and return migration differ in the decision making process. The location where migrants will migrate to as well as the trajectory migrants will follow still has to be determined in the country of residence while the location and the trajectory of return migrants is already partly mapped out in the country of residence. Return migrants will not have to go through the locational threshold as this is already determined. However, when they cannot return to their place of origin, another location should be determined The trajectories which are meant to brigde the distance between places of origin and places of destination (Van der Velde and Van Naerssen 2011, 221) is also more or less determined before the actual return migration. The IOM will arrange the airline tickets to their country of origin, to a place near their hometown. In the Netherlands they will be escorted at Schiphol, only once arrived in their country of origin they are expected to stand on their own feet. In addition, when the return is not completely voluntary, the space of indifference becomes non-existing because migrants will have no open choice between immobility and being mobile. Though, emanating from a voluntary return, the space of indifference and the threshold of indifference are applicable to this study and are a strong addition to the approach of Van Wijk. For my study I have made another model for the return migrant decision making process. To start off, I have excluded the locational and the trajectory threshold. Once the decision is



Source: Partly based on Van Houtum and Van der Velde (2003)

made to return the IOM will take it from there and will determine their location and their trajectory. The indifference phase is still included into the model though in a way that it is clear that the return migrants are already influenced to make the choice to become mobile. This adjusted framework will be applied to the empiric of my study. In the empiric it will also be more clear why the passiveness phase does not always exist which is related to the voluntariness of the return.

2.3. Sustainable return migration and development

2.3.1: Definition and measurability

There are many definitions and approaches to describe the concept of sustainable return migration. One way of defining sustainable return is defining it in a strict sense; to see if it involves the absence of re-migration (Black and Gent 2005, 2). However, the absence of re-migrating is not equal to living a sustainable life in the country of origin. The absence of re-migration could have many reasons, that is why the concept needs to be more specific. Another approach takes into account the socio-economic conditions (such as the availability of employment or access housing and basic services, or indeed fear of violence or persecution) faced by the returnees which makes it possible to build a sustainable life in the country of origin (Black and Gent 2005, 2). A third definition focuses on a number of absolute rights: rights to public and social services, to property and to freedom of movement (Black and Gent 2005, 2). Though, it is not considered what level of rights is enough for a sustainable return. The last approach is different from the approaches discussed above which all focus on the individual as this approach looks at return in a wider perspective and focuses on the consequences of return for the wider society (for example 'brain gain') (Black and Gent 2005, 2). It is difficult to come up with a definition of sustainable return that encompasses all these aspects.

Platform on Sustainable Return which is a coalition of nine Dutch organizations who are active in the fields of asylum and migration have reached an agreement on the definition on sustainable return migration, which will also be the definition I will be using in my research. The nine member are the Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN, Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland), Cordaid/ Mediation Agency for Return (Maatwerk bij Terugkeer), IOM, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA, Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers), HIT Foundation, (HIT stichting), Nidos, Pharos, HealthNet TPO and SAMAH. The definition given by Platform on sustainable return focuses foremost on the second and fourth definition mentioned above:

'return migrants should after their return (medically, psychosocially and socio-economically) reintegrate in the country of origin and they should be satisfied with their future perspectives (Frouws, Grimmerus and Bourdrez 2011, 24). Therefore, the return should offer real social and economic prospects in the country of origin. The return refers to the actual, independent departure from the country of destination, where the client has been adequately prepared, resulting in a real chance of psychosocial and socio-economic re-integration in the country of origin' (Geraci 2011, 14).

Geraci (2011, 27) uses the concept of embeddedness to gauge the sustainability of return (Geraci 2011, 27). Embeddedness encompasses both a (psycho) social component, which refers to the ways how return migrants feel at home or feel a sense of belonging, a sense of safety and their psychological wellbeing, and a socio-economic component, which refers to the social position taken up by the returnee and his family in the country of origin, possibilities for participation in society, having work and money as well as a social network to fall back on (Geraci 2011, 28; Ruben, Van Houte and Davids (2009, 932).

However, the theory of embeddedness only focuses on the concept of sustainability in relation to the position of the individual, while Black et al. (2004, 25) conceptualize sustainability also in relation to a wider context, to the home society as a whole (Black and Gent 2006, 26). The theory of Black and Gent further entails that 'sustainability' for individuals can be considered from the (subjective) vantage point of the returnees, as well as in terms of objective measurement of their situation. Third, sustainability can be measured in relation to the physical location or desired location of migrants after return but also in relation to socio-economic and political-security considerations (Black et al. 2004, 25). The physical, socio-economic and political security in relation to the subjective and objection point of view will be discussed in the following paragraph which is based on the approach of Black et al. (2004).

2.3.2: Physical, socio-economic and political security – Embeddedness

Subjective physical sustainability for the individual returnees is achieved if they do not want to leave their home country within a certain time after their return (Black et al. 2004, 26). Objective physical sustainability for individual returnees is achieved if they do not actually leave their home country within a certain time after their return (Black et al. 2004, 27). Aggregate physical sustainability is achieved if levels of emigration from the home country do not increase as a result of the return process (Black et al. 2004, 27). There are certain factors that influence the sustainability of the return, looking at the physical, the socio-economic and the political aspect of the return. Some factors that influence the physical sustainability are for example age and gender; pre-war accommodation and employment; Whether the language of the asylum country was learned; accommodation in the country of asylum; Whether living in pre-war home; follow-up from return organisations; and the willingness to return and reasons to return (Black et al. 2004, 26-27).

<i>Elements and potential measures of the sustainability of return</i>			
	Physical	Socio-economic	Political-security
Subjective perception of returnee	(Lack of) desire to re-emigrate	Perceived socio-economic status	Perception of safety, security threats
Objective conditions of returnee	Proportion of returnees who (do not) re-emigrate	Actual socio-economic status of returnees	Actual persecution or violence against returnees
Aggregate conditions of home country	Trends in levels of emigration and asylum-seeking abroad	Trends in levels of poverty and well-being	Trends in levels of persecution, conflict and violence

Source: Black et al. 2004, 25

Subjective socio-economic sustainability for the individual returnees is achieved if they believe they have an adequate level of well-being within a certain time after their return. Objective socio-economic sustainability for individual returnees is achieved if they reach an adequate level of well-being within a certain time after their return. Aggregate socio-economic is achieved if level of well-being do not decline as a result of the return process (Black et al. 2004, 27). Socio-economic sustainability can as well be influenced by the following factors, gender; pre-war education and employment; whether asylum was sought alone; education, employment and accommodation in the country of asylum; whether living in pre-war home; receipt of return assistance; willingness to return, reasons to return (Black et al. 2004, 27).

Subjective political sustainability for individual returnees is achieved when they believe they

have an adequate level of security and access to public services within a certain time after return. Objective political sustainability for individual returnees is achieved if they gain access to public services and are not victim to persecution within a certain time after their return. Aggregate political sustainability is achieved if levels of access to public services and of persecution do not worsen as a result of the return process. Factors that influence the political sustainability are gender; status in the country off asylum; and the receipt of assistance and follow-up from return agencies (Black et al. 2004, 27).

The theory of embeddedness can be related to this theory which measures sustainability by using three options which present themselves in relation to the three types of sustainability identified: measure the perceptions of individual returnees themselves; measure the objective conditions of individual returnees; measure the wider conditions in the country of return. The three types are –the socio-economic, the political security, and the physical. Embeddedness however, can only take place if the migrant has no desire to re-emigrate (the physical sustainability); this can be regarded as a prerequisite for psychosocially and socio-economically embeddedness. Therefore, the theory of embeddedness only relates and only to two types of sustainability, the socio-economic and the political security dimension. The socio-economic and the political security dimension encompasses the psychosocial and socio-economic component of the theory of embeddedness. However, the psychosocial component of the theory of embeddedness further elaborates on the feeling of home which is a relevant component in this research and will be addressed in the next paragraph.

This theory on the measurement of sustainability will provide me with a framework for my empirics. However, my study is a qualitative study which only provides a subjective vantage point of the returnees leaving the objective measurement of their situation open for further study. My approach is similar to the theory of embeddedness which only takes the perception of the individual returnees themselves into account, though to fully measure sustainability it is necessary to take into account the objective conditions of the individual returnees and the wider conditions in the country of return as well.

2.3.3: Home & belonging

The psychosocial component which includes the short and long-term emotional/psychological problems refugees experience upon return is often overshadowed by the physical and practical aspects of sustainable reintegration (Ghanem 2003, 36). Reintegration is not only about financially or socially getting re-integrating in your country of origin but also about feeling at home again in the country you came from. 'Return migration is not simply a matter of 'going home', as feelings of belonging need to be renegotiated upon return' (De Bree, Davids and De Haas 2010, 489). It is therefore wrong to assume that returnees will naturally 'reconnect' with their homeland and recover the feeling of well-being they enjoyed before the events leading to their flight (Ghanem 2003, 36). 'Feeling at home' is not easy to denote and has been explored by many scholars within a wide range of fields and it has now been understood as a multidimensional concept (Teerling 2008, 1084; Mallet 2004, 64). Home is not only a place or country where people come from originally, whereas people may not feel at home in that place (anymore). When referring to the concept of home as a place, it is often seen as a place where one finds refuge, a place of retreat from conflict, toil and struggle (Wright 2009, 476). Relating this to the Iraqi refugees who fled their country because of conflict, toil and or struggle, it could be contested whether Iraq is still seen as their home. All refugees who arrived in the Netherlands are hoping for a safe place to live, a safe haven. A safe have

does not need to refer to a literally safe place, but could also refer to a place with a good economy, in case of Mongolian asylum seekers, where one can built their future. Returning to their country of origin is giving up this safe haven to go to a place which is their country of origin but maybe no longer their home. Home does not need to refer to a place it could also refer to as a space, a feeling or a state of being in the world (Teerling 2008, 1084). Home is about belonging. Yuval-Davis (2006, 197) points out that belonging is about 'emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home', and again about feeling safe'. Return migration is not simply coming 'home', especially not for refugees, who left their country of origin because of the fact they no longer feel 'at home' anymore (Davids and van Houte 2008, 176).

In this study, families are about to return or are already returned to their country of origin. The feeling of home and belonging needs to be taken into account regarding their return and reintegration because this could have its effect on the participation of these return migrants in their new society especially if they still feel connected to the Netherlands. In this study it is assumed that migrants who have been living in the Netherlands for a longer period of time, which are often Iraqi families, will struggle more with their feeling of belonging. In this time period, their norms and values, their language and their identity is Dutch or is shaped by the Dutch culture. The notion of 'home' and 'belonging' these returnees have will be altered by their experience in the host country, and the way each one of them interprets it and consequently affect their reintegration upon return (Ghanem 2003, 25). The different ways these families have cultivated their notion of 'home' in their stay in the host country exile will influence the psychosocial dimension of their reintegration upon return (Ghanem 2003, 28).

2.3.4: Return reintegration assistance and sustainability

Ruben, Van Houte and Davids (2009, 932) in their article on the embeddedness of return migrants state that the type and timing of assistance can substantially contribute to improving their embeddedness upon return. Many assisted voluntary return programs try to influence the success of returns and also the sustainability of the return. Thus, the sustainability can be enhanced by return reintegration assistance; it can offer the migrant a real chance of psychosocial and socio-economic reintegration in the country of origin. The main purpose of a IOM voluntary assistance return project is 'facilitating over a 12 month period orderly and voluntary return and reintegration of returnees in their first steps towards their reintegration in the country of origin and therefore contributing towards their sustainable return. It aims to help individuals to obtain the adequate tools to rebuild their life back in their country of origin and promote their self-sufficiency via training or employment' (IOM 2004, 3).

The AVR FC-project of the IOM offers the return migrants assistance not only after they arrived in their country of origin but also at the pre-return stage. It offers both financial support and it provides support in the decision-making process towards voluntary return, with the preparation for voluntary return, in drafting a family plan on return and reintegration prior to departure (FPRR), the journey back home and post arrival support in the country of origin to implement the FPRR (IOM 2011a). Ruben, Van Houte and Davids (2009, 933) are pleading for a more integrated approach for assisting returnees which addresses both material and human needs. Though, the return assistance cannot address all challenges of building sustainable livelihoods. Other important factors which play an important role in ensuring a successful return and subsequent embeddedness are safety and improved political, economic and social conditions in the country of origin; the desire to be reunited with family; the possibility of claiming one's property in the country of origin and of finding

employment; the desire to contribute to reconstruction of the country of origin (Geraci 2011, 28). Assisted return alone cannot ensure sustainable return; sustainable return is highly dependent on the concrete situation of the individual returnee (Chu et. al 2008, 5). Chu et. al (2008, 5) state that 'there is no easy or inexpensive way to achieve sustainable return, and even if every aspect is included in a return programme there is no guarantee that this return will be sustainable. As stakeholders in the return process, we can only advocate for and assist in the process of ensuring that the relevant preconditions for sustainability are in place'. It is therefore better to speak of an increase in the likelihood of the sustainable return as result of assisted return.

2.3.5: Return migration and development

International migration and development are closely interconnected. Development influences migration and migration has its impact on development (IOM 2001, 6). Also return migration has its impact on development, though the implications of return migration vary significantly based on several factors such as, the volume of return migration, characteristics of migrants, reasons for return, and situations existing in the countries involved in the migration (IOM 2001, 17). Financial and human capital may be mobilized by a migrants return, think of migrants who accumulate savings while working abroad and bring them back to their country of origin or those migrants who make new social contacts which prove useful back in the country of origin (IOM 2001, 17). It could help reverse 'brain drain' and could promote the transfer and investment of migrant capital in countries of origin (Black and Gent 2005, 1). These migrants are often highly skilled migrants instead rejected asylum seekers (Olesen 2002, 135-136). However, the contribution this last group can make to the development of their countries by bringing back human and social capital should not be underestimated (Olesen 2002, 136).

This is evident in the implicit 'policy theory' on sustainable return by Platform -The promotion of "voluntary" sustainable (medical, psychosocial, social and economic embedded) return of the (former) asylum seeker with a focus on local development in the country of origin- which also refers to the development component as part of a return and reintegration project (Frouws, Grimmus and Bourdrez 2011, 24 and Zadel, Kakushadze and Tongeren 2010, 250). This is why assisted return reintegration is funded through a grants framework, for which the budget is EUR 9 million in 2011 (Ministry of foreign Affairs 2008). However the implicit 'policy theory' - individual sustainable reintegration leading to positive developments for the wider community in the country of origin - is not explicitly elaborated on in the program proposal (Frouws, Grimmus and Bourdrez 2011, 24). They presume that sustainable return and reintegration are enhancing development in the country of origin. The ministry of foreign affairs believes that through financial and in kind assistance they can help the returnees building a new life in their country of origin. However de AIV states that the decision to return should not be dependent on the financial assistance. They state that voluntary return is a precondition because this generates the most success for a sustainable return (AIV 2005, 55). There prevails a dilemma that often the government of the host country only provides training and guidance in return to those whose only common characteristic is that their application for a residence permit is rejected. While the specialized organizations prefer to work with candidates who are motivated and have capacities. For example, to achieve self-employment in their country of origin the absence time constraint to leave is a benefit. The general approach would be more emphasis on development and less on return (AIV 2005, 55).

Though in general, the effects of sustainable return on development can only be measured by taken the aggregate conditions of the home country into account. However, In contrast to my

study which measures the subjective perception of the returnee by conducting in-depth interviews, the aggregate conditions in the home country needs to be measured differently. Black et al. (2004,39) states that 'a more sophisticated tracking system to monitor aggregate changes in incomes, employment, security and migration patterns could be envisaged, but would be unlikely to be robust enough to isolate the impact of return itself on these indicators'. He therefore distinguishes to definitions of sustainability, one focused on 'individual sustainability' which is quite similar to my definition of sustainability stated in paragraph 2.3.1., and the other focuses on the 'aggregate sustainability'. His definition of aggregate sustainability entails 'Return migration is sustainable for the home country or region if socio-economic conditions and levels of violence and persecution are not significantly worsened by return, as measured one year after the return process is complete' (Black et al. 2004,39). Consequently, the relation between return migration and development could only be indicated by using this last definition and the corresponding methods.

2.3.6: Monitoring

To actually measure the physical, socio-economic and political sustainability of a return and measuring the influence of the return assistance on the sustainability of the return, the return of each family should be monitored by following up these families. However, there are limitations to ongoing monitoring of returnees due to the cost of following mobile populations (Gent and Black 2005, 3). The desk officer endorses this by arguing that it is not possible to monitor every project for three years or longer, because it is too expensive. One year, she says, would be the minimum because it takes a couple of months or maybe a year before you're really settled because of the adjustments people have to make. According to the desk officer it is best to conduct an external research instead of only evaluating the project by the organization itself.

In this research, only the experience of the migrant themselves are explored by following the returnees and looking at the three different factors that influence the sustainability of return. Monitoring would include follow-up over a period of months and years after their return, instead of only monitoring them immediately when they are returned (Black et al. 2004, 28).

Black et al. (2004) identified a series of indicators that can be translated into a survey instrument for a sample of returnees. These indicators include the perspective of the returnees on sustainability but it also includes objective indicators of their situation. Furthermore, it is also important to have a definition that defines a time period (Black et al. 2004, 27).

Indicators of the sustainability of return		
Dimension of sustainability	Key indicators	Possible sources of comparison
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wish to re-emigrate • Plan to re-emigrate • Re-emigration of family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be compared over time
Socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment (all household members) • Income level • Income sources • Whether return was to pre-war home • Receipt of humanitarian assistance • Receipt of remittances • Access to education • Access to health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSMS and Labour Force Surveys measure employment, income, sometimes remittances • Demographic and Health Survey measures access to health • Education surveys measure access to education • All indicators can be measured over time
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of security • How reality of return compares to expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc surveys often measure actual and perceived security • Both indicators can be measured over time

Source: Black et al. 2004

Chapter 3: The return process in The Netherlands and the actors involved

3.1: Return migration in The Netherlands

This chapter will deal with the whole return process in the Netherlands by first describing the Dutch asylum policy and the return process. The court ruling on the return of families with underage children will be discussed next. Then I will provide a short description on the Iraqi and the Mongolian migrants in the Netherlands. Subsequently, a framework on the actors involved in the return process is provided which will discuss the IOM and the AVR-FC project in particular. This chapter tries to better conceptualize the return process in its whole.

3.1.1: *The Dutch asylum policy and return*

When a person applies for asylum in the Netherlands their asylum procedure will start. In the Netherlands there are four grounds for Asylum which are based on art. 29(1) of the Alien Act 2000. The first ground is based on the Refugee Convention defining who is a refugee. The second protection ground is based on article 3 ECHR, or art. 3 CAT or art. 15 QD. This ground will be applicable to a person 'who makes a plausible case that he has good grounds for believing that if he is expelled he will run a real risk of being subjected to 1. death penalty or execution 2. torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or 3. serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. (art. 29(1)(b) Vw 2000). The third and the fourth ground are based on National legislation. The third one is based on a humanitarian clause; a person 'who cannot, for pressing reasons of a humanitarian nature connected with the reasons for his departure from the country of origin, reasonably be expected, in the opinion of the State Secretary of Justice, to return to his country of origin (art. 29(1)(c) Vw 2000). The fourth one is the so-called 'categorical protection law' which is given to for whom return to the country of origin would, in the opinion of the Minister constitute an exceptional hardship in connection with the overall situation there (art. 29(1)(d) Vw 2000). This last one will be further discussed later on in relation to the Profile of Iraqi migrants in The Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, the return process of migrants starts when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) rejects their application for a residence permit and any subsequent applications for judicial review or appeals are denied by the courts; or when the IND does not renew their residence permit; or when the IND revokes their residence permit (Government of the Netherlands n.d.). A return decision is imposed on aliens who are no longer entitled to stay in the Netherlands or are here illegally. They are obligated to leave the Netherlands on their own initiative (art. 62. Lid 1 Vw), if this is not the case, the State Secretary of Justice can deport the migrant (art. 63 Vw). In practice, the statutory departure deadlines are not strictly followed (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland 2010, 2); when aliens agree to cooperate with their return, an additional period for departure of 12 weeks can be giving in addition to the regular departure time of 4 weeks. These aliens are removed from the initial reception center and taken to the Freedom Mitigating Location (VBL) in Ter Apel (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland 2010, 2). Since July 2011 there are two family shelters (gezinslocaties) where families with under aged children can reside who have to leave the Netherlands.

3.1.2: *Return of families with underage children*

Due to the rulings of the court in The Hague on 27 July 2010 and 11 January 2011, the lodging of families with minor children be terminated until the children reach the age of 18 years have not yet

achieved and their departure from the Netherlands has not occurred. This is a important incentive for voluntary return (temporarily) disappeared (Leers 2011a, 4).

The government has notified in the coalition and support agreement high priority to the return of families with minor children, especially since the return of minor children is the longer they stay in the Netherlands (CITT 2011, 13) . This is why the return of this group has become crucial to achieve. There have made special reception locations in Gilze and in Katwijk for these families. However, there has been a lot of criticism on these family shelters, stating that the mental condition of the parents but also of the children has sharply declined after their arrival in the family shelter. Other critique is based on the sober regime which is not suitable for longer stays, the travel expenses which must be provided by the people themselves and the limited access to medical care for the residents which is worrisome (Manson 2011, 2,3; Start 2011). It is indeed true, that in these shelters only the basic needs are taken care of: shelter, food and daily care and the children are able to go to school. The center is not a prison, but the movement is restricted (Rijksoverheid 2011). Minister Leers together with the IOM created a special return scheme for families with underage children as an additional incentive to voluntary return from the Netherlands. This project is further discussed later in this chapter.

3.1.3: Iraqi migrants in the Netherlands

Tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees fled to the Netherlands in the nineties and through family reunification many more Iraqis immigrated to the Netherlands. In the following years there has been a constant influx of Iraqi refugees in the Netherlands (Netherlands Refugee Foundation 2011, 34). All of the Iraqi asylum seekers from Central-Iraq who arrived in the Netherlands until 22nd November 2008 were automatically granted a conditional residence permit because of the unsafe general situation in Iraq; this is a so-called categorical protection policy. This policy was abolished on 22nd November 2008 because the Dutch government adopted the view that the security situation in Iraq has improved to such an extent that return of Iraqis has become possible (Netherlands Refugee Foundation 2011, 34). This means that the cases of the asylum applications are now reassessed on a case by case basis (Netherlands Refugee Foundation 2011, 34). Most of these asylum seekers fled the country because of the general situation in the country of origin, which means that the residence permits of many Iraqi's will be withdrawn and they will be send back to Iraq. Many sources however (jurisprudence, official reports etc.) indicate that the security situation is not totally safe (Netherlands Refugee Foundation 2011, 34). Even last week on Thursday 23rd February 2012, there has been a wave of bombings and shootings across Iraq which has killed at least 50 people and injured hundreds (BBC News 23-02-2012). Because of the attacks and the internal violence which still causes 400 civilian deaths per month, the UNHCR is highly critical of the Netherlands' return policy. Though it should be noted that feeling secure is not objective it is subjective and relative. A report of the UNHCR on Iraq Refugee Returnee monitoring stresses that a large number of Iraqi refugee returnee families have claimed to have returned to Baghdad from their country of asylum out of a positive response to improvements in the security and political situation in Iraq (UNHCR 2011, 2). Regarding the return of Iraqi refugees, it is stated that when they return to Iraq they are faced with many challenges, not only the lack of security, but also challenges of livelihood prospect and of social services (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland 2008; UNHCR 2012, 146).

3.1.4: Mongolian migrants in the Netherlands

In IOM statistics of migrants who voluntarily returned with the assistance of the IOM in 2011, it is apparent that the vast majority of the migrants returned to Iraq, Russia and Mongolia. The 'Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands' (REAN) and the 'Return and reintegration regulation' (HRT) consisted of 3473 migrants in 2011, 825 returned to Iraq and 200 returned to Mongolia (CITT 2011). Relatively, many migrants return to Mongolia while this country is not currently known as a 'asylum country of origin' or a country where many illegal immigrants come from. Also, regarding the AVR-FC project many migrants returned to Mongolia. In the period 01.01.2012 until 30.06.2012, 105 families returned with the AVR-FC project, 41 to Russia, 21 families to Iraq, and respectively 16 to Mongolia (IOM 2011). It is plausible that the reasons for the return have to do with the rapid economic development in the country and the associated modernization (Mongools verkeersbureau 2011).

In February 2012 a monitoring field visit was made by two project officers (Pos) to Mongolia to assess the assistance received and the reintegration efforts made so far. They have visited six families who have benefitted from the maximum reintegration packages in order to assess the impact of the reintegration assistance (IOM 2012a, 6). They were interviewed at the locations where they started their businesses. The table below shows that families originating from Russia, Iraq, Mongolia and Armenia form the largest AVR FC caseload. Unfortunately, I was not able to find general statistics on Iraqi and Mongolian families in the Netherlands.

#	Nationality	Δ Departing families during reporting period per nationality	Total families per nationality	#	Nationality	Δ Departing families during reporting period per nationality	Total families per nationality
1	Afghanistan	1	1	10	Indonesia	0	1
2	Angola	2	2	11	Iraq	21	39
3	Armenia	12	12	12	Iran	3	3
4	Azerbaijan	1	1	13	Liberia	1	1
5	Bolivia	1	1	14	Mongolia	16	21
6	Burundi	1	1	15	Nigeria	1	1
7	China	1	1	16	Russia	41	53
8	Colombia	1	3	17	Kosovo	1	1
9	Egypt	0	1	18	Sri Lanka	1	1
					TOTAL CASES	105	144

Source: IOM 2012

3.2: Involved organizations

3.2.1: All the players in the field

Organizations concerned with return

In the Netherlands there are many organizations which are concerned with return migration. The Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer & Vertrek, DT&V) which is an implementing organization of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, is responsible for supervising the assisted voluntary and forced repatriation of foreign nationals who are not allowed to stay in the Netherlands. Its key goal is to stimulate voluntary return of the alien, however when this is not the case, the Repatriation and Departure Service enforces the departure of the alien (the Repatriation and Departure Service n.d.). When aliens are choosing for voluntary return, the IOM will assist them, only when these aliens are qualified for the assistance of the IOM, to return to their country of origin

and with sustainable reintegration. In addition, the following community service organizations are also involved in the process of (former) asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants returning to their country of origin: Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA, Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers), Mediation Agency for Return (MbT, Maatwerk bij terugkeer), among which Beyond Borders (BB), Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN, Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland), HIT Foundation, (HIT stichting), Nidos and Pharos (Geraci 2011, 8). The IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and will also be the organization on which this research will be based. It is dedicated to promote humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. The IOM in the Netherlands has a great number of projects which help to ensure these believes (iom-nederland.nl).

3.2.2: The IOM

The IOM is a worldwide intergovernmental organization established in 1951 146 Member States and 98 observers who acts with its partners in the international community in the field of migration. IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. In 1990 the IOM started to introduce activities in the Netherlands (IOM website). One of them is the assistance of migrants who want to return voluntarily to their country of origin and with their sustainable reintegration in this country. This is called the REAN-program which provides basic services to migrants leaving the Netherlands, provided the conditions are met. It provides information on the possibilities the migrants have to return voluntarily, by means of offering current information on the situation in the country of destination and by answering individual questions. The IOM provides the travel and provides guidance on departure and, if desired, during transit and upon arrival. IOM can also assist in obtaining travel documents. In addition, the IOM provides certain target groups additional (financial) support or individual counseling (IOM website). In recent years, the IOM in addition to the REAN program developed projects for specific target groups which support is given to the reintegration upon return. This reintegration assistance is designed to help migrants to build a new life in the country of origin. One of such project is the AVR-FC project (IOM website).

3.2.3: The AVR-FC project

Since August 2011 the reintegration assistance is also available for families with under age children the Assisted voluntary return for families with children (AVR-FC) project which will be the focus of this research. This project is very similar to the AVRFC project in the UK, however under this project the IOM offers assistance to non-EEA families and children (under 18) who want to return permanently to their countries of origin – whether they have ever claimed asylum or have not (IOM UK). While in the Netherlands the family must have made an asylum claim. Another difference is that the IOM in the UK will make all arrangements and pay travel costs for only one parent and any number of their own children to return, with a £500 relocation grant per person given in cash at a UK airport (A second parent will travel under either the VARRP or AVRIM voluntary return programs)(IOM UK) and unaccompanied Minors (asylum seekers or irregular migrants) can also benefit, individually, under the AVRFC program. In the Netherlands both of the parents can apply for the project however, unaccompanied minors cannot apply for the AVR-FC project in the Netherlands.

The AVR-FC project proposes to contribute to the humane and sustainable voluntary return from the Netherlands of families with a pending or rejected asylum claim, as well as well as to families that have remained in the Netherlands in an irregular situation, following the rejection of their asylum claim children (IOM 2012). This is realized by providing support in the decision-making

process towards voluntary return, with the preparation for voluntary return, in drafting a family plan on return and reintegration prior to departure (FPRR), the journey back home and post arrival support in the country of origin to implement the FPRR (IOM, 2011). The family plan consists of several components, which can be flexibly combined. For instance, the family grants and the specific child grants can cover various services depending on the specific situation and needs of the family. This tailor-made approach allows for adjustments in according to the specific needs and wishes of the members of the family; both adults and children. IOM offices in CoOs play a crucial role in providing feedback on the realistic implementation in the CoO and in ensuring delivery of assistance and monitoring after return (IOM 2012). Tailor-made AVRR assistance will be organized for a target of 150 returning families.

The AVR-FC project combines in kind assistance with financial assistance, in addition to services already available under the two Dutch existing AVR programs. The in cash grant will be made available to the family upon departure to the country of origin. The in kind assistance should be used to invest in an establishment of a small enterprise, housing, vocational training, education/training, job placement or medical support. When all the in kind assistance has been finalized as agreed upon a final installment will be made available. Iraqi, Russian and respectively Mongolian families are the three significantly largest groups who applied for the AVR-FC project. This research will be based on the return process of these three largest groups, the Iraqi, Russian and Mongolian families who applied for this project.

In a second interim report of the AVR-FC which is send to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 105 families, a total of 240 children and 182 adults returned under AVR FC project in a period from 01.01.2012 until 30.06.2012 (IOM 2012). Since the start of the AVR FC project 144 families returned¹. IOM expects to attain the targeted number of 150 families in the forthcoming months. The donor agreed to use the remaining budget relating to reintegration support for an additional 10 to 15 families pending budget availability (IOM 2012).

.

Chapter 4: The return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families at the pre-departure stage

4.1: Introduction

This chapter will focus on the return migration process in the Netherlands which is discussed in the first part of my theoretical framework. The order that is used in the theoretical framework shall also be applied to this chapter starting with the first step in the return process: the decision to return. The decision making process of the return migrants has been studied in accordance with the framework composed in my theoretical framework. It has done so by taking into account the stay, deter, push and pull factors while the passiveness and the activeness in the return migration process is related to the voluntariness of the return. Only after studying the different factors that influence the decision making process of the families the voluntariness of the return in practice can be considered.

In most cases, when the families have made their decision to return they approach the IOM. The assistance provided at this stage shall be described in order to provide a clear objective image of the role of the IOM. However, this assistance is not perfect as the families as well as the project officers will have their remarks about some parts of the assistance. These perspectives on the AVR-FC project will be discussed in order to make the return more sustainable.

4.1.1: Introducing the families

This chapter concerns the return migration process of the families in practice which will be illustrated with some quotes from the interviews. To avoid some possible confusion only a few families, my key-informants, will be brought to light whom I will introduce first. All these families already decided to return to their home country at the moment of the interview, however, their incentives will be discussed in the next paragraph.

The first Iraqi family is family Al-Musawi, a mother with her six year old son. One year ago she came to Netherlands because her husband was killed in Iraq and she didn't feel safe anymore. Her two other children she left behind in Iraq because it was too expensive for her to bring them to the Netherlands. Here, she made an appeal to her negative decision on her asylum claim, but until this day she did not heard from them back. But because of

Next is the family Hassani with their three children two of which are born in the Netherlands. Seven years ago they got their residence permit based on the categorical protection policy, however this permit was withdrawn after four and a half year. The husband and wife both started with their incorporation course and they got level two. After this the husband studied at the ROC Leiden to become a mechanic.

Father Al-Nasiri came to the Netherlands seven years ago, his wife and four children migrated two years after. Just like family Hassani they received their residence permit on the bases of the categorical protection policy and their permit was also redrawn after four years. The mother is very sick, she has cancer and kidney failures. All the children go to school and the eighteen year old girl is studying to become an pharmacy assistant.

The Mongolian family Oyuunchimeg has been living in a AZC for over one year. They have got two children of whom one of them is still in Mongolia. Before they came to the Netherlands the mother and the daughter applied for asylum in Czech Republic, however this was negative. They decided to go to the Netherlands where the husband applied for asylum but again this was negative. Till this day, his asylum claim is still pending.

Family Gantulga is a family consisting of a mother, father, daughter of 4 years and their baby. They came to the Netherlands in February 2012 and in May they got a negative decision from the IND.

At last, family Bolormaa with two children of whom one of them is still in Mongolia. They got a negative on their asylum request. They were told by their lawyer that they had to leave the Netherlands a year ago. But the mother was pregnant, so they stayed until her daughter was born.

4.2: Incentives to voluntary return or not to return

4.2.1: Passiveness and activeness

Return migrants are migrants who already been mobile in their lives. They have already passed the threshold of migration once before. Once in the country of asylum however, the process of migration will start all over again. Though, the return migration process differs from their previous migration process, as the trajectory and the location of the migration are already decided and the passiveness phase of the migration process hardly exist in the lives of asylum seekers who are rejected; they are often forced to be active. The mental threshold to actually migrate, however, does exist strongly. In the next paragraph the considerations of the families to return or not to return are taken into account.

4.2.2: Push factors on micro- and macro-level

Push factors are conditions that are unfavorable about the area that one lives in and are the reasons why people leave their place of residence. The biggest push factor is without doubt the fact that the families no longer have a residence permit for the Netherlands which means that they are supposed to leave the country within 28 days. Withdrawal and rejection of their residence permit is therefore the foremost reason to migrate which is a push factor from the Netherlands. Withdrawal of a residence permit in contrast to rejection is more crude for the persons concerned as most of these persons have been in the Netherlands for a longer time period. Most of the Iraqi families whom I interviewed did receive a residence permit a few years back on the basis of the categorical protection policy. A few months later, a house was assigned to the family, they received social benefits and they could make use of all the social services including education. However, this residence permit was a permit for a certain period of time and when Iraq was claimed to be safe in 2008 most of these residence permits were revoked. This means that they are no longer lawfully resident in the Netherlands and have to return to Iraq. As a consequence, the social benefit and social services such as healthcare are denied to these families which disables them from paying their rent. In case of Iraq, where they do not allow involuntary return, families cannot be forced to return. Though their option is restraint, as they can no longer pay their rent the only option left is moving into a family shelter.

The Mongolian families were more clear in their statements. They indicated that they did not receive a residence permit returned to their country of origin because of this. Father Oyuunchimeg, however, still has a pending asylum claim but nevertheless he decided to return to Mongolia with his family. He explained why:

'My wife and my daughter are being sent back to Czech Republic, while I have to stay here in the Netherlands. Therefore, we could not stay together and that made the situation very difficult. We want to stay together and that's why we want to return together to Mongolia with the assistance of the IOM' (Interview family Oyuunchimeg, own translation).

4.2.3: Pull factors on micro- and macro-level

Pull factors are those factors that attract one to another area and encourage a person to move from their country of origin to another country of residence. Most of the informants, Iraqi as well as Mongolian informants, claim that there are no pull factors. Only the Iraqi mother Al-Musawi with her son decided to return because of her two children who are still in Iraq. She told me:

'Three weeks ago I decided to go back and next week I will leave the Netherlands. I went to the VVN and told them that I wanted to return very soon because of my children in Iraq. My children have a problem in Iraq.. I want to go back to Iraq because my sister is getting a baby and she can no longer take care of my children. I still have court, but I want to go before. I don't want to go but I have to for my children sake' (interview Al-Musawi)

4.2.4: Stay factors on micro- and macro-level

The stay factors are those factors that make people want to stay in their country of residence which are in this case foremost factors at the micro level (the micro and macro level for all the factors are discussed in paragraph 4.2.6.). The Iraqi families claim that they feel safe in the Netherlands. Not only do they feel safe in the Netherlands, they also feel at home here. As said before, Iraqi families have been living in the Netherlands for a couple of years and in the meantime some of their children were born in the Netherlands. The parents often argue that their children will be influenced most by the Dutch culture as most of them went to school in the Netherlands, they talk Dutch everyday and have a lot of social contacts here. You could say that through this all, they are more or less Dutchified. Father Hassani explained to me:

'My children are born here, in the Netherlands. My daughter was three when she came to the Netherlands, now she's 9'. Interviewer: 'Does she remember Iraq?'. 'Only a little'. Interviewer: 'Do you still have contact with people in Iraq?'. 'Yes, sometimes I contact my family. But not that often, because it's only possible by telephone, and they live in a village, so it is really difficult to get in contact with them'. (Interview Hassani, own translation)

While some claim to feel at home in the Netherlands, some Iraqi parents strongly hang on to their Iraqi background which is sometimes also reflected to their children. This is true for one family whom I have not introduced as they are not a key informant, but is significant to show the contrast with the other families who do feel at home in the Netherlands. This family states without a doubt that their home is Iraq, also for their children. They speak Kurdish at home because the parents do not speak Dutch. They state that the language is a real barrier for them to really feel at home here as well as the cultural differences. The two children of this family and their parents also have a lot of contact with family and friends in Iraq via telephone, internet, Skype and other media. The parents made clear that because of this their children had a 'clear' image of Iraq.

Another stay factor what came up was the health of the mother Al-Nasiri, her husband states:

'My wife is very sick. She has a benign tumor in her head what puts a lot of pressure on her brain. A surgery is necessary to keep her a live' (Interview Al-Nasari, own translation)

The health care in the Netherlands is much better which is seen as a important stay factor by this family considering their medical issues.

The Mongolian families in the interviews did not focus on the stay factors but more on the deter factors of Mongolia which will be discussed in the next paragraph. The most likely cause of the lack of stay factors will have to do with the short time period the Mongolian families resided in the Netherlands. They didn't receive a residence permit and therefore only stayed in a AZC while the Iraqi families have lived in a house and could make use of the social services. They could not really take part in the Dutch society.

4.2.5: Deter factors on micro- and macro-level

The deter factors are linked to the countries of origin at a macro and micro level. These are often also the reasons why they left their country in the first place. Safety is often the reason why they do not want to return to their country of origin at least in case of the Iraqi families. Familiy Al-Nasiri states that they cannot return to their old neighborhood because Shiite militias are threatening their lives., stating that the security situation in Iraq is really bad.

The Mongolian families do not make this claim but are repelled to go back to Mongolia because the life is very difficult there, especially in case of finding a job.

A second deter factors is the fact that all the families sold everything they owned in order to be able to finance the journey to the Netherlands. In the country of origin they have got nothing, no house and no job. One Iraqi informant told me:

'We don't have anything there. If I go back, I have three children, it's really difficult. We have to start of scratch, we have to life on the streets. It's really bad' (interview Hassani, own translation)

The Mongolian family Gantulga argued almost the same thing:

'Well it is very difficult in our country, that's why we came. Go back, we sold everything now we have to buy everything again, is very difficult. We spend a lot of money to come here.' (interview Gantulga).

One last important factor that has come up in many interviews is the fact that the children will have a difficult time returning to their country of origin as they are integrated in the Dutch society which is at the same time a stay factor. Many children of the families are born in the Netherlands or were very small coming to the Netherlands, they will not remember or do not know anything about their country of origin. Most of them do not speak Arabic very well let alone write. A friend of the Iraqi informant stated that:

"In Iraq the school, they cannot play, no computers, no writing. In Iraq if not read, then slap. I am very said about this'. Interviewer: 'Does he remember Iraq?'. 'Ja he remembers, but he doesn't want to go. Yesterday he was No no Iraq! He cried so much, please mommy I want to stay here, to study. And maybe brother come here, to see how different it is here. And he likes to dance, but in Iraq, nay nay" (interview Al-Musawi)

4.2.6: Voluntary return in practice reconsidered

It is evident from the push factors from the Netherlands indicated above that the pressure to return is high because of the few means to stay in the Netherlands without a residence permit. Due to facilities and the social services which are denied and the conditions in the family shelters which are very bad, the families claim that their only choice is between life on the streets and returning to their country of origin. This all puts pressure on the families to return without physical coercive measures. This mental pressure is declared by father Al-Badri who already returned and who will be introduced in the next chapter, stating that:

'I had to leave the Netherlands because of the fear for forced return and I did not want my family to live any longer in a 'kamp' (AZC), I wanted to spare them this. Because in the camp you could feel a lot of mental pressure, so I decided to leave with my own dignity. If it wasn't for the pressure and so on, I would have never returned' (own translation, interview Al-Badri, own translation).

Most of these families only return with the assistance of the IOM because they don't see any other option and returning with the IOM is in their view their best option. Sometimes, it is expressed very clearly that they have no other option than return. Family Al-Nasiri stated:

'The DT&V made appointments with us about our return and we felt like we were pushed to leave the country' (Interview Al-Nasiri, own translation).

Another conversation with the Iraqi family Hassani made clear that their return is not totally voluntary either:

"Interviewer: 'Why are you going back to Iraq?' Father Hassani: 'Because I am forced'. Interviewer: 'Did the DT&V contacted you?'. Father Hassani: 'Yes, I had about 4 appointments with them. They said it would be better if I left voluntarily, and not go to the family shelters. Because it will be more difficult if I do not leave on voluntary basis. But it is not voluntary, I have to go back'. Interviewer: 'How did you come in contact with the IOM?'. Father Hassani: 'The DT&V gave me the telephone number of IOM, I could call this number if I decided to return voluntarily. And I saw that I did not have another option. If the children could no longer go to school that's the end of their future here'" (interview Hassani, own translation).

The Mongolian family Oyuunchimeg, where the mother and daughter made an asylum claim in Czech Republic state first that their decision was quite forced upon them:

'The immigration Police came to us one day and said that my wife and daughter are being deported to Czech Republic and the only way to stay together is to all return to Mongolia. So, that's why we decided to go back to Mongolia. I have signed the return papers, but this was under pressure because otherwise the immigration Police would deport my family. But my case, my asylum claim is still pending' (Interview family Oyuunchimeg, own translation).

However, when I asked if they felt this was forced return they state:

'Well actually, we decided for ourselves to returned to Mongolia. Though, we made this decision because we are afraid that I and my daughter could be deported. [...] So we had no other choice then to decide to return to Mongolia together. (Interview family Oyuunchimeg, own translation).

This last quote does resemble the IOM definition of voluntary return; the families still have their own agency to decide what their choice will eventually be. This clarifies that the passiveness phase of the return decision making process does really exist as the families are required to think actively about their return process. This is difficult process as the families do not have many options but their decision is still their own decision.

4.2.6: Concluding: Determinant factors on return

For conceptual reasons, a division will be made between conditions on a micro- and conditions on a macro-level as well as between push-, pull-, stay- and deter-factors (IOM 2008a, 24, 53). At a macro level, the national policy with regard to the abolishing of the categorical security policy in Iraq in 2008 had a great impact on the decision making process of the Iraqi families. Evidently, the asylum policy has also a direct influence on Mongolian families whose asylum procedure failed. The families indicate that these macro-factors are the main push factors which influence their decision making the most. Despite the push factors, the stay factors are extensive on the macro-level as well as on the micro-level. The macro-level stay factors are closely related to the macro-level deter factors as these are the opposite of each other. Such conditions are the health care system, the security situation and the economic situation which are better in the Netherlands according to the families. The micro-level conditions which influence the stay factors often concern the children who are Dutchified and the family who feels safe and at home in their new country. Deter factors on the micro-level conditions are the fact that when they return to Iraq or Mongolia they will have to start of scratch. It is striking that there are almost no pull-factors. This suggests, alone with the extensive stay- and deter- factors that the decision to leave is not totally up to the families. The push-factor, the withdrawn or the rejecting of a residence permit outweighs the other factors which is also evident from the previous paragraph. For this reason the voluntariness of the return should be reconsidered.

Below, a model, introduced by Van Wijk (IOM 2008a, 44, 45) which maps out all relevant factors that influence the decision making process on return, is filled in for the Iraqi family Al-Nasiri and the Mongolian family Oyuunchimeg. It creates a clarifying representation of the situation of the families (IOM 2008a, 45).

Case 2: Family Gantulga – Mongolian			
The Netherlands:		Iraq:	
Push factors		Pull factors	
<u>Micro</u>		<u>Micro</u>	
IOM assistance		-	
<u>Macro</u>		<u>Macro</u>	
Rejected asylum claim			
Forced by DT&V		-	
	Clients		
Stay factors		Deter factors	
<u>Micro</u>		<u>Micro</u>	
		They have nothing left in Mongolia	
<u>Macro</u>		<u>Macro</u>	
Final decision: Family Gantulga returned to Mongolia			

Family Al-Nasiri- Iraqi	
<i>The Netherlands:</i>	<i>Iraq:</i>
Push factors	Pull factors
<u>Micro</u>	<u>Micro</u>
-	-
<u>Macro</u>	<u>Macro</u>
Revoked residence permit	-
No social security	
Stay factors	Deter factors
<u>Micro</u>	<u>Micro</u>
Family is integrated into Dutch society	They have nothing left in Iraq
High smuggling fee is paid	Cannot return to old neighborhood
	Language problems for children
<u>Macro</u>	<u>Macro</u>
	Bad and expensive medical care
	Hazardous overall situation Iraq
	Extremely expensive
Final decision: Family Al-Nasiri returned to Iraq	

4.3: The perspective of the families and the IOM officers on the assistance at this stage

During the interviews with the families and the IOM officers the AVR-FC project is discussed and evaluated. The perspectives of the families on the assistance the families receive are described in the following paragraphs as well as the perspectives of the IOM officers on the AVR-FC project. Before evaluating the assistance, it should be clear what the pre-departure assistance entails.

4.3.1: The assistance provided at the pre-departure stage

The AVR-FC project is an addition to the REAN and the HRT project which provides the migrants in the pre-departure with advice and information on return and resettlement; with advice regarding to obtain a travel document and a reimbursement of the costs of obtaining a replacement document; and a one-way ticket to an airport that is as close as possible to the migrants final destination. The AVR-FC project focuses more on the reintegration of the families in the country of origin. This is also visible in the counseling in the pre-departure stage where the families will be drawing a family reintegration plan for themselves when returned. They will also receive an reintegration package which consists of both in kind support as well as cash support. The families are entitled to receive both 3,000 euro 'in kind' assistance and the basic cash allowances from the REAN program (IOM 2011). Families, with an asylum claim dating prior to 15 July 2011 receive additional in kind assistance up to 2,000 euro for every underage child. Furthermore, these families are entitled to receive additional cash assistance of 2,500 euro per adult and 1,250 per underage child in cash of which 750 and 370 euro respectively will be paid out as a final installment in the country of origin upon completion of the reintegration assistance (IOM 2011).

During the counseling the Project Officers of IOM in the Netherlands will support the families with the decision making on voluntary return, the preparations for the departure and in drafting a family plan on return and reintegration prior to departure (FPRR) based upon your entitlements (IOM 2011). Drafting a family reintegration plan the PO along with the family will determine the reintegration needs and wishes of the family.

4.3.2: Perspective of the families on the pre-departure assistance

During the interviews with the families in the Netherlands I asked them about the merits and pitfalls of the AVR-FC project. After analysing this data, some recurring topics were found which will be

addressed in this paragraph. The most significant topics are the cash and in kind assistance, the family plan of return and reintegration, distrust and communication which will be subsequently discussed starting with the cash and in kind assistance.

Cash and in kind assistance

Most of the families start off by saying that the cash money they will receive is not enough. They argue that they have sold all the property they had and spent all their money on their way to the Netherlands. The money they spend is nothing compared to the money they receive to return according to the families. The Mongolian family Oyuunchimeg confirms this by stating that the money they receive from the project is not enough for their basic needs. They have nothing left in Mongolia and in the meantime everything in Mongolia has become five times more expensive than before. Family Gantulga, however, is more optimistic and states that:

'The money is off course is not enough, but it will help. We can find some place to live with this money at least for one or two month, so we can find some other things, it will cover it. Hope so yeah'. [...] 'Well if there is money, we think we can do it better for ourselves' (interview Gantulga)

In addition, most of the families do not see the benefits of the in kind assistance; they rather receive everything in cash instead of in cash and in kind for a number of reasons. First of all, most of the families first want to rent, buy or built a house. They do not need in kind assistance for this. Mother Al-Musawi states:

'I don't want anything, I only want money for house. Because, when I can buy television or something else, where do I put it? If you want to help me, give me money only here.' (interview Al-Musawi, own translation)

Another Iraqi family, family Hassani does not see the advantages of the in kind assistance and pleads for only cash assistance:

'Well if I receive the money in cash, or if they tell me I can just built a house, we will give you this amount of money. Then that is good, then I can start. But now they say I give you a little for the house, a little for the rent a little for this. That is not good. The most important thing for me is building a house. But it is really difficult because, ok one week I can sleep at my families house or two weeks. But after this it no longer possible, I need a house.' (interview Hassani, own translation)

What most families do want is help with finding a job, however this also differs per family. Some families state that they do not want help stating:

'No no that is not necessary'. Interviewer: 'Why not?'. 'because I can better search than they can' (interview family Hassani, own translation)

One family made clear that assistance through money in cash or in kind is not enough, the IOM should act as an active intermediation. Family Al-Nasiri explained:

'When we first arrive there, we need help with accommodation, then assistance with finding a house and work. The job needs to meet the level of education of our family. [...] The assistance should be more, longer and more money' (Interview Al-Nasiri, own translation)

The family plan of return and reintegration (FPRR)

Drafting the family plan of return and reintegration is in some cases rather difficult. Some families, especially Iraqi families, have been living in the Netherlands for a couple of years now and in those years they never returned to Iraq. Coming up with a plan for reintegration in Iraq is difficult for them because they do not know what is possible for them to do in Iraq as they have been away for such a long time and the situation has changed in those years they resided in the Netherlands. Family Hassani stated:

'I don't know what I can do there because I've not been there for a long time. So that is really difficult to decide what I can do there, what I need to do. I don't know about the situation there, what will happen. if I am there [in Iraq], one week two weeks, I can decide what to do. It is difficult to decide here what to do in Iraq' (interview Hassani, own translation)

The Mongolian family, family Bolormaa, who has been living in the Netherlands for three years now wants to start a taxi business in Mongolia. They first want to start the business and later on when they got some money from the business they want to rent a house or built one. Though they also indicate that:

'We have not been in Mongolia for so long, so we don't know how to start a taxi business and it is difficult to manage this here in the Netherlands. We want to buy a car and built a garage, but we have to start a research for building this taxi business, how much everything costs and managing documents with the authorities. It is difficult for us to figure out how much everything will cost. (interview Bolormaa)

The fact that this family is planning to set up a taxi business is quite odd since family Oyuunchimeg also presented this plan to their project officer however this plan was turned down due to bad experiences in the past. This taxi business would have been perfect for this family as this is their best and cheapest option they claim to have. This way they could also save some money for their real business plan which is to built a farm. This was their initial plan but after doing some research they realized that the costs are extremely high. However at this moment they are not sure what their business plan will be, now that their taxi plan is denied. Their problem is the same as the Iraqi family Hassani: they have not been in their country of origin for such a long time (family Oyuunchimeg has left Mongolia in 2006). However their project officer has informed them that they could go back to Mongolia and orientate there; see what their best option is to spend their money and then come up with a business which they will share with the IOM in Mongolia.

Distrust

The interviews show that there is a lot of distrust among the Iraqi families regarding the Iraqi IOM. In Iraq the families have to submit receipts of their purchases to the IOM in Iraq to receive the in kind

money. Because of their experiences in Iraq with the government and their assumption that every organization in Iraq is corrupt, their distrust is high. Family Al-Musawi has listened to many people who returned to Iraq with the IOM but say they never got the money. So she is certain that:

'the money will never never come' (interview Al-Musawi)

Father Hassani also expressed his concern:

'Who says they will really help me?'. Interviewer: 'You don't believe that you will get the money?'. 'No no not believe, but I don't have anything in the hand' (interview Hassani, own translation)

Mother Al-Musawi states that:

'I listened to so money people who went to Iraq via IOM who say they did not get this money only the money here. So I listened to the IOM but I think I will not take it. Because when the government wants to help the people here they have to help them here not in Iraq. I want to take all money here, because money in Iraq is no' (Interview Al-Musawi)

However two families expressed their concerns but at the same time they think they have the confidence that they will receive the money in Iraq. For one family, the project officer has convinced them of this. They realise now that the IOM is an international organization and they have the contact details of the project officer.

Communication

The Mongolian family Oyuunchimeg started their return procedure in February 2012, however in the meantime the husband had to undergo an operation which meant that their return procedure was suspended. Before the operation their contact person of the IOM was different from the person they are assigned to now. They claim that the first contact person was very intimidating:

'The questions he asked were like 'When are you coming' 'What are you doing here', that kind of questions were asked. If someone speaks to me in such a authoritarian way, as if I am being interrogated, then I get really scared' (interview Oyuunchimeg, own translation)

Also, the communication was very poor due to the lack of a translator. This is also indicated by another Mongolian family who does not speak properly Dutch and English. This way they could not express themselves well and they didn't understand everything. Family Oyuunchimeg states:

"I said, 'I'm sorry but could you please arrange a translator for the meeting?' but this was ignored. The person talks to me in Russian, stating that 'You come from Mongolia so you must be able to talk Russian'. The person talks a few words Russian to me, and luckily I have spent a few years in Czech Republic, so I could understand a little Russian. But the only thing I understand was that he said 'You just wait, you will hear from us'. So that was not good at all." (interview Oyuunchimeg, own translation)

After the operation, another IOM Project officer was assigned to assist this family. The family is very happy with this PO because they can communicate very well with this person thanks to the translator he had arranged. They are very grateful and after the first meeting with this person they immediately asked him if he could assist through the whole procedure.

4.3.3: The perspectives of the IOM officers on the counseling in the AVR-FC project

The project officers are the persons in the field assisting the families with their return, these persons are aware of the situations of the families and their struggles to return. They are the ones that have to execute the AVR-FC project and are therefore relevant informants who can evaluate the project from a different perspective. They have found some pitfalls regarding the AVR-FC project and they have made some observations regarding the return process of the families. They described this to me but at the same time they were asked to give some recommendations to solve this problem. The problems identified by the project officers which I will address in this paragraph are: the time constraints, unshared knowledge and again distrust.

First of all, project officer Van Dijk indicates that every project officer has its own capabilities, qualities and knowledge. Though, this knowledge is not shared with colleague project officers. This is Van Dijk's opinion on the unshared knowledge:

'Native counselors are very handy, they can counsel in their own language and they have a lot of knowledge on their own country and region, on the situation and on a lot of practical matters. However, this knowledge is not shared with their colleague PO's, because of lack of time or it's not worth the trouble. This is a shame because some PO's with more knowledge become overworked, overbooked and overscheduled' (Interview Van Dijk, own translation).

In addition, the project officers detected a significant flaw in the project instructions; they claim to have insufficient time to assist the families. Project officer Driessen explains:

'The project calculates two times a half an hour per family which is not feasible. The time is not enough budgeted. However, I do give my clients all the time they need. Sometimes I spend 15 to 20 talks with the families before their actual departure. (Interview Driessen, own translation).

This calculation of half an hour per family is incorrect, which is apparent from the consultation hours that often take more time than scheduled which results in longer waiting times for other families.

During the consultations with the families the project officers have noticed that there appears to be a lot of distrust with regard to the kind of money which they will receive in the country of origin. Though, before the families can trust the IOM in their country of origin, they first have to trust the IOM officer in the Netherlands. Van Dijk claims therefore that all the IOM PO's should build a relationship of trust with the families. Van Dijk's view:

'Don't tell the families they are lying, just give them space. Which will eventually gain their trust. You have to invest on the relationship, this should be 90% on the relationship and 10% on the content of the conversation. You need to build a relationship. Instead of the DT&V who sends through the clients immediately to the IOM. The families must want to come to us' (Interview Van Dijk, own translation).

However this takes a lot of energy and time which the PO's do not have. Now the consults are based on numbers and guidelines instead of individuals and families. PO Driessen states that it is important to think along with the families:

'It's not only about the return but also about the reintegration there. Not only counseling, but it's more social work. (Interview Driessen, own translation).

4.3.4: Conclusion

Both the families and the project officers gave their opinion on the AVR-FC project and on the qualities of the individual project officers. Both of them indicated that there is a lot of distrust which is not so surprising according to Van Wijk (IOM 2008a, 39) as the world of migration is a world of rumours (IOM 2008a, 39). Rumours create in this case distrust, mainly distrust in the IOM in Iraq. They do not believe they will receive the money they are promised or they have heard that the money will take a long time before actually receiving it. This information that circulates in migrant networks are often incorrect and incomplete (IOM 2008a, 39). It is the job of the project officers to take away this distrust. To succeed, trust should be gained first by the project officers. This is rather difficult considering the short amount of time that is calculated per family. Another precondition is proper communication which is not always the case at the moment. The interviews revealed that some returnees attach high value to good communication which can be resolved mainly by using a translator. Counselling the families is not only filling in some paper work but families indicated that they want more than this; it should be considered as social work. This concluded the perspectives of the families on the counselling and we will now discuss the perspectives on the cash and in kind assistance and the family plan.

At this stage the families are not thrilled about the in kind assistance; it is seen as troublesome. They have to collect all the receipts which they have to hand in by the IOM offices before they can actually buy something. Also the trip to the IOM offices is seen as problematic. Returnees in Iraq have indicated that the in kind money takes a long time for actually receiving it. Another point of criticism on the in kind assistance in general is the question who decides what is good for the migrant? By giving the families not the money in cash but in kind restricts them of their freedom to spend this money. As some families indicate that they first want to built a house instead of spending the money on a business.

The in kind assistance requires a business plan which is designed by the families in the Netherlands. This business plan is very useful in relation to the reintegration in the country of origin. Though, coming up with a plan appears to be rather difficult due to the fact that they have been away for such a long time; they do not know the possibilities in the country of origin and it is very difficult to manage this from the Netherlands.

For some families, though, the combination of in kind and cash assistance alone is not enough for the sustainable reintegration of the families. Some families, mainly those who haven't been in their country of origin for a long time, claim that they need personal assistance during the whole return process.

Chapter 5: The return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families at the transportation stage and at the post-arrival stage

5.1: Introduction

This chapter will focus on the return migration process in the country of origin which is called the post arrival stage. Like the previous chapter I will retain the same order as in the second part of my theoretical framework. First, the three different aspects of the sustainability are measured: the physical, the socio-economic and the political security sustainability. This framework shall be applied to empirical data I have gathered among the families. Hereafter, I will relate the sustainability of the return to the return assistance the families receive. This will be done by first describing the role of the IOM at this stage as the perspective of the families on the assistance will be discussed subsequently. Though, this will not be as elaborated as the previous chapter as this chapter will more focus on the sustainability of the return. In order to get a more comprehensive view on sustainable return and return assistance the Desk Officer from the ministry of foreign affairs will shed light on their perception on this subject. However, first I will introduce the Iraqi and Mongolian families who have already returned to their country of origin.

5.1.1.: Introducing the families

In this stage five key informants will be introduced shortly, three Iraqi families and two Mongolian families. I have made this distinction because the telephonically interviews with the Iraqi families were more telling than the questionnaires of the Mongolian families.

Family Al-Badri arrived in the Netherland in 2011 with three children. However, after two asylum procedures they were told by the DT&V to leave because the decision was negative. He stayed in Ter Apel for five months, arriving in Iraq on the end of last year.

Family Al-Khafaji consists of a father, mother and two children. They arrived in the Netherlands in October 2007 and soon after they received their residence permit on the bases of the categorical security policy. However this permit was withdrawn in 2011 and in November 2011 they returned to Iraq.

The last Iraqi family is family Akrawi with one child who lived in the Netherlands for seven years. Just like family Al-Khafaji their residence permit was also withdrawn and they were told to leave.

The Mongolian family Ganbaatar came to the Netherlands in February 2009 with one child. The other child is born in the Netherlands. They returned to Mongolia in April 2012 because of their rejected asylum claim.

The last family, is family Ganbold with two children who also left the Netherlands after one year and returned to Mongolia because of a negative answer from the IND.

5.2: Sustainable return migration

This paragraph will go into the sustainable return migration by taken into account the physical, socio-economic and political security aspects of sustainability which are discussed mainly from a subjective perception of the returnees. It was not possible in the context of this research study to analyze aggregate physical sustainability, since this would require accurate monitoring of emigration levels for the country as a whole, and these statistics were not available.

5.2.1: Physical sustainability

The physical sustainability from a subjective point of view is achieved if they do not want to leave their country of origin within a certain time after their return (Black et. al 2004, 26). The two indicators of the physical sustainability of return, the wish to re-migrate and the plan to re-migrate are two significant different indicators. The families whom I have interviewed all indicated that they are not planning to re-migrate. Family Al-Badri answered to the question if she is planning to re-migrate:

'Even if I would want to go, where could I go to?!' (interview Al-Badri, own translation).

However some families did have the desire to re-migrate but it is simply not a feasible option for them.

The desire to re-migrate is affected by the assistance the returnees receive. It has been shown that returnees who only receive cash assistance are more likely to re-migrate. They are not bound to the country of origin and with the money they received already in the Netherlands they are able to migrate to another country. The AVR-FC project does not only offer cash assistance but also in kind assistance which they will receive in the country of origin. The in kind assistance will last till a maximum of 12 months after the arrival in the country of origin. In the family plan (FPRR) the in kind grant and the final instalment are specified. When all the in kind assistance has been finalized as agreed upon a final installment will be made available. The families will stay in the country of origin because otherwise they would lose the in kind grant and the final installment. After one year they probable will not re-migrate, as they have invested their in kind assistance in a business in their country of origin.

The objective physical sustainability for an individual returnee is achieved if they do not actually leave their home country within a certain time after their return (Black et. al 2004, 27). However the objective physical sustainability is not measured accurately as I only contact with the families in their country of origin just a few months after they arrived. Though, all explain to me that they have not re-migrated, for the reason explained above. To properly measure the objective physical sustainability it would be better to examine this at a later time period.

5.2.2: Socio-economic sustainability

Socio-economic sustainability was defined above as involving levels of well-being, with a particular emphasis on employment, income, assets, and housing, as well as the extent to which individuals were reliant on others to satisfy their needs (Black et. al 2004, 30). This aspect of sustainability is only measured from a subjective point of view which is achieved for the returnees if they themselves believe they have an adequate level of well-being measured at a certain time after their return. The indicators for socio-economic sustainability are employment, income level, income sources, whether return was to pre-war home, receipt of humanitarian assistance, receipt of remittances, access to education, access to health care. This paragraph will mainly focus on the employment and housing of the families as an indicator for socio-economic sustainability.

A number of difficult situations were reported during interviews in both Iraq and Mongolia regarding their employment and housing. Father Al-Bardi started a jewellery shop however that did not pay off and he went bankrupt. At this moment family Al-Badri is living with their in-laws, the parents are both unemployed. He explains:

'I have studied law in Iraq, but I have been away for so long that I am no longer of value for the ministries. That makes it very difficult for me. Everyday I am searching for a job, I go to the ministries, employment agencies but I do not find a job. That's why I have to stay with my in-laws.' (interview Al-Badri, own translation).

Al-Bardi states that the economic situation in Iraq is very bad, especially in his case, with his work experience. He cannot not find a job.

Father Akrawi is more successful and works at a children clothing shop which is managed by his brother in law.

'I don't know yet if I can make enough money with this business. But I will continue for now and see if I will succeed or not, if I can make benefits of this.' (interview Akrawi, own translation).

This is their only income because his wife is pregnant for eight months now. She does not work but stays at home with her two year old daughter. In Iraq, the children will go to school at the age of five.

The same applies to family Al-Khafaji, where the mother also stays at home while the father works. Before he came to the Netherlands he worked in Iraq as a gym teacher. When he came back to Iraq he succeeded to get his old job back.

In Mongolia, the family Ganbold is living with the family of the father in the place Erdenet. They have a own business, a grocery store and they are employing one person as a sales assistant. The family indicates that their monthly income is sufficient enough only for the families basic needs.

Family Ganbaatar. Used the in kind money to purchase a truck.

5.2.3: Political security sustainability

Subjective political security sustainability for individual returnees is achieved when they believe they have an adequate level of security and access to public services within a certain time. In this paragraph we will address the feeling of home and feeling secure regarding the families.

The Iraqi families back in Iraq indicate that they do miss the Netherlands. Family Al-Bardi who only resided in a ACZ in the Netherlands states:

'I miss the punctuality, the accuracy and the order and feeling safe in the Netherlands. [...] My children did have a difficult time at the beginning, but are really to young to fully understand everything. I expect that that will come, and especially because we returned in the middle of the school years and the kids could not enroll. They couldn't go to school for five months' (interview Al-Badri, own translation).

He explains why he is having a difficult time back in Iraq:

'This all makes it all very difficult, my jewelry store that went bankrupt... I am physically and mentally I am stuck. It's because of my children, otherwise I would of had a much harder time.' (interview Al-Badri, own translation).

Another Iraqi family, family Akrawi who had a little shop in the Netherlands state:

'I had a lot of friends and some colleagues and customers in the Netherlands. I still have contact with them now by telephone or the internet. But in Iraq I also have a social network.' Interviewer: 'Where do you feel at home and why?' I feel that Holland is where I feel at home. For so many reasons, administrative, political, health. Where I now live and my home in Tilburg is the opposite. The only good thing now is that I don't need to pay tax. But only if you have money in Iraq then life is good, otherwise if you have a moderate income or less life is not good. In the Netherlands he received benefit' [...] 'I miss the system, the democracy, the weather. Now that I have lived in the Netherlands and know what life I then had, makes it more difficult to live in Iraq now. In the Netherlands I had level 2 in Dutch and I was very busy with school and work' (interview Akrawi, own translation).

When I asked family Al-Khafaji where he feels at home he responded:

'Off course I feel at home in the Netherlands! I had good contacts in the Netherlands, good people, good rules, healthcare, everything is good there. Here everything is difficult.' [...] 'I don't feel safe here in Iraq. My children cannot go to school by themselves, every time someone needs to walk with them to school. In the Netherlands they could go to school by bike.' (interview Al-Khafaji, own translation).

Though he indicated that the children are going to school and learned Arabic very fast. In the Netherlands they could not speak Arabic. They are now in group six and five of the primary school.

Family Ganbaatar who has two children, one nine-year-old girl who is disabled and a six-year-old boy which are both born in Mongolia, arrived in July 2010 in the Netherlands and has lived there until October 2011. They planned to settle in the Netherlands permanently but had to return because they did not get a residence permit. They state that they liked living in the Netherlands because the good and secure living conditions.

'There are clean, safe and comfortable conditions to live, especially for disabled children' (Questionnaire family Ganbaatar).

The mother states that the children were able to go to school but it was very difficult for her daughter to go to school, because there are bad conditions for disabled children.

Family Ganbold arrived in the Netherlands in February 2009 and had to return to Mongolia in April 2012. The family, mother, father and son spend three years in the Netherlands and in 2012 another son was born, this time in the Netherlands.

5.2.4: The three aspects of sustainability

There is found a significant variation in response between the families. The physical sustainability could be indicated by two different factors: the desire to re-migrate and the plan to re-migrate. Some families indicated that they would want to re-migrate but an actual plan to re-migrate is often lacking. This is partly due to the in-kind assistance which requires them to invest in a business in their home country and they need to wait approximately a year to actually receive all the money and it is partly due to the lack of possibilities the families have to actually re-migrate. Though you could state that families are really reintegrated in their country of origin when they do not have the intention to re-migrate but also no desire to re-migrate. In my theoretical framework I have stated that the

physical sustainability); this can be regarded as a prerequisite for psychosocially and socio-economically embeddedness. However, this could also be seen in the other way by turning it around; when someone does not have the desire to re-migrate this relates to the fact that they are satisfied with their reintegration.

This study focused foremost on the employment as a indicator for socio-economic sustainability. Again this varies strongly per family, though it seen as an important indicator for sustainable reintegration as a job would help them become self-reliant. The families whom I spoke to without a job seemed more desperate, more unhappy with their reintegration. A factor influencing the socio-economic sustainability is the receipt of the assistance which will be addressed in the next paragraph.

Instead of focussing on the solely on the feeling of security and access to public services regarding the political security, I have focused on the feeling of home and belonging in particular which is not address by the approach of Black et al (2004) but is an important additive to the political security sustainability derived from the embeddedness theory discussed in the theoretical framework. Feeling safe however, has also a big impact on the feeling of home. Safety is a relative notion, it is something personal, subjective. Returning to a place where you feel unsafe will have the effect that you will feel less at home. Families who returned to Baghdad do not feel at home mainly because they do not feel at safe at their 'new' home. The feeling of belonging and home might be seen as a particular important measure for sustainability, even though it is primarily subjective, giving the importance to be attached to belonging and feeling home by Iraqi families as stay factors discussed in the previous chapter. Some Iraqi families in this chapter have also indicated that they felt at home in the Netherlands. While for some families, some Iraqi and the Mongolian families, this feeling is less strong. 'Belonging' must be seen as a changing concept as well as the concept 'home' which is infinite, open and constantly changing.

5.3: The perspective of the families and the Desk officer on the assistance at these stages

During the interviews with the families in the country of origin and the desk officer at the ministry of foreign affairs the AVR-FC project is discussed very broadly. First, the desk office expresses her view on the AVR-FC project and subsequently the families will evaluate the project in general. After this will be discussed how the cash and the in kind assistance is used. But we start by describing what the pre-departure assistance entails.

5.3.1: The assistance provided

The IOM will provide the families in the transportation stage with assistance at Schiphol airport and, if necessary, also at the airport to which you are traveling. The reception assistance will consist of identification of returnees and guidance through immigration and customs; assistance with lost luggage and cargo; and medical assistance (if required) (IOM 2011). The IOM offices in countries of origin will play a crucial role in assessing possibilities back in the country of origin and ensuring delivery of assistance and monitoring after return (IOM 2011 AVR from the net).

On the bases on the family reintegration plan the IOM officers in the country of origin will provide counseling on arrival and will assist your family to set up the desired reintegration activity (IOM 2011). The IOM in the country of origin will have at least two monitoring visits to the families. Within a month the reintegration family plan is discussed with an reintegration assistance. On the basis of the final monitoring rapport it will be determined if the family will receive their final installment.

5.3.2: The AVR-FC project desk officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The desk officer is working on the program for voluntary return of former asylum seekers at the ministry of foreign affairs. She is acquainted with the policy on sustainable voluntary return migration and is interviewed about the perspective of the ministry of foreign affairs on sustainable return and on sustainable return assistance.

Desk Officer states that the AVR-FC project offers tailor made assistance.

'The families who want to make use of the project will write an plan for their return. They shall includes those things that are important for their return, and yes.. you have to assume that they are well informed about the conditions after their return.' [...] 'Well it is true that in every country there is an IOM office, and they will have knowledge about the local conditions. So these are all ingredients which should allow the project to work well ' (interview Desk officer own translation).

It is an attractive offer which is apparent from the attention and interest in the project. She assumes that the people who make use of this offer plan to make the best of it. Though, she states that there is too little supporting evidence to claim that the cash and in kind assistance really works. Some countries do have experience but more monitoring and evaluation is needed.

Before the combination of the cash and in kind assistance, there existed various projects that consisted of only financial assistance or only in kind assistance. Which means that the returnees had to choose between cash or in kind assistance for example a training or study.

'But in practice, it showed 99 % of the returnees would choose for the money. And as result, the in kind projects attracted only a small number of people, and therefore only little experience was gained ' (interview Desk officer own translation).

Desk officer is convinced that the new combination of cash and in kind assistance will be successful.

'No one will refuse the financial assistance, and a lot of people will also want to make use of the in kind assistance because this has a value of €1500 per adult and €1000 per child' (interview Desk officer own translation).

5.3.3: Merits and pitfalls of the project according to the families

The families expressed their general opinion on the assistance they received. Most of the families state, first of all, that they are happy with the assistance they received of the IOM:

'The IOM offered me great help, I am satisfied with the assistance of the IOM' (interview Al-Khafaji).

Father Al-Badri claimed that however the money they received is already gone, they are also very happy with the assistance they received:

'Look at it which way you will, the assistance helps you to make the first steps. I know a lot of people who returned without any assistance and they are way worse off. I am very pleased that I actually received the money they promised me ' (interview AL-Badri, own translation).

I asked the informants what the IOM could have done better or differently, but their response was that they do not know. At the moment I interviewed them they could use some help though. The Iraqi family Al-Badri indicated that he could use some assistance with finding a job. Another informant stated that he could need some help fixing his house because it's a very old house. What was apparent was the fact that the IOM in Iraq called one of my informants to ask if he needed help finding a job.

'The IOM called me to see if I needed help finding a job, they said that they would otherwise be able to help me. I told them that I would continue to work in my clothing shop and if this would not turn out well, I would call them back. ' (interview Akrawi, own translation).

The Mongolian families are also satisfied with the assistance of the IOM.

'Cash and in kind assistance was very useful and important to start our own business' (Questionnaire, family Ganbaatar).

Though family Ganbaatar claimed that the fund they received was insufficient for their business, their grocery store.

The monitoring visit by the two IOM employees showed that All families we visited could rely on a good social network (relatives in particular) (IOM 2012, 16). Families with young children must be aware of the winter cold. Many - especially those who were not born in Mongolia - suffer from flu and pneumonia upon arrival (IOM 2012, 16).

5.3.4: How the families made use of the cash and the in kind assistance

All the families who applied for the AVR-FC project have filled in a family plan of return and reintegration before their return. This plan, however, was not final as the families could still adjust this plan after they returned to their country of origin. The families can only spend the cash money and the in kind assistance in their country of origin. The interim report of the IOM itself on the evaluation of the AVR-FC report showed how the families utilized their reintegration support. During the reporting period 95 new families were assisted in drafting a FPRR and 105 plans were finalized by IOM reintegration officers in the country of origin. The table below reflects the reintegration support requested, based upon 140 departures and shows clearly that the majority of families returning utilize their support for both business Set up and housing (IOM 2012, 6)

1	Business-setup	91	33,70%
2	Housing	83	30,74%
3	Education	22	8,15%
4	Job-placement	50	18,51%
5	Medical assistance	11	4,07%
6	Vocational Training	11	4,07%
7	Other	2	0,74%
Total desired reintegration activities		270	100%

Source: IOM 2012

During the monitor visit to Mongolia by two Pos six Mongolian families were interviewed who returned with the assistance of the IOM. All families they visited used the reintegration budget for sound business investments, education/ schooling and medical treatments (IOM 2012, 16). This kind of support lays down a foundation enabling swift reintegration in the local economy and community. All families they visited could already or most likely in the near future sustain themselves on their business (IOM 2012, 16)

The above table, which is based upon 140 departures, includes five families which are studied in this paragraph. Their in kind assistance is also foremost spend on housing and business-set up. Though, I will discuss per family how they spend their reintegration assistance. Starting with family Al-Badri who indicated:

'I spend the cash money on a new car, because this is a primary necessity of life here, otherwise it is very difficult to be mobile. With the in kind money and with the assistance of the IOM I started a jewelry store. Though, this yielded nothing and I went bankrupt' (interview family Al-Badri, own translation)

Next is family Akrawi who also invest his in kind money in a business:

'The in kind money I spend on children clothing for the shop. The cash money I spend on my house and on life itself. We are now rented a house but we need more money for the rent. And this house is very old, it needs some rebuilding. it is an expensive lifestyle because I spends 600 or 700euros a month' (interview Akrawi).

Family Al-Khafji had other priorities and invested solely on their house. With the in kind assistance they could pay the rent for one year long.

The family Ganbold in Mongolia have invested in the purchase of chickens. They have bought 1500 chickens and they are now running their own chicken farm.

At last, family Ganbaatar was able to rent a grocery store and are now purchasing goods to sell at their store.

5.3.5: Conclusion:

The previous paragraph has focussed mainly on the cash and in kind assistance which is the most significant factor at this stage enhancing the sustainability of the return. The families are expected to invest their in kind assistance in their reintegration which they also did as most families have invested in a business set-up or housing. In the paragraph 5.3. we have seen that employment is though it seen as an important indicator for sustainable reintegration as a job would help them

become self-reliant. The families indicated that they are satisfied with the overall assistance they received and some of them claim that they no longer need assistance which can be seen as a indicator for sustainability. However again, these perspectives differ per family as one family indicates that they would like assistance with finding a job. These different perspectives should be taken into account trying to adjust the reintegration assistance in such way that most families are satisfied with the assistance they received.

Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1: Results and conclusions: Theory & Practice

6.1.1: Introduction

The overall objective of this research has been to provide an in-depth study on voluntary return of Iraqi and Mongolian families who applied for the AVR FC-project in order to get insight in the return process of migrants. It has presented a literature review on voluntary return migration, on the incentives to return and on the concept of sustainability. In addition an overview on the return process in the Netherlands and the actors involved in the process was presented. It has analyzed relevant original, primary data, collected among nine families in the Netherlands and eight in Iraq and Mongolia, a Desk officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and five project officers. It has developed understanding of the incentives to return voluntarily; the voluntariness of the return; return and development; of the concept of sustainability by elaborating a working definition and establishing a process for measuring sustainability, whilst also assessing the factors that appear to contribute towards sustainability; and of return migration and reintegration assistance. This all has enabled me to answer my main research question: 'What does the voluntary return process of Iraqi and Mongolian families who applied for the AVR FC project entail and to what extent has the project enhanced the reintegration in the country of origin?'

It is a qualitative research which means that the studied population is small and is not representative to all the families who applied for the AVR-FC project. The conclusions that are drawn in this chapter are therefore only applicable to the examined informants.

6.1.2: Incentives to return: a voluntary return?

Voluntary return remains a very contested concept; as said, different degrees of 'voluntariness' can be identified. Therefore a definition is needed as a starting point to identify the degree of voluntariness regarding the return of ex-asylum seekers. Though, the IOM definition of voluntary return: 'the return of an individual to a country of origin, transit or a third country based on the free will and well informed decision of the individual and in the absence of coercive measures (IOM 2010, 29)' does not always comply with the actual voluntariness in practice. The last part of the definition about the absence of coercive measures is quite indistinct. Physical coercive measures may not exist but mentally these coercive measures are very real as argued in Chapter 4.1.6. In the case of ex-asylum seekers, they do not have a clear and open choice either to return or to stay permanently in the host country. But rather, their choice is often between returning voluntarily when asked to do so and gaining financial or other incentives as a result, or staying and having no social security, having to live in a family shelter or risking forcible return at some date in the future (Black and Gent 2004, 7). This is also evident from their incentives to return; there a lot of push factors, but hardly any pull factors are mentioned. The stay and deter factors are relevant factors which indicate why the migrants do not want to return. However the study has shown that the push factors outweigh the stay and deter factors.

The concept voluntary return may therefore be questioned regarding ex-asylum seeker. It would therefore be better to speak of independent return or facilitated return. These terms better match the return of the families who applied for the AVR-FC project because whether their return is

voluntary or not almost all families are pleased with the assistance and the money they receive of the IOM to return.

6.1.3: Sustainable reintegration and the return assistance

This research has combined the theory of embeddedness and the theory of Black et al. (2004) which measured sustainability from the physical, socio-economic and political-security view. This should have been measured through the perceptions of the individual returnees, the objective conditions of the individual returnees and the wider conditions in the country of return. However this research has focused largely on the perception of the returnee, trying to measure the extent to which return is considered 'sustainable' by individual returnees. The objective conditions of the returnee and aggregate conditions in the home country are however equally important however this is something for further study. The physical sustainability is a circle reasoning as the desire to re-migrate is influenced by the socio-economic and political security sustainability of the reintegration or the other way around, if someone has the desire to re-migrate it can influence their reintegration at these fields. I would therefore focus more on the socio-economic and political security sustainability. We have seen that employment and the feeling of belonging are the most significant indicators.

There are many, many factors influencing the sustainability of the return. The receipt of the reintegration assistance is just one of these factors influencing the return. Taking the whole reintegration assistance into account, some aspects of the assistance have been highlighted as significant factors enhancing the sustainability of the return. These are good communication, drafting a family plan of return and reintegration and the cash and in kind assistance. As discussed in the previous chapter, good communication is important to properly inform the family what awaits them and to build a relationship of trust. This way they are reassured about what they can expect and they will more focus on their reintegration. The family plan of reintegration also requires the family to think ahead about their reintegration. Although, the families are not always able to execute this plan when arrived in the country of origin but they have already put some thought into it. The in kind assistance supports the family plan of reintegration, because this requires that the families invest in their reintegration/business plan. With the cash and in kind assistance the families are able to invest in something that will help them get reintegrated which if often spend on their business set-up which has enhanced their socio-economic sustainability. As seen in the political security sustainability the feeling of home plays a role in the country of origin by Iraqi families. They are sad about leaving the Netherlands and these emotions may hamper their reintegration in the country of origin. Ruben, Van Houte and Davids (2009, 933) were pleading for a more integrated approach for assisting returnees which addresses both material and human needs. Human needs would in this case imply psychological assistance in the country of origin in order to make the family feel at home again.

The returnees who return to their country of origin after a long period of time could be compared to migrants who come to the Netherlands which should also be assisted the same way. Both have to find a way to get (re)integrated into the new society and their social network is either missing or is not that big. Some returnees will suffer from traumas or psychological problems which they need to process for themselves. In addition they do not have a job security. In the Netherlands the integration of refugees is based on three domains; first the initial reception and guidance, second integration and third participation (Klaver, Tromp and Van der Welle 2012, 13). However, in the Netherlands in contrast to Iraq this is mostly governed by legislation and carried out by social organizations. Some of these activities are housing, language coaching, counseling and guidance to employment. IOM should act more as a mediator and should take on a more active supporting and

guiding role. However this is sometimes not realistic in the country of origin where only one IOM office is located.

The main purpose of IOM voluntary assistance return project emphasizes that they are assisting the migrants in order to make their first steps towards their reintegration by providing the migrants the adequate tools to rebuild their life back in their country of origin (IOM 2004, 3). This study has shown that through the pre-departure assistance and the post-arrival assistance the returnee has a real chance of a sustainable reintegration. Noticeable is the emphasis on a real chance of reintegration because there are no reassurances of the return assistance that the return will be sustainable, many more factors are at play here. Some factors that came to light in this research are safety and the economic conditions in the country of origin (finding employment). These are factors that are hard to address through return assistance. Though the return assistance in this research could be improved in order to increase the likelihood of sustainable reintegration as some families have indicated that the assistance was not quite as wished. The assistance which is offered is still quite general; their only focus is families. However all the families are different and more importantly the country where they will return to are very distinct. This apparent from interviews which showed a great diversity between the families. Some family's mostly Iraqi and Mongolian families have lived in the Netherlands for a relatively long period of time making the return more difficult. In addition, return to Iraq is not the same as return to Mongolia. Iraq is a post-conflict country and returnees are very worried about their safety when returning. The same applies to reintegration to North-Iraq where it is relatively safe in contrast to South Iraq and in particular Baghdad. The reintegration assistance needs to be adjusted to these particular circumstances and to the wishes of the families.

6.2. Recommendations for the AVR-FC project

This paragraph will present recommendations which are derived from the interviews in order to enhance the sustainability of the return. However taken into account that there are many factors influencing the sustainability of the return discussed in the previous paragraph. These recommendations can only increase the likelihood of sustainable reintegration A distinction is made between the pre-departure phase and the transportation and post-arrival phase.

6.2.1: The pre-departure phase

- **Personalized counselling**

Personalized counseling can only be established when all the returnee families will be designated a contact person who will guide them through the whole process. Preferable a person who originates from the same country or a translator should be arranged at all times when needed.

- **Gain trust**

Providing the right information all the possibilities and by giving them some space, trust should be gained. Their distrust in the IOM in Iraq could be taken away by the IOM project officers by the following actions; explaining to the families that the IOM is an international organization; giving the family an IOM business card with the number of the PO; more focus on the direct contact with the IOM officers in the country of origin by giving the families Skype or email addresses of the officers.

- **Proper preparation**

Clients should be given sufficient time and opportunity to adequately inform and prepare themselves. The Project officers should help the families use the internet and ensure that there are

adequate facilities for internet use. Ensure there is a direct telephone connection with family members and organisations in the country of origin to enable the potential returnee to ask questions (about the safety of a particular location, employment, accommodation, healthcare, tracking down family members, etc.). Ensure that any (provision of) information about the country of origin is up-to-date, reliable and available to both those providing assistance and to the returnees themselves. All information about the return process and assistance should be made available in the most common languages. At all times when asked for by the returnee a translator by telephone or in person will be provided. Inform the families about what they can expect. The In kind assistance for example sometimes takes a long time before the returnees actually receiving the money. This should be indicated in the pre-departure counsels, so returnees know what to expect when returned.

- **Share knowledge**

The knowledge POs have about a certain country or region should be shared with other PO's. There should be more time available to delve into a certain country or region.

- **Concrete FFRP**

Before returnees are obliged to fill in the family form for reintegration, this form should be filled in more thoroughly. This plan is filled in three or four weeks before their actual departure, this time is too short for the family to make a proper reintegration plan. In an earlier stadium the families should be thinking of their reintegration through the use of workshops, coaching, information provision, empowerment and co-operation with other organisations.

7.2.2: The transportation and the post-arrival phase

- **IOM as a active mediator:**

The IOM should act more as a mediator and should take on a more active supporting and guiding role. Assistance through only money and in kind is not enough especially when arrived in the country of return. This could contain: reception assistance when arriving in the country of origin; support in dealing with formal / municipal authorities, referral to health professionals and with housing of returnees, participation on the labor market.

- **Psychosocial assistance**

Reintegration through social counseling at the IOM offices in the Netherlands and at the country of origin. . Psychosocial assistance is needed for reinforcing identity (belonging) and safety feelings. Returnee children who are Dutchified need special assistance to become reintegrated in their country of origin. They will face linguistic, cultural and social difficulties in their country of origin and these difficulties should be addressed as well as in the pre-departure as in the post-arrival stage. For instance, by providing temporary language classes for children and young people with serious deficits in the language until they have caught up.

- **Business start-up**

In this stage there should be some sort of business start-up support. This could be made possible by a program such a Irrico which aims to provide information for migrants considering returning back to their countries of origin. It provides information about return and reintegration possibilities in the countries of origin. Information is provided about health care, housing, education, employment,

business opportunities, custom issues, and transportation. In addition, in each country of origin, a contact list is provided with the addresses of relevant organisations and service providers: hospitals, schools, universities, ministries, NGOs, etc. This program is no longer in use in the Netherlands because there was no longer a budget to support this system. Though, there is need for.

7.2.3: The overall return assistance

- **Victims of human trafficking**

Victims of human trafficking cannot apply for the AVR-FC project. This is a pity because these victims often consist of families. And especially these families need assistance with their return and reintegration because they often have problems with their family in the country of origin which leaves them without or with a smaller social network upon their return. These families need reintegration assistance to be able to fend for themselves.

- **Cooperation IOM here and there**

There should be more interlinkage with the IOM in the Netherlands and the IOM in the country of origin. Returnees in the Netherlands should be able to contact the IOM mission in their country of origin. This could be made possible if the IOM officers in the countries of origin would have a telephone consultation hour in one of the IOM offices in the Netherlands. This will give the returnees the opportunity to ask pressing questions to the IOM officers in their country of origin. Also more cooperation is needed with other organisations.

- **Cash and In kind assistance:**

The combination of cash and in kind assistance should continue. However this assistance should be supplemented with more intensive guidance.

- **Tailor-made assistance:**

Reintegration projects should take into account the differences between the applicants of the project. Every family is different. A country specific reintegration project should be considered.

- **Evaluation:**

The sustainability of return assistance could be evaluated by introducing a reintegration barometer. This should be made possible through a quantitative analysis of the situation with regard to reintegration and a quality in-depth theme.

References:

- ACVZ. 2004. Advies terugkeer: de internationale aspecten. In *Den Haag*.
- Anthias, F. 2008. Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: An intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging. *Translocations* 4 (1): 5-20.
- AIV. 2005. Migratie en ontwikkeling: de samenhang tussen de twee beleidsterreinen. (43).
- Becker, H. 2005. Guide to selected EU legal and policy instruments on Migration, edited by IOM. Vienna.
- Black, R., K. Koser, K. Munk, G. Atfield, L. D'Onofrio, and R. Tiemoko. 2004. Understanding voluntary return. In *Home Office Online Report 50/04*, edited by H. Office: Sussex Centre for Migration Research.
- Black, R., and S. Gent. 2005. Defining, measuring and influencing sustainable return. In *Briefing*, edited by g. a. p. Development Research Centre on Migration. Brighton: University of Sussex.
- Black, R., and S. Gent. 2006. Sustainable return in post-conflict contexts. *International Migration* 44 (3):15-38.
- Boccagni, P. 2011. The framing of return from above and below in Ecuadorian migration: A project, a myth, or a political device? *Global Networks* 11 (4):461–80.
- Cassarino, J.P. Conditions of modern return migrants: Editorial introduction. 2008. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 10 (2):95-105
- Castles, S., and M.J. Miller. 2009. *The age of migration : International population movements in the modern world*. Edited by Basingstoke. 4 ed: Palgrave MacMillan
- Danish Refugee Council. 2008. Recommendations for the return and reintegration of rejected asylum seekers: Lessons learned from returns to Kosovo, edited by K. S. Chu. B., S. Dünnwald and T. Loran: Danish Refugee Council.
- Davids, T. & M. Van Houte. 2008. 'Remigration, Development and Mixed Embeddedness: an Agenda for Qualitative research?' in J.P. Cassarino, ed, *Contemporary Challenges in Return: In Theory and in Practise*. Florence: Robert Shuman Centre for advanced studies, European University Institute. EMN. 2011. Programmes and Strategies in the EU Member States fostering Assisted Return to and Reintegration in Third Countries. March 2011.
- De Bree, J., T. Davids, and H. De Haas. 2010. Post-return experiences and transnational belonging of return migrants: a Dutch–Moroccan case study. *Global Networks* 10 (4).
- European Commission. *Glossary* 2012 [cited. Available from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/glossary/index_v_en.htm.
- Flickr. 2011. Iraqi refugees protest outside The Hague: 100_3665.
- Frouws, B., T.K. Grimmus, and L.B.F. Bourdrez. 2011. Evaluatie stichting duurzame terugkeer: Eindrapport, edited by Ministry of foreign affairs.
- Geraci, D. 2011. *Facing Return: An approach for psychosocial assistance to (former) asylum seekers and undocumented migrants*. Edited by F. Pharos. Utrecht.
- Ghanem, T. 2003. When forced migrants return 'home': The psychosocial difficulties returnees encounter in the reintegration process., Refugee study centre, University of Oxford, Oxford.
- Government of the Netherlands. *Asylum policy and immigration* n.d [cited. Available from <http://www.government.nl/issues/asylum-policy-and-immigration>.
- IOM. n.d. Assisted voluntary return (AVR) Geneva: IOM.
- IOM. 2001. Harnessing the potential of migration and return to promote development. In *IOM migration research series*. Geneva: IOM.

- IOM. 2003. VARRP Project Outline: IOM.
- IOM. 2004. Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Program (VARRP): Reintegration self-evaluation results. .
- IOM. 2008a. Out of sight: Research into the living conditions and decision making process of irregular migrants in the main cities of the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. The Hague: IOM.
- IOM. 2008b. *Return migration* [cited. Available from <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/358>.
- IOM. 2010. Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in the EU. Geneva: IOM.
- IOM. 2011a. *Return and reintegration for families with underage children* [cited. Available from http://www.iom-nederland.nl/english/Programmes/Return_Reintegration/Reintegration_Projects/Return_and_Reintegration_for_Families_with_Underage_Children.
- IOM. 2011b. Leaving detention: A study on the influence of immigration detention on migrant's decision-making processes regarding return. The Hague: IOM.
- IOM. 2011c. *Top tien nationaliteiten 2011*. [cited. Available from http://www.iom-nederland.nl/Programma_s/Vrijwillig_vertrek_uit_Nederland/Cijfers/Terugkeercijfers_2011/Top_tien_nationaliteiten_2011.
- IOM. 2012a. 2nd Interim Report to the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs [AVR-FC].
- IOM. 2012b. International dialogue on migration. Geneva: IOM.
- IOM UK. n.d. Assisted Voluntary Return for Families and Children (AVRFC): Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): IOM UK.
- IOM UK. n.d. Stories of return. London: IOM UK.
- Ivacic, I. 2010. Uitzettingen naar Irak: Landelijk bureau Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland.
- King, R. 2000. Generalizations from the history of return migration. In *Return Migration: Journey of hope or despair?*, edited by B. Ghosh. Geneva: IOM.
- Kraniauskas, L. 2010. Return home: Best practice study of assisted voluntary return programs in the EU member states: IOM.
- Leerkes, A., M. Galloway, and M. Kromhout. 2010. Kiezen tussen twee kwaden. Determinanten van blijf- en terugkeerintenties onder (bijna) uitgeprocedeerde asielmigranten. In *Cahiers 2010-05*. The Hague: WODC.
- Leers, G.B.M. 2011a. Terugkeer in het Vreemdelingenbeleid. nadere uitwerking van de maatregelen., edited by M. v. B. e. Koninkrijksrelaties.
- Leers, G.B.M. 2011b. Vreemdelingenbeleid.
- Mallet, S. 2004. Understanding home: a critical review of the literature. *The Sociological Review* 52:62-89.
- Manson, D. 2011. Gezinslocaties.
- Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. 2008. Internationale migratie en ontwikkeling 2008, edited by M. v. B. Zaken: OBT.
- Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken. 2012. Algemeen ambtsbericht Noordelijke Kaukasus: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken.
- Mongools verkeersbureau. *Mongoliërs in top 10 vrijwillig vertrekkende migranten uit Nederland 2011* [cited. Available from <http://www.mongoolsverkeersbureau.nl/nieuws/671-mongoliërs-in-top-10-vrijwillig-vertrekkende-migrant-uit-nederland.html>.

- Netherlands Refugee Foundation. 2011. *Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons: Out of sight, out of mind?* The Hague.
- Olesen, H. 2002. Migration, return and development: An institutional perspective. *International migration* 40 (5).
- Rijksoverheid. 2011. Sober onderdak voor afgewezen asielzoekers met kinderen.
- Rodger, J. 2001. Defining the parameters of the non-refoulement principle. LLM research paper international law (Laws 509), Faculty of law, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.
- Ruben, R., M. Van Houte, and T. Davids. 2009. What determines the embeddedness of forced-return migrants? Rethinking the role of pre- and post-return assistance. *International Migration Review* 43 (3):908-937.
- Start, R. 2011. Opvang uitgedeelde gezinnen inhuman. *NOS*, 28-10-2011.
- The Repatriation and Departure Service. *Basic principles* n.d. [cited. Available from http://english.dienstterugkeerenvertrek.nl/basic_principles/].
- 't Hart, H., H. Boeijs, and J. Hox. . 2005. *Onderzoeksmethoden: Boom onderwijs*.
- Teerling, J. 2011. The development of new 'third-cultural spaces of belonging': British-born Cypriot 'return' migrants in Cyprus. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37 (7):1079-1099.
- UNHCR. 1996. Handbook voluntary repatriation: International protection. Geneva: UNHCR.
- UNHCR. 2003. Conclusion on the return of persons found not to be in need of international protection.
- UNHCR. 2011. Iraq Refugee returnee monitoring: UNHCR.
- UNHCR. 2012. Global appeal 2012-2013: Iraq. Geneva: UNHCR.
- Van de Voorde, F., and C. Vandyck. 2008. Reintegratieondersteuning: een referentiekader. Brussel: Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen.
- Van der Velde, M., and T. Van Naerssen. 2011. People, borders, trajectories: an approach to cross-border mobility and immobility in and to the European Union. *Area* 43 (2):218-224.
- Van Engeland-Nourai, A. 2008. Repatriation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees from Iran: When home is no longer home. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 10 (2):145-168
- Van Houte, M., and M. de Koning. 2008. Towards a better embeddedness? Monitoring assistance to involuntary returning migrants from Western countries Bureau Maatwerk bij Terugkeer (Mediation Agency for return) Cordaid.
- Van Houtum, H., and M. Van der Velde. 2004. The power of crossborder labour market immobility *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 95:100-7.
- Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. 2008. Notitie - Veiligheidssituatie in Centraal-Irak.
- Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland. 2011. A tot Z, introductie asielbeleid Irak.
- Webber, F. 2011. How voluntary are voluntary returns? . *Race & Class* 54 (4):98-107
- Wright, S. 2009. Going home: migration as enactment and symbol. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 54:475-492.
- Yuval-Davis, N. 2006. Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40 (3):197-214.
- Zadel, E., A. Kakushadze, and B. Tongeren. 2012. Assisted voluntary return & reintegration of Iraqi nationals from selected European countries: An analysis of policies and practices.: IOM.

Appendix

1: Interviewguide families in the Netherlands

Interviewguide Iraqi families in the Netherlands

Personal information about the informant

- Name, age
- Family composition
- Time spend in the Netherlands
- Asylum procedure

General conversation about his/her experiences in country of origin and in the Netherlands

Situation in the Netherlands:

- Where and how do/did you live in the Netherlands? For how long?
- Where are your children born? If in Iraq, how old were they when you came to the Netherlands?
- Did/do you follow an inburgeringscursus (incorporation course/ traject)?
- What did you learn?
- How fluent do you and your other family members speak Dutch?
- Which language do you speak at home?
- Did you and/or your partner have a job in the Netherlands?
- What kind of a job and for how long?
- Do you like your job?
- Did your child(ren) go to school?
- Do you have a lot of friends and acquaintances (social contacts) in the Netherlands?
- How many contacts do you have with Iraqi people in The Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?
- How many contacts do you have with Dutch people in the Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?
- How about your other family members (children)?

Identity

- Do you feel at home here? Why or why not? How about your other family members?
- What things make you feel at home here?
- What are the things that disturb this?
- What do you miss about Iraq?
- How do feel about Iraq relating to feeling at home? How about your other family members?
- Do you think you are going to miss the Netherlands? If so, what are you going to miss? What about other family members?

Incentives to voluntary return or not to return

- Why and when did you decide to return to Iraq?
- What were your considerations to return?

Conditions in The Netherlands and in the country of origin Conditions at a macro-level

- Did the IOM play a role in this decision? If so, how?
- How about other organizations (DT&V, Embassy)?

The role of the IOM at the pre-departure stage

- What role did the IOM play at this stage?
- What did they offer you?
- Did you feel you have enough information and facilitation (internet, phone, info) to prepare yourself for return?
- What way was it useful?
- What did you found is missing regarding the IOM assistance? Or what could the IOM done better?
- Did you made a reintergration plan already? What does this plan look like?
- Where in Iraq are you returning? What about accomodation?
- How are you spending the cash and in kind assistance? How are you spending the assistance which is meant for the children?
- What do you think of this assistance, the combination of cash and in kind?
- Do you feel it is enough? What would you rather have?
- Does the assistance of this project influence your decision to return? Or would you've gone anyway, or with another project?

Expectations

- What are you expecting when you arrive in Iraq?
- What are your expectations of the IOM Iraq assistance?
- What about the in kind money you will receive in Iraq?
- How do you think your future looks like?

2: Interviewguide Iraqi families in Iraq

Interviewguide Iraqi families in country of origin

Personal information about the informant

- Name, sex, age
- Family composition
- Asylum procedure
- Time spent in the Netherlands
- Time of return

General conversation about his/her experiences in country of origin and in the Netherlands

Situation in the Netherlands:

- Where and how do/did you live in the Netherlands? For how long?
- Where are your children born? If in Iraq, how old were they when you came to the Netherlands?
- Did/do you follow an inburgeringscursus (incorporation course/ traject)?
- What did you learn?
- How fluent do you and your other family members speak Dutch?
- Which language do you speak at home?
- Did you and/or your partner have a job in the Netherlands?
- What kind of a job and for how long?
- Do you like your job?
- Did your child(ren) go to school?
- Do you have a lot of friends and acquaintances (social contacts) in the Netherlands?
- How many contacts do you have with Iraqi people in The Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?
- How many contacts do you have with Dutch people in the Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?

How about your other family members (children)?

Incentives to voluntary return or not to return

- Why and when did you decide to return to Iraq?
- What were your considerations to return?

The role of the IOM at the transportation stage and at the post-arrival stage

- What role did the IOM play at this stage and in what way was it useful?
- What you found is missing regarding the IOM assistance?
- After your return, how satisfied were you with the information and advice you received from IOM?
- After your return, how long did it take before you first contacted IOM or before IOM contacted you?
- How did you make use of the cash and the in kind assistance?

Situation in Iraq:

- What does your life look like in Iraq? (House, job, education)
- What about safety?
- Was reality anything like what you expected? What was better than expected and what was not?
- How do you see your future?
- Does the informant have contact with other returned asylum seekers? Why?

- Contact with organizations in country of origin? Active in, or member of, an organization? Which? Why?

Identity

- Do you feel at home here in Iraq?
 - What things make you feel at home here?
 - What are the things that disturb this?
- How many contacts do you have with Iraqi people in The Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?
- How many contacts do you have with Dutch people in the Netherlands?
- How important are these contacts for you?
- Did you feel at home in the Netherlands?

3: Questionnaire Mongolian families in Mongolia

Questionnaire Mongolian families:

IOM number:

Gender, age and marital status

1. *Date of birth:*//(month/ day/ year)

2. *Gender:*

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. *Marital Status:*

- ☐ Single (never married)
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Separated

4. *How many children do you have, and of what age?*

5. *Where are your children born?*

- ☐ In Mongolia
- ☐ In the Netherlands
- ☐ Other.....

6. *Where do you live in Mongolia?*

- ☐ Place:.....

Questions about arrival in the Netherlands

9. *When (what year and month) did you arrive in the Netherlands?*

.....

When (what year and month) did you return to Mongolia?

.....

10. *Did you receive a residence permit?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. *When you came to the Netherlands, did you plan to:*

- ☐ Settle here permanently
- ☐ Live here for a while and return to Mongolia
- ☐ Live here for a while and then move to another country
- ☐ Maintain residence in both the Netherlands and another country
- ☐ Other

12. *Where did you live in the Netherlands?*

- ☐ In a AZC
- ☐ First in AZC then in a house
- ☐ Family shelter

o Other

13. *How long did you live in your house or in the family shelter?*

.....

14. *Did you like living in the Netherlands?*

o Yes, because

o No, because

o Sometimes, because

Decision to return to Mongolia

15. *Why did you decided to return to Mongolia?*

.....

16. *What were your considerations to return?*

.....

17. *How did you get in contact with the IOM?*

.....

IOM assistance in the Netherlands and at transportation

18. *In what way did the IOM help you in the Netherlands?*

.....

What did you think of the family plan you had to make in the Netherlands?

.....

19. *What do you think of the cash and in kind assistance?*

.....

20. *Were you satisfied with the IOM assistance in the Netherlands or is there something they could of done better?*

.....

Life in Mongolia

21. *Where did you go after you arrived in Mongolia?*

.....

22. *Where do live now?*

.....

23. *Do you rent or bought a house?*

.....

24. *How did you find this house?*

.....

25. *Are you currently employed?*

.....

26. *Upon returning home, how did you support yourself financially?*

.....

27. *Were/will the children be able to go to school?*

.....

IOM assistance in Mongolia

28. *When did you first get in contact with the IOM in Mongolia?*

.....

29. *In what way did the IOM help you in the Mongolia?*

.....

30. *How did you spend the cash and in kind assistance?*

.....

31. *In what way can the IOM help you now?*

.....

32. *Are you satisfied with the IOM assistance in Mongolia or is there something they could of done better?*

.....

33. *From who else did you receive help?*

o family members

o friends

o organisations

o other:

Identity

33. *Do you feel at home here? Why or why not? How about your other family members?*

.....

34. *What things make you feel at home here?*

.....

35. *What are the things that disturb this?*

.....

36. *What do you miss about Holland? What about other family members?*

.....

4: Interviewguide IOM project officers

Interviewguide

IOM projectofficer

Algemene vragen:

1. Wat is uw functie binnen de organisatie?

2. Hoe verloopt samenwerking met andere organisaties (DT&V/ COA)?

Spreekuren

Het terugkeerproces van gezinnen die terugkeren met het AVR-FC project:

3. Wat is er vooraf gegaan voordat de gezinnen bij u terechtkomen?

4. Wat zijn de voornaamste redenen voor de families om terug te keren en op welk moment maken ze deze beslissing?

5. Wat is de rol van het u/het IOM hierin?

The caseload van het AVR-FC project:

6. Kunt u me iets vertellen over de Iraakse gezinnen die zich aanmelden voor het AVR-FC project?

7. Kunt u me iets vertellen over de Russische gezinnen die zich aanmelden voor het AVR-FC project?

8. Kunt u me iets vertellen over de Mongoolse gezinnen die zich aanmelden voor het AVR-FC project?

Uw bevindingen tijdens de spreekuren:

9. Wat zijn de voornaamste wensen die de families hebben m.b.t. hun terugkeer assistentie?

10. Wat zijn de voornaamste problemen die deze families ondervinden tijdens hun terugkeerproces in Nederland of in het land van herkomst (wantrouwen, corruptie, veiligheid, lang verblijf in Nld.)?

11. Wat zijn de redenen voor deze problemen naar uw mening?

12. Wat kan IOM doen om deze problemen op te lossen?

13. In hoeverre hebben de terugkeerders genoeg tijd en de faciliteiten om zich goed te laten informeren en goed voor te bereiden op hun vertrek? (internet, telefoon, informatie)

14. Hoe zit het met de aankomstassistentie in land van herkomst en de verdere assistentie die in het land van herkomst plaatsvindt?

15. Waaraan zijn de gezinnen voornamelijk van plan hun geld en de in kind assistentie aan te besteden?

16. In hoeverre is in de terugkeerlanden sprake van een adequaat netwerk van partners om de benodigde ondersteuning te geven. Het gaat zowel om kwantitatieve (zijn er voldoende organisaties) als om kwalitatieve aspecten (zijn de partners voldoende gefocust op het geven van de gevraagde begeleiding en beschikken ze over de benodigde deskundigheid)?

17. Wordt de begeleiding van cliënten in het land van terugkeer gevolgd? Zo ja, op welke wijze? Is sprake van een adequaat monitoringsysteem?

5: Interviewgide Desk officer

Desk officer (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, DCM/MO)

Algemene vragen:

- Wat is uw functie binnen het ministerie van Buitenlandse zaken?
- Hoe verloopt samenwerking met andere organisaties (DT&V, IOM)?

Vrijwillige terugkeer:

- Wat is uw visie op het concept vrijwillige terugkeer?

The IOM however defines voluntary return as 'an immigrant's decision of his own free will to return to his country of origin' (Kraniauskas 2010, 10). The decision is assumed to be taken of own free will without any psychological coercion or psychical threat and is taken in the presence of relatively accurate and objective information allowing him to take the most favorable decision (Kraniauskas 2010, 10).

- Wat vindt u van deze definitie?

Duurzame terugkeer:

- Wat verstaat u onder duurzame terugkeer?
- Hoe kunnen terugkeer projecten bijdragen aan duurzame terugkeer?
- Hoe kan het gezinnenproject van de IOM bijdrage aan duurzame terugkeer?
- Hoe denkt u over de samenwerking met andere projecten/organisatie om duurzame terugkeer te bevorderen?
- Hoe kunnen de returnees het beste worden gemonitord?

Return assistance programmes:

- Wat is naar uw mening de waarde van deze assistentie?
- *essential component of an effective and humane migration management framework*

Het terugkeerbeleid in Nederland:

- Wat vindt u van het terugkeerbeleid in Nederland?

Nieuw subsidiekader

Sinds juli 2011 zijn er twee gezinslocatie waar gezinnen met minderjarige kinderen kunnen verblijven die Nederland moeten verlaten. Hier is veel kritiek op geweest.

Gezinslocaties:

- Wordt de bereidheid om terug te keren beïnvloed door hun verblijf in deze gezinslocaties?
- What role does staying in the family shelters play in the migrants' decision-making process regarding leaving the Netherlands?
- In what way do the living conditions stimulate to leave the Netherlands? Which living conditions?

Algemeen AVR-FC project:

- Wat is het voordeel van de combinatieregeling? T.o.v. het vorige Irak project waarbij alleen geld werd gegeven?
- Denkt u dat het een incentive om terug te keren?
- Heeft deze cash en in kind assistentie aanzuigende werkingen denkt u?
- HRT is nooit geëvalueerd, waarom niet?
- Dit project Dublin clamanten aan, wat vindt u hiervan?