

# **Return Migration to Armenia**

## *Monitoring the Embeddedness of Returnees*

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## Abstract

This study monitored the re-embeddedness process of Armenian (rejected) asylum seekers and irregular migrants returning from various European countries to Armenia by addressing the question: *Which factors influence the process of re-embeddedness of involuntary returning ex-refugees, rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants and what is the role of assistance herein?* Structured surveys and semi-structured in-depth interviews with a life history character were conducted with returnees from the target group to examine their socio-economic, social networks and psycho-social embeddedness. Specific attention was given to the impact of individual characteristics, experiences during the migration cycle, and return assistance, on former asylum seekers' and irregular migrants' ability to embed upon return in Armenia. Values were assigned to the levels of embeddedness to be able to calculate a score along the continuum of embeddedness for each returnee. The mean of these values forms a number between zero and 100, and indicates the level of embeddedness. The influence of different factors on embeddedness was tested through statistical regression analysis. The transcriptions from in-depth interviews were analysed to give substantial meaning to the scores and to understand the outcomes of the regression analyses.

Unlike traditional ideas of return migration as the end of the migration cycle, the interviews reveal that return back to Armenia is often the beginning of a new cycle which includes building up an economic livelihood, activating social networks and adjusting to the Armenian society. The post-soviet context and the recent decades' socio-economic upswing give returnees certain opportunities and obstacles to re-embed. Yet, how each returnee manages to re-embed upon return varies greatly, not least in accordance with their individual characteristics and their migration experiences. Additionally, return and re-integration assistance can under certain conditions play a role in the process.

The study is part of a larger research that was conducted by the Radboud University Nijmegen and the University of Amsterdam and was commissioned and financed by Bureau Maatwerk bij Terugkeer (The Mediation Agency for Return). It is hoped that the results of this research will add to the understanding of return migration and provide organisations and policy makers in both Europe and Armenia with important information and recommendations in the favour of returnees.

The research project is coordinated by Marieke van Houte, country reports are co-ordinated by Mireille de Koning.

## Content

1	Introduction	1
2	Armenia	3
2.1	History	3
2.2	Socio-economic, cultural and political background of Armenia	4
2.2.1	Socio-economic situation in Armenia	4
2.2.2	Political situation in Armenia	5
2.2.3	Health situation in Armenia	5
2.3	Migration Profile of Armenia	6
2.3.1	Recent migration flows from Armenia	6
2.3.2	Return migration to Armenia	7
2.3.3	The legal basis and the involvement of various institutions in return migration	8
2.3.4	Available assistance for Armenian returnees	8
3	Methodology	11
4	Embeddedness in Armenia	14
4.1	Dimensions of embeddedness	14
4.1.1	Economic embeddedness	14
4.1.2	Social networks embeddedness	19
4.1.3	Psycho-social embeddedness	22
4.1.4	Conclusions on embeddedness	25
4.2	Factors influencing embeddedness	26
4.2.1	Individual characteristics	26
4.2.2	Migration cycle	27
4.2.3	Assistance	33
4.2.4	Conclusions on factors influencing embeddedness	36
5	Conclusions and recommendations	37
5.1	Conclusions	37
5.2	Recommendations	39
	References	41
	Appendixes	43
Appendix I	Individual characteristics and migration history of respondents	43
Appendix II	Interviewed stakeholders and participation	45
Appendix III	Participation in migration related events	46
Appendix IV	Regression analyses	47
Appendix V	Factors influencing embeddedness	51

# Map of Armenia



Source: University of Texas libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.

## List of abbreviations

AAAS	Association Arménienne d'Aide Sociale
BC	British Council
COA	Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers
FFAD	Fondation Franco Arménienne pour le Développement (French Armenian Development Foundation)
ICHD	International Centre for Human Development
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
VARRP	Assisted Voluntary Return and re-Integration program



# 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

We did not feel like we returned to our homeland, we felt like we went to a place where we were not safe, where we had nothing, and where we did not know what would happen to us. (Zara, 26, 27 September, 2007)

Armenia has a long history of migration. Throughout centuries, emigration from the country has shaped its socio-political and demographic life. During the early years of Armenia's independence from the Soviet Union, socio-economic upheavals caused thousands of Armenians to leave their country (Bachmann et al. 2004). Still today, poor socio-economic conditions are a basis for emigration from Armenia, mainly to Russia, but also to Europe and elsewhere. Migration thus continues to be a common phenomenon in the life of many Armenians. Figures available indicate that at least 35 % of the population has migrated from Armenia in the last ten years (Gevorkyan, Mashuryan, and Gevorkyan 2006). While Russia has started to regularize temporary labour migration from Armenia, Europe has strengthened its focus on the return of asylum seekers and irregular migrants. Irrespective of the moral justification for return migration and the capacities for the countries of return to receive returnees, it is a fact that many migrants will be returning back to their native countries in the years to come. Upon return they often face difficulties in rebuilding their lives and in adjusting to the new circumstances.

Within this context, different stakeholders have acknowledged the importance of assisting asylum seekers in their return, as well as in their process of re-building a life. Attention to different types of return and re-integration programmes in both Europe and Armenia is increasing. On an international level, however, few systematic monitoring studies of ongoing assisted return programmes or in-depth investigations on the influence of return policies on the sustainability of return are yet available (see Black et al 2004). From literature on migration and return and through interviews with various stakeholders in Armenia, it also appeared that knowledge about returned (rejected) asylum seekers and irregular migrants to Armenia is almost non-existing. This research attempts to help fill this gap.

The study is part of a larger research that was conducted by the Radboud University Nijmegen and the University of Amsterdam and was commissioned and financed by Bureau Maatwerk bij Terugkeer (The Mediation Agency for Return). In an attempt to support the migrants who face the increasingly restrictive asylum policies of Western European states and a focus on return, initiatives like the Mediation Agency aim at assisting returning migrants to try to overcome the obstacles they face upon return. By doing so, they aim to contribute to sustainable return that might even lead to development in the countries of origin. The question remains however, if and under which circumstances, the return of involuntary returning migrants is sustainable.

The question raised by the Mediation Agency for Return was, whether return assistance given to former refugees, rejected asylum seeker and irregular migrants was/is effective and how this assistance could be improved. Approaching this question from a broader perspective, the following research question was developed: *Which factors*

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<sup>1</sup> This study is part of a 6-country monitoring study conducted by the University of Amsterdam and Radboud University Nijmegen coordinated by Marieke van Houte and Mireille de Koning. I would like to acknowledge the help received from Valentina Mazzucato (AMIDST) and Tine Davids (CIDIN) on useful comments and Luuk van Kempen (CIDIN) and Theo van der Weegen (Research-Technical Support Group (RTOG) on the SPSS analysis. I would like to further acknowledge those organisations and individuals in Armenia who have shared their time, devotion and knowledge, especially Armenian Caritas. Finally, I would like to acknowledge all returnees who have shared their experiences and life stories with me during the interviews.



*influence the process of re-embeddedness of involuntary returning ex- refugees, rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants and what is the role of assistance herein?*

During two months, qualitative and quantitative field research was carried out in two major cities in Armenia. In the field, interviews were conducted with Armenian returnees and with relevant stakeholders. The research also included observations and participations in migration related events. Additionally, an extensive literature and policy review was conducted.

When examining the current situation of the returnees, the concept of embeddedness is used. Embeddedness entails a multidimensional concept which refers to an individual finding his/her own position in society and feeling a sense of belonging to, and participating in, that society. In this study, return is conceived as a process of mixed embeddedness. Embeddedness should be seen as a continuum in which each returnee takes his or her unique place. Embeddedness consists of three *dimensions*:

- *Economic* embeddedness; which refers to the returnees' building of a sustainable livelihood.
- *Social networks* embeddedness; which refers to the returnees' social contacts and the material and emotional benefits of these social relations.
- *Psychosocial network embeddedness*; which refers to the returnees' identity construction, psychological wellbeing, feeling at home, and feeling of safety.

The concept of embeddedness was chosen over the more common concept of re-integration as embeddedness does not imply a normative idea of how a returnee should behave upon return.

Although migrants who are obliged to return to their countries of origin, and do so without being forcefully expelled, are generally referred to by policy makers and NGOs as 'voluntary returnees', it is the opinion in this research that return is not voluntary when there is no plausible (legal) alternative. The degree of 'voluntariness' is here defined as whether migrants have a choice to stay or leave their host countries. Our findings show that all the people we spoke with did not have a choice, even those that 'volunteered' to leave. Thus, in this study, return out of reasons other than a personal desire to return is conceived of as involuntary. In practice, this usually means that any returnee, not possessing a permanent permit, is regarded as having returned involuntarily.

The results of this research aim to provide organisations and policy makers in both Europe and Armenia, concerned with the well-being of returnees, with important information and recommendations for best practices. With improved return practices, involved stakeholders can contribute to a more humane return for individual returnees.

The following chapter will introduce a few historical events in the Armenian history and give a brief description of the country's socio-economic, political and health situation. This is followed by an introduction of current migration trends in Armenia, the basis and the involvement of various institutions in return migration and assistance available for returnees. In chapter three, the methodology underlying the research will be presented. Chapter four is the main analytical chapter in which the results of the research are presented. Chapter five provides major conclusions and recommendations.

## 2 Armenia

The difficulties and opportunities returnees meet upon return are much dependent on the situation in the country to which they return. To understand the situation and the needs of Armenian returnees it is essential to know something about the context to which they return and are supposed to build up a life in. This chapter gives a brief introduction the socio-economic climate in Armenia and introduces the reader to a few of the recent migration trends affecting the country.

### 2.1 History

During its history, Armenia has been under the control of various empires, including Greeks, Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Mongols, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, and most recently, the Russians. Centuries of submission also created a world wide diaspora. In fact, over half of the world's 6.3 million Armenians live outside the borders of the Republic of Armenia (Library of Congress 2007). Therefore, many Armenians have family and friends living outside the borders of Armenia, mainly in Russia. The rise and fall of the Soviet Union and the last year's economic and cultural progress in Russia have therefore had major impact on the life of Armenians. The role of the diaspora plays an important role in the life of Armenians, both economically and socially.

In Armenia's recent history, three major events have caused Armenian citizens to emigrate from their country. In December 1988, a catastrophic earthquake hit northern Armenia. The earthquake destroyed a third of the country's industrial capacity, left more than 24.000 dead, and 400.000 homeless. This disaster caused the first wave of mass emigration from Soviet Armenia. More than 150.000 homeless people were evacuated mainly to other Soviet Republics. One quarter has not yet returned to Armenia (Bachmann et al. 2004). Still today the regions hardest hit by the earthquake have not recovered from its damage. In cities like Gyumri, the second largest city of Armenia and one of the hardest hit by the earthquake, people still live in the metal containers provided to them immediately after the earthquake.

A second wave of mass migration followed the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, a primarily Armenian-populated region, assigned by Moscow to Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1920s. A large scale migration flow occurred at the beginning of the conflict, when Ngarno Kharabagh declared independence, and an open war broke out between the two countries. The conflict over Ngarno Kharabagh led to a blockade of major transportation routes for oil, gas, and other products, as well as to the closure of the Turkish Armenian border (Bachmann et al. 2004). A cease-fire took hold in May 1994, and since then Armenian forces control Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as a significant portion of Azerbaijan (Gevorkyan, Mashuryan, and Gevorkyan 2006). The conflict has had economical rather than political consequences and few people outside the near lying regions are directly affected by it.

A third and by far the largest emigration wave occurred in response to the economic collapse that hit Armenia after its independence from the Soviet Union on September 23, 1991. During the Soviet era an intensive industrialization period had been accomplished in Armenia but after the collapse of the Soviet empire, it industrial capacity shrank to zero. Simultaneous oil and gas blockades, in combination with the damages of the earthquake, meant no light, heating, nor water at home, scarce public transport and shortage of petrol for private cars. Additionally, a hyper-inflation in 1993 resulted in dramatic declines of real incomes and in the value of private savings. In a few years,

Armenia retreated from the industrial to the pre-industrial age, and for Armenian citizens this meant a sharp decline in living standards. Few factories reopened after independence and most industrial workers were unable to enter other sectors of employment. Many people also lost their social status since professional training, careers and other identity markers became irrelevant outside the Soviet social system. As a result of these environmental, political and socio-economic developments, almost a quarter of the population left Armenia during the decade between 1991 and 2001. Still today, this type of economic migration abroad is very present. The overwhelming majority of migrants go to various former Soviet republics, mostly Russia and Ukraine, and only to a much smaller extent to the USA or Western Europe (Bachmann et al. 2004).

## 2.2 Socio-economic, political and health background of Armenia

In this section, a brief overview is given on the socio-political background and health situation in Armenia. This background gives an idea of the national context to which Armenian returnees return and in which the situation of the returnees should be viewed.

### 2.2.1 Socio-economic situation in Armenia

Today, 16 years after independence, Armenia has still not been able to recover from the hard years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Within the city of Yerevan, empty buildings, deserted parks, gardens loaded with garbage, and industries staring empty, are all proof of the last decade's social changes. However, since 1996, the country's economy has been recovering. Yerevan, the country's capital, has become a booming capital where international organisations and Armenian and foreign businesses are settling and where the citizens can enjoy electricity twenty-four hours and water at least two times a day (Bachmann et al. 2004). The economy today is dependent on foreign investments and remittances from abroad (Minasyan, Hancilova 2005). The influence of foreigners can also be seen in the investments of the diaspora, who come to Armenia during their vacations and spend a lot of money or who invest in real estate. For the larger part of the population, the recent economic growth has not stimulated job creation, nor led to an increase in social benefits. Instead, the socio-economic polarization has grown and schools, hospitals, and roads are still in bad shape. Moreover, the cultural sector is poorly developed and the spectrum of civil society actors is small (Bachmann et al. 2004).

In December 2006 the unemployment rate was 7.2 % in Armenia, 70 % of the unemployed were women, even rising up to 80 % in Yerevan. According to a recent study on labour migration conducted by the Gallup Organisation, only 25 % of adult Armenians are permanently employed. These numbers, however, do not include hidden unemployment and hidden employment which is significant in Armenia. The same survey shows that approximately one-third of Armenians are interested in seeking employment abroad, the absolute main reason being unemployment (Eurasia foundation n.d.). The generation educated in the Soviet system still has difficulties entering the labour market due to the lack of demand for their knowledge and practical skills (The Country of Return Information Project August 2007). Even for those who have employment, salary levels are low and do not guarantee a livelihood. The situation in the provinces is particularly difficult. Rural inhabitants formerly employed in factories are now working as farmers, trying to make a living from whatever they can grow on their small pieces of land (Bachmann et al. 2004).

**Table 1. 1. Development indicators Armenia**

Armenia	Total/year
GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$16.94 billion (2006 est.)
GDP - real growth rate	13.4% (2006 est.)
GDP - per capita (PPP)	\$5,700 (2006 est.)
Unemployment rate	7.4% (November 2006 est.)
Population below poverty line	34.6% (2004 est.)
Labor force - by occupation	agriculture: 45% industry: 25% services: 30% (2002 est.)

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) The World Fact book 2007

URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html>

### 2.2.2 Political situation in Armenia

Growing socio-economic polarization, declining public services, together with widespread corruption and undemocratic national elections have resulted in distrust among the Armenian population for its government. Power remains concentrated around the president himself who also controls army, police, and intelligence services. The parliament has limited power, media is restricted and the judiciary system is partial. Political parties consist of networks of relatives, friends, and acquaintances and are ineffective outside electoral periods (Bachmann et al. 2004). Complaints about corruption in various sectors are wide spread and conversations with both returnees and other Armenians reveal an attitude of distrust towards the state and the future situation of Armenia. Both returnees and other Armenians emphasize that they feel ignored by the state and that their family and relatives are the only security net they have.

### 2.2.3 Health situation in Armenia

In a country where most people struggle to survive for a month, and where any additional cost may lead a family into severe poverty, the need for healthcare is a secondary concern. As from 2006, basic healthcare should be guaranteed by the state and be freely provided, but this remains theory rather than practice. According to surveys undertaken in all regions of Armenia, the lack of access to health care was considered as one of the most difficult problems of vulnerable groups. Health insurances are limited, and especially vulnerable groups have limited access to basic and specialized health care services. Necessary and expensive drugs are often not available at healthcare facilities, and patients have to purchase them on their own. According to surveys, however, groups with privileges, which are often the same as vulnerable groups, are not able in practice to use their privileges with regard to fees and drugs. Corruption is also widespread in the health sector: out-of-pocket payments still constitute an estimated 65 % of all health care expenditure in Armenia. People who refuse paying such 'under the table fees' can expect to get poor treatment, if any treatment at all (The Country of Return Information Project August 2007).

## 2.3 Migration profile of Armenia

This section briefly discusses current migration trends in Armenia. Additionally, an overview is given on national stakeholders involved in return migration and the availability of return and re-integration assistance for Armenian returnees. This overview will provide the legal and institutional context in which return migration to Armenia takes place.

### 2.3.1 Recent migration flows from Armenia

Contemporary migration from Armenia continues to be widespread. Figures available indicate that at least 35% of the population has emigrated from Armenia in the last ten years. The outflow is large and all societal groups are represented. The most common destination is Russia, but also the other former Soviet republics (Gevorkyan, Mashuryan, and Gevorkyan 2006). Migration plays a central role in the lives of many citizens of Armenia. According to a survey carried out on labour migration, an estimated 9 % of the economically active population in Armenia was involved in labour migration between 2002 and 2005. During the same period, 63 % of the labour migrants had already returned, leaving between 42.500 and 53.800 labour migrants still working abroad (Minasyan, Hancilova 2005). Although reliable figures for the number of Armenians working in Russia do not exist, 31 % of Armenians have at least one family member working in Russia (Eurasia foundation n.d.).

Due to a lack of data, the profile of those who have left Armenia is not well defined. A survey carried out in 2001 on arriving and departing passengers at Armenian borders (conducted by the Armenian National Statistical Service), showed that the persons indicating that they were leaving Armenia for a long period or permanently were often children up to the age of 17 and married women (Bachmann et al. 2004). Other studies on labour and seasonal migration show that mainly men are engaged in labour migration. Labour migration is more common in urban areas (Minasyan, Hancilova 2005) but it is mainly in the rural areas, where whole villages are deserted by young men, that labour migration creates demographical problems (Bachmann et al. 2004).

Labour migration also affects the life of the families left behind. While remittances might solve some economic problems, the psychological pressure is high on the mothers left behind (Minasyan, Hancilova 2005). Minasyan and Hancilova (2005) also point to a survey on labour migration, in which about one third of the respondents state that, since their family members migrated, they have less contact with their friends, relatives and acquaintances. Armenian labour migrants also often refuse to bring their families, arguing that their children would be 'perverted' by Russian society and lose their Armenian identity and values (Bachmann et al. 2004). In other cases, the person who migrated finds a new family and breaks the relations with the family in Armenia. Moreover, in villages where there are no phones, many elderly people suffer from not knowing exactly where their children have migrated and from not being able to call them (Cimera 2005).

There are few reliable numbers on migration from Armenia to Europe. Following the general trend of decreasing asylum applications in the Netherlands, and in Europe in general, the number of asylum claims by Armenian citizens has sharply declined since 2002 (IOM 2003).

**Table 1.2. Number of asylum claims by citizens of Armenia lodged in Europe, 1998- March 2003**

Armenia	Total/year
1998	5,278
1999	8,645
2000	8,587
2001	8,610
2002	8,144
2003	755
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,019</b>

Source: International Organisation of Migration, 2003, 13 reports data from UNHCR, 2000/2001/2002/2003 & IGC, 2003

Among those who go as irregular migrants or as asylum seekers, both men and women from various social backgrounds are represented (Ter-Minasyan, personal communication 24 August 2007).

As for labour migrants, an estimated 7000 people have migrated to Europe between 2002 and 2005. The majority are specialists with university degrees, between 21 and 50 years of age, who come from Yerevan and other urban areas (Minasyan, Hancilova 2005). Additionally, an outflow of high-educated Armenian migrants to Canada on a temporary VISA continues to take place as a response to a programme initiated by the Canadian government which encourages the influx into Canada of highly educated migrants (Ter-Minasyan 2007).

### 2.3.2 Return migration to Armenia

Estimations indicate that a maximum of a few thousand migrants have returned to Armenia from Europe in the past years (Bachmann et al. 2004). These numbers should be taken as mere estimations since no statistics are available on return migration to Armenia. Taking the general trend of return from the Netherlands to Armenia as an indicator, the numbers are increasing, both for assisted returns of asylum seekers and forced returns (IOM 2003).

**Table 1.3. Total numbers of persons returned with AVR/REAN assistance from the Netherlands to Armenia, 1999 – June 2003 (IOM, 2003b)**

Armenia	Total/year
1999	15
2000	54
2001	30
2002	56
2003	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>

Source: International Organisation of Migration, 2003, 13

Whereas no numbers are available on spontaneous returns, The International Organisation for Migration, IOM, offices in Western and Central Europe are estimated to have assisted around 5000 unsuccessful asylum seekers and stranded irregular migrants to return to Armenia since 1994 (IOM 2003). The Netherlands have returned 480 Armenian migrants since 1999.

**Table 1.4. Numbers of deportations from the Netherlands of citizens of Armenia, 1999 – 2002 (Ministry of Justice, 2003b)**

Armenia	Total/year
1999	134
2000	135
2001	109
2002	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>

Source: International Organisation of Migration, 2003, 13

No specific research is available on the characteristics of asylum seekers returning to Armenia but it has been suggested that the phenomenon of return in the last few years seems to be more common among women with children. Young adults who leave also seem to be less likely to return to Armenia (Bachmann et al. 2004).

### 2.3.3 The legal basis and the involvement of various institutions in return migration

The legal responsibility for migration issues lies within the state department of territorial planning. This department does not have a specific unit dealing with migration issues, and instead different organisations and institutions have become responsible for various issues related to migration (Bababyan, personal communication 15 October 2007). The Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration is the most active institution and the most prominent policy makers in the field of migration. In 2001, the agency initiated a project together with IOM on combating illegal immigration which included an element of return migration (Chobanyan, personal communication 17 October 2007). In the years that followed, several re-admission agreements were conducted with various European countries. Because of the unclear division of responsibility there is no powerful structure and no mechanisms or basis for the implementation of organised return migration and there are concerns of whether Armenia has the capacity to receive returnees (Bababyan 2007).

Recently, a couple of initiatives have been taken towards developing a policy strategy and regulatory framework on migration as well as encouraging and a platform for communication between various decision makers and stakeholders from the civil society (Chobanyan 2007). The Migration Agency are working on a project in cooperation with the British Council (BC) and the International Centre for Human Development (ICHHD) aimed at creating public consciousness on the issues of and solutions for illegal migration, stimulating a policy dialogue, and establishing an institute for re-integration assistance (ICHHD 2007). The Eurasia Foundation is at the time of this research working on the implementation of Migration and Return Resource Centres in different regions. The idea is to provide returnees as well as potential migrants with information and practical assistance. A nationwide Network of Migration and Return Resource Centres have also been planned for exchanging of information and best practices (Eurasia foundation n.d.).

IOM has an office in Yerevan. Within IOM, an Assisted Voluntary Return and re-Integration program (VARRP) was established in January 1996, with the objective of assisting voluntary returns and providing re-integration assistance to rejected asylum seekers returning voluntarily from Europe (Ter-Minasyan 2007).

### 2.3.4 Available assistance for Armenian returnees

There are no special benefits or privileges for returnees in Armenia (The Country of Return Information Project 2007). Most organisations which are involved in re-

integration assistance for returnees work in partnership with European governments or organisations. Accordingly, assistance is only given to returnees within that particular program and few opportunities exist for spontaneous returnees to receive assistance upon return. There are a couple of institutions which provide re-integration to returnees on the basis of their recognition of returnees as a vulnerable group, however, the scope and availability is limited.

Potential migrants and returnees can approach the Migration Agency for information or questions relating to migration and return (Hovhanisyan, personal communication 17 October 2007). The agency is currently working on a web portal with information about return related issues and is in the process of establishing a chat forum (Chobanyan 2007). IOM only assists returnees on requests from host governments or NGOs (Ter-Minasyan 2007). So far, assistance has been given to 24 cases of return and business plans have been prepared for 7 cases (Badiryan, personal communication 15 October 2007). IOM is also implementing a Micro Enterprise Development Project, through which returnees can receive assistance in starting up micro-businesses on the basis of their recognition as a vulnerable group (Kazazyan, personal communication 4 September 2007). ICHD also gives training for returnees in how to establish businesses. If preferable, ICHD can refer them to appropriate employment centres, business initiatives in the provinces, or to state institutions for legal procedures.

For rejected Armenian asylum seekers from Switzerland, opportunities have existed for three years, since 2004, to receive re-integration assistance through a re-integration program implemented in cooperation between the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Swiss authorities. Up to now, 8 families (23 persons) from Switzerland have returned through this program and the agency plans the return of another 50 persons within the context of the project. The project will be in process until the end of this year (Hovhanisyan 2007).

Similar initiatives have been established between the Armenia based organisation Fondation Franco Arménienne pour le Développement (French Armenian Development Foundation), FFAD, and the French association Arménienne d'Aide Sociale, AAAS, and between Armenian Caritas and Caritas International in Belgium and Maatwerk Bij Terugkeer in the Netherlands. These non-profit organisations are assisting returnees from France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, respectively. The two initiatives work similarly. Assistance is designed according to the specific needs of each returnee and is offered both in the host country and in Armenia. The assistance includes information about employment and living opportunities in Armenia, travel preparations, legal consultation, support in job searching, professional training, medical and psychosocial assistance, and social assistance. Whereas AAAS and FFAD mainly focus on assisting returnees in setting up micro-business activities, Caritas focus more on social assistance. The ability for the organisations to provide various types of assistance is first and foremost a budget question. Returnee can often only receive small scaled assistance.





### **3 Methodology**

The theoretical and methodological framework underlying this research was developed for case studies in 6 different countries of return. This report is the outcome of two months field research in two major cities in Armenia, from mid August to mid October 2007. The level of analysis is the individual returnee and the research population consist of those migrants who have lived in Western Europe as either asylum seekers or as irregular migrants, and who returned from Western Europe to Armenia due to reasons other than a personal desire to return and irrespective of future prospects in the host country. Access to this research population was gained through a broad network of individual contacts and gatekeepers working for various national and international non governmental and governmental organisations, somehow involved in return and reintegration.

In the field, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. A questionnaire was used to collect structured data on the situation of embeddedness and the factors influencing embeddedness. Additionally, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with a life history character to expand on topics addressed in the questionnaire or those relevant to the situation of the particular respondent.

Interviews were conducted with 32 returnees of whom some were interviewed twice. A close cooperation was established with Armenian Caritas. With their assistance, 20 respondents could be interviewed. To identify more respondents, a snow-ball method was used. All relevant (and some non relevant) stakeholders in Armenia were contacted by phone or directly. They were asked to provide information about themselves, identify potential respondents and to provide information about other relevant stakeholders. To get in touch with non-assisted returnees, personal contacts were used. The rest of the sample were helped by the following organisations: five respondents are beneficiaries of French Armenian Development Foundation, three respondents are beneficiaries of IOM Armenia, two respondents are beneficiaries of the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration in cooperation with the Swiss Government and three respondents are spontaneous returnees. Of those who received assistance, assistance was received in the preparation, during and/or after return, and the type of assistance was ranging from a small amount of money from organisations in the host country to involvement in business support programmes starting in the host country and followed up in Armenia.

**Table 2.1. Personal profile of the respondents in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	19	59
Male	13	41
<b>Total</b>	32	100
<b>Age</b>		
18-30	6	19
31-47	14	44
48-65	9	28
66-	3	9
<b>Total</b>	32	100
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	2	6
Married	21	66
Engaged/in a relationship	1	3
Divorced/separated	3	9
Widow(er)	5	16
<b>Total</b>	32	100
<b>Education</b>		
Primary education	4	13
Secondary education	13	41
Vocational education/training	6	19
Higher education/university	9	28
<b>Total</b>	32	100

**Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007**

The time in which the respondents left Armenia range from 1990 to 2006, of which the majority left between 1999 and 2006. The year in which they returned ranges from 1997 to 2007, of which the majority returned between 2004 and 2007<sup>2</sup>.

The sample group can not be claimed representative of the whole return population. First, there is an over representation of assisted returnees and under representation of spontaneous returnees in the sample population relatively to the general return population. Without enough local contacts and without the ability to approach people in their native language it was difficult finding other respondents than those connected to an organisation. Returnees who have re-emigrated are furthermore not included in the sample. In most cases where a whole family returned, only one family member was interviewed. No children were interviewed. Spouses and other family members were often present and commented on the answers so that more perspectives were put forward. Comments from other present family members were always noted and considered. An important bias in the sample is the urban-rural composition. The majority of the respondents are resident in Yerevan, a smaller number in Gyumri. The few respondents, who live in semi-urban or rural areas, all live close to Yerevan. The socio-economic situation in Yerevan and the near-lying regions is different from the situation urban areas in the rest of the country. The results of the research should be considered with this bias in mind.

All interviews were conducted with a translator and all but two were recorded. The translator was connected to Armenian Caritas. Her connection to Armenian Caritas provided the returnees with trust and enabled interviews with respondents otherwise reluctant to participate. Most interviews were conducted in the home of the respondent. This gave the interviews an informal character as well as gave an insight in the living

<sup>2</sup> See appendix for more specific data on the characteristics and migration history of the respondents

conditions of the respondents. The average duration of the interviews was approximately two hours. Sometimes the answers in the end of the interview were not as thorough as in the beginning. To avoid bias, the order of the questions was sometimes changed.

The interviews with returnees were complemented by observations, meetings with 11 different stakeholders<sup>3</sup> and participation in migration related events. These meetings provided extra information on migration related issues and the legal and policy context in Armenia. The interviews with stakeholders also functioned to put the stories of the returnees into a broader context.

Upon arrival, a common strategy was developed to enable a systematic analysis of interviews and observations. For the purposes of this research, values were assigned to the levels of embeddedness to be able to calculate a score along the continuum of embeddedness for each returnee. The mean of these values forms a number between zero and 100, and indicates the level of embeddedness. In order to avoid a bias in the scores due to misinterpretation of questions, the scores have been examined and sometimes adjusted in relation to each other and in relation to observations and qualitative information. The scores on embeddedness should be seen as relative rather than absolute indicators since a person is always to a certain extent, though never entirely, embedded. Moreover, embeddedness is conceived as a process and the scores of the returnees on the different dimensions are never static.

To visualize the general situation on embeddedness in the country, scores were ranked on all three levels of embeddedness, where 0-40 indicates low embeddedness, 41-70 middle embeddedness and 71-100, high embeddedness. Considering the fact that each returnee has a unique combination of scores on the different elements, it is only possible to generally indicate what these low, middle and high levels consist of. It can be said that a low score on embeddedness roughly indicates a very insecure position on respectively the economic, social network or psychosocial dimension, a middle score suggests that a returnee is starting to find his or her way, but is not embedded in a sustainable way yet, while a high score would indicate a movement towards a sustainable embeddedness. The influence of different factors on embeddedness was tested through statistical regression analysis. The quantitative analyses were supplemented with qualitative analyses to give substantial meaning to the scores and to understand the outcomes of the regression analyses.

Below, the results from the research are presented.

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix two and three for list of interviewed stakeholders and events attended in Armenia.

## 4 Embeddedness in Armenia

We did not work there [in the Netherlands], we had no money there. We had to come back with no money or anything. Here, we had nothing so it was all in darkness. What could we do here? What were we going to decide? (Zara<sup>4</sup>, 26, 26 August, 2007)

Return migration is often seen as the end of the migration cycle. It has been suggested, that once back in the country of origin, the returnee will be morally, spiritually, and culturally better off (Hammond 1999). Due to economic restrictions, return migration to Armenia is for many returnees often indeed the end of the migration cycle, since they can not afford to move again. However, after having lived abroad for several months or years, the return back to Armenia is often the beginning of an entirely new cycle. In order to build up a life again, a range of practical and emotional issues needs to be dealt with. Often, returnees have questions concerning registrations, employment, education, and health. Additionally, a considerable number of returnees are dealing with psychological instability, traumatic experiences, and difficulties to mentally adjust to the life in Armenia some even long after return. In this research the economic, social, and psycho-social network embeddedness<sup>5</sup> of returnees who have returned from European countries to Armenia have been monitored. Additionally, the research has identified important factors that influence the ability to re-embed.

### 4.1 Dimensions of embeddedness

Economic embeddedness refers to the returnees' access to assets, sufficiency and independency of income, access to employment, health services and education. Social networks embeddedness refers to a returnee's participation in society and to the quantity and usefulness of the returnee's social networks for material and emotional needs. Psycho-social network embeddedness refers to the returnees' psychological balance and feeling of safety. Psycho-social network embeddedness also includes the returnees' identification with his or her country of return as well as the society's attitude towards returnees.

#### 4.1.1 Economic embeddedness

I turn to my cousin from time to time to ask for a little bit of money for medical treatment and health care. My brother [in Russia] pays the money back to my cousin. Yesterday, my cousin told me that he had called my brother and that my brother is very ill. He has to see the doctor, but he does not have the money. I don't think that he can send me money anymore because he also has his wife and two children and he has other problems [...] maybe I have to stay on the street (Armen, 52, 31 August, 2007).

The current embeddedness situation among returnees varies greatly and each returnee has a unique combination of scores on the different elements. While the majority of the respondents migrated with the intention of improving their economic situation, few returnees experience that migrating and returning had any major impact on the quality of

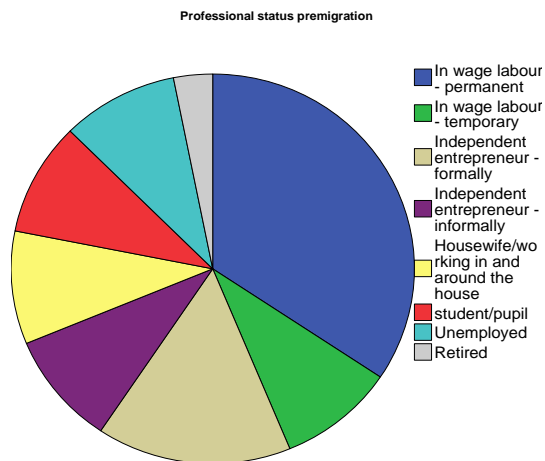
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<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms are used throughout the report to protect people's privacy.

<sup>5</sup> A description of how embeddedness is conceptualized and measured can be found in the general report.

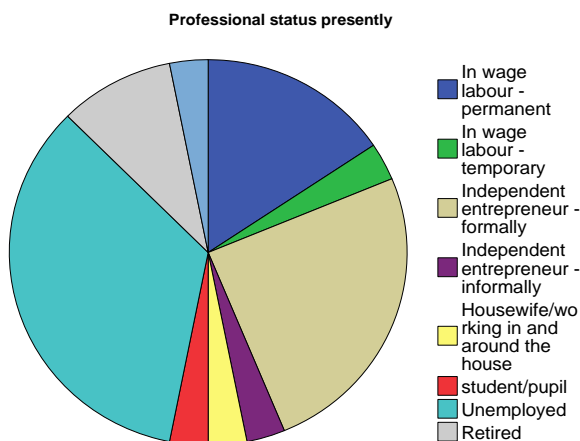
their lives. In fact, 25 % of the returnees think that migration had a negative impact on the quality of their lives. In those cases, the negative impact is almost always on an economic level. One major reason for this experienced degradation in life quality is unemployment. Whereas 35 % of the returnees were engaged in permanent or temporary wage labour before they migrated, the current number is 16 %. Before migrating, 16 % of the returnees were engaged in formal independent entrepreneurs. After return, this number is 25 % which, as we will see in later section, indicates the success of business assistance.

**Figure 3.1. Professional status pre-migration in percentages of the total sample (n=32)**



Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

**Figure 3.2. Professional status presently in percentages of the total sample (n=32)**



Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

In general, economic insecurity is a major concern for Armenian returnees. However, whereas a few returnees are currently living under extreme insecure conditions and are concerned of becoming homeless in a near future, most returnees meet economic ends today but run the risk of falling into deep poverty if unexpected costs befall the family. What characterises the distinction between low and high economic embeddedness is first and foremost the employment situation and the major source of income. Throughout the

interviews it is stressed that to fully embed economically in Armenia one has to be employment or own a business.

**Table 3.1. Score on economic embeddedness in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

Economic embeddedness	Frequencies	Percentage
Low (0-40)	11	34
Middle (41-70)	16	50
High (71 – 100)	5	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

Whereas all returnees in group three (see table) have employment, either in permanent wage labour or as formal entrepreneurs, the employment situation in the other two groups is more diversified. Within group two, those engaged in temporary wage labour and informal businesses are also represented. Furthermore, this group also consist of housewives, retired, and unemployed returnees. In group one, 78% are unemployed, whereas 11 % are students and the same number are retired. If compared to before migration, however, the current employment levels among the interviewed returnees is lower than before migration.

The majority of the returnees rely only on one income, which is shared amongst the nuclear and often also the extended family. Additional costs for things such as health care and education often put heavy economic pressure on the family. For those employed, salaries or revenues from businesses are major sources of incomes. Among the returnees in group two, other major sources of income are allowances from friends and family, loans (informal and micro credit loans from re-integration projects), other family members' income. In the table below, the major source of income within the different groups are indicated.

**Table 3.2. First source of income in numbers and percentages (n=30)**

Source of income presently: first \* econembedhilow Crosstabulation

			econembedhilow			Total
			low	middle	high	
Source of income presently: first	Salary/wage/interest	Count	0	6	5	11
		% within econembedhilow	.0%	37.5%	100.0%	36.7%
	Public relief	Count	5	1	0	6
		% within econembedhilow	55.6%	6.3%	.0%	20.0%
	Allowances/grants from relatives/friends	Count	3	2	0	5
		% within econembedhilow	33.3%	12.5%	.0%	16.7%
	Loans (formal or informal)	Count	0	4	0	4
	% within econembedhilow	.0%	25.0%	.0%	13.3%	
	Remittances	Count	1	1	0	2
		% within econembedhilow	11.1%	6.3%	.0%	6.7%
	living off direct family (husband/wife)	Count	0	2	0	2
		% within econembedhilow	.0%	12.5%	.0%	6.7%
<b>Total</b>		Count	9	16	5	30
		% within econembedhilow	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Return migration Armenia 2007

A major difference between group two and three is that those in group two rarely consider their income to be sufficient to support themselves and their family. In group 1, the most common sources of income are allowances from families and friends and public relief. Relying on grants from friends and family is often paired with insecurity. Many times, allowances from friends are given very sporadically and might stop abruptly if the donor no longer can afford giving away money. Several returnees also mention that they are reluctant to ask friends for money. Pensions and other forms of public relief are very low in Armenia and do not guarantee a living. Another major difference between the groups is whether the returnees consider themselves to have access to healthcare which is exclusively a monetary issue. Whether all in group three report that they have access to healthcare, the numbers in the other groups are only 31 % and 11 % respectively.

The lack of employment and an instable employment situation put the returnees in a vulnerable position and has large consequences in the daily life of many returnees, both materially and socially. One major concern is the inability to pay for essential health care. Illness and health treatment often put a great financial burden on the family. A few returnees needed treatment at the time that the research took place, but could not afford the necessary treatment. As for education, primary and secondary education in Armenia is free so the great majority of the returned children attend school. One returnee complains that her children can not attend school since the family can not afford proper clothes and school materials. University education is considered very important in Armenia and not being able to pay for college or university is seen as a real problem. 'If your children are good in school but you don't have money to pay for their education, their lives are destroyed' (Svetlana, 32, 30 September 2007). University fees are expensive though and several returnees report that they can not send their children to university or that they spend all their money on tuition fees.

Housing is another important indicator of economic embeddedness. The housing situation differs between the returnees. Whereas a few returnees returned to their previous houses, others had sold their house and had problems finding housing upon return. Currently, 47 % of the respondents live in their own private house whereas 22 % of the respondents still live in the house of a family member. Another 16 % live in a rented house. The rest of the respondents have various housing situations, including social housing, unofficially occupied house, refugee settlement, and metal container. A few of the returnees are currently living in extremely insecure situations and are concerned about becoming homeless at the end of the year. The housing situation of returnees does not differ much from the condition preceding their migration.

The housing conditions of the returnees vary a lot, also within the different groups. A considerable part of the respondents have household assets such as a TV and a stereo but the house is often in a bad condition. In many houses, one or two rooms are kept in a decent condition whilst the rest of the house, especially the bathroom, is badly maintained. A few returnees state that they can not afford to pay for gas to warm up their house during the winter period. The housing conditions do not always indicate economic status however. Several Armenians who were economically well off during the Soviet period still live in the same house as before. However, during the inflation and economic collapse that followed the fall of the Soviet Union, these Armenians lost all their savings and assets. Today, the size or condition of their house might indicate that they once were wealthy, although they are now living in economic hardship.

Several of the economic problems that returnees face are closely connected to the general conditions in Armenia, such as unemployment, lack of future prospects, and an absence of official health insurances. These problems are not unique for returnees and the



general population face similar difficulties. There are, however, specific problems that returnees face due to their emigration. Some of the returnees sold their homes or cars before emigrating. Others borrowed money from friends and relatives to finance their visa and tickets. Upon return, the returnee is faced with debts that have to be repaid, as well as a loss of vital assets. Years after return, few returnees have managed to become economically embedded and their needs are still as large as they were immediately after return.

An obvious sign of a failure to re-embed is the willingness to re-emigrate. The wish to re-emigrate differs between the returnees though. 59 % of the returnees would leave Armenia again if they had the opportunities to do so. 'Yes, [I would leave Armenia again] without thinking for a moment. For economic reasons, here you can not find a job' (Peter, 2007). Most returnees left Armenia with a temporary intention to earn money, send remittances and to return back after a few years when their personal financial situation had stabilized. If their economic situation in Armenia does not change and if they are not able to support their family their incitement to stay is small. Some returnees received health treatment abroad and see re-emigrating as the only way to recover or preserve their health. To suffer from not being able to pay for treatment and unstable health condition are other important reasons for wanting to leave Armenia again.

I only want to go back. I am going crazy here and I cry everyday. I cannot stay for another moment. I just want to be able to relax, take a bath, and live like a normal person. I lived there and I was completely satisfied. I saw the normal way of living, but the return affected us very negatively [...] I get crazy when I look at my children, my spouse, and the house (Lusine, 32, 30 August, 2007).

The larger part of the returnees would prefer to stay in Armenia if they had the means to support them selves and their family. Those who do not want to leave Armenia again often refer to their disappointment of Europe and the conditions they lived under as illegal immigrants or as asylum seekers.

I don't want to stay in my country but neither do I want to go as an asylum seeker. I would like to go as a student or to work but never ever again as an asylum seeker. Life as an asylum seeker there is too hard (Zara, 26, 26 August, 2007).

Several respondents mention how they felt emotionally and spiritually depressed in Europe because of the lack of social networks and meaningful economic and social activity. In Armenia, they suffer economically but have a richer social and spiritual life.

Although, several respondents mention that they would like to leave Armenia again in order to find employment or to study, it is noteworthy that few respondents are taking any concrete actions to realize their willingness of re-emigrate. While the practical obstacles to go abroad are caused by the lack of financial means, the lack of information on how to go about, and the small chances to get a legal permission to stay, several returnees also seem to have lost their motivation to take such concrete actions, a motivation they obviously had before. The loss of motivation seems to derive from the unwillingness to use the asylum system. Most respondents are thus focused on trying to get embedded in Armenia, whether they wish to do so or not. However, if the hard circumstances in Armenia do not change the necessity to support one's family is stronger than the reluctance to go through the asylum procedures again or try to leave irregularly. Migration for many returnees was and will, if they leave again, be a temporary livelihood strategy in order to support the family.

***Partial conclusion***

Most returnees meet economic ends today but they live in economic insecurity and run the risk of falling into deep poverty if unexpected costs befall the family. Economic insecurity is caused by unemployment, low salaries, and dependence on unstable allowances from friends or family and creates problems in daily life such as inability to pay for healthcare, gas, or university education. A few returnees are currently living under extreme insecure conditions and are concerned of becoming homeless in a near future. Additionally, some respondents suffer from frustration, stress, and depression due to unemployment and insecurity towards the future. The respondents who are economically well-embedded are predominantly employed or formal entrepreneurs who rely on their salary or revenues from businesses. The majority of the returnees would prefer to stay in Armenia if they had the means to support them selves and their family. However, if the hard circumstances in Armenia do not change they want to leave Armenia again.

**4.1.2 Social networks embeddedness**

Many of the friends I had I have lost and I have no contact with many of them [...] I don't think that they understand me. I think that I have a little bit different thinking now because I look at life a little bit differently than they do, maybe because I had many experiences there and here (Zara, 26, 27 September, 2007).

Armenia has poor social infrastructures; therefore, social networks are often the only source of economic as well as psychosocial support. Reliable social contacts function as a support network and facilitate the process of re-embeddedness. In times of economic and emotional insecurity, friends and family are often also the only references of stability. Not having such a support network is a great deficit in the ability to re-embed in Armenia. Embeddedness in a social network helps returnees both materially and emotionally and is this important for their economic as well as psycho-social embeddedness. Materially, friends and relatives, both in Armenia and abroad, have shown to be important for example in providing initial housing and for pre-return information about the reality which the returnee will face upon return. Having the right contacts are also often stressed as very important when looking for a job. A good example of how social contacts can facilitate embeddedness is told by a woman who managed to take a loan and start up a business with the help of her social network. The family of her husband pawned their house in order for their daughter in law to take a loan. The same person was later educated by friends in marmalade making. Today, the lady is running a marmalade business and is both economically and emotionally satisfied with life in Armenia.

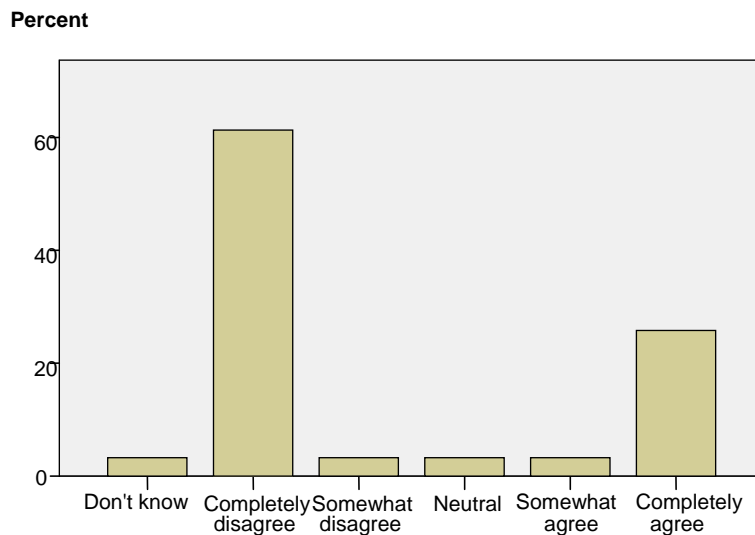
**Table 3.3. Score on social network embeddedness in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

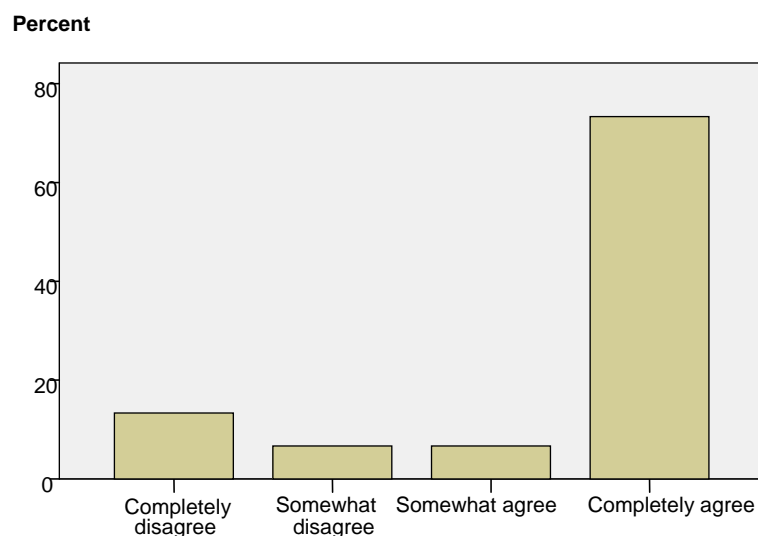
<b>Social networks embeddedness</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low (0-40)	11	34
Middle (41-70)	14	44
High (71 – 100)	7	22
<b>Total</b>	32	100

Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

Whereas the majority, 69 %, of the returnees thinks that they have enough social relations in Armenia, 22 % have a few but not enough social relations in Armenia. 6 % of the returnees do not have any social relations at all in Armenia. Often, these returnees suffer psychologically both from social insecurity and from the loss of contact with people in their former host country. The majority of the returnees, however, can not rely on their social networks for material needs (62 %). Often family and friends are not in the financial position to be able to help materially and if they do, the support is very sporadic. On an emotional level on the other hand, 75 % of the returnees report that their social networks help them to feel more at home. The majority of the returnees rely mainly on their families for emotional needs and secondary on friends. A large part of the returnees think that their social relations make them feel more at home in Armenia. Six respondents do not have social relations that make them feel more at home. These returnees also show a low level of psycho-social and economic embeddedness which suggest the importance of social networks for both psycho-social wellbeing and economic opportunities.

**Figure 3.2. Social relations help me with material needs in percentages of the total sample (n=32)**



**Figure 3.3. Social relations help me to feel more at home in percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

**Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007**

Among those well embedded in social networks (group three in table) are those who consider themselves to have enough social relations in Armenia. In group three, all returnees consider their social networks as reliable for material as well as emotional needs. In group two the majority rely on their social contacts for emotional needs but not for material needs but for emotional needs. In group one, no one rely on their social contacts for material needs, however, for emotional needs there are both those who can and those who can not rely on their social contacts.

For many people, social relations abroad are just as crucial as social contacts within Armenia. Several respondents made new friends in their host country, mainly with other Armenians, but also with locals or other asylum seekers. Others already had family in the host country with which they remain in contact. Transnational contacts have played an important role in the process of embeddedness. Whilst still abroad, several returnees received information from the Armenian community in their host country about the conditions and development in the home country as well as about the procedures, rights and obligations in the host country. This information was seen as very important both in the host country but also as a pre-return preparation for the conditions in Armenia. A few returnees also received financial support from their families abroad after return, but often very sporadically. Whereas 69 % of the returnees still are in contact with their friends and family abroad, only a few returnees still rely on transnational social networks for material or emotional needs. A number of returnees worry that they lack the financial capacity to have regular contact with their family and friends abroad.

The effect of the migration experience on returnees' relations with friends and family varies greatly. The majority of the returnees do not experience any direct obvious changes in their relations with people. They say to have been away for too short of a time to experience any changes in their social relations. There are cases, though, where the returnee feels that he or she is not able to socialize with people in the same way as before migration due to unemployment or psycho-social problems following from their migration experience. Several returnees who stayed abroad for a longer time experience that they adopted a different behavior and manner abroad and that they now find it difficult to identify with and to socialize with people in Armenia.

Of returnees, 56 % report that they suffer from traumatic experiences from their past and from their lives abroad. For some of them, this creates difficulties in trusting people.

After all these experiences, I can only rely on my family. I don't believe people anymore. I don't trust them anymore. It is not good, but I don't put trust in people' (Zara, 26, 27 September, 2007).

To not have enough social networks is for a few returnees a reason for wanting to re-migrate. A few returnees experience a positive change in their relations with people. They state that their experiences abroad and the hardships they had to deal with as asylums seekers or illegal immigrants made them stronger, more decisive and humble towards life and people. A number of returnees state that they have a more appreciative attitude towards Armenians now after having lived in another country. In some cases this resulted in better relations with their families.

### ***Partial Conclusion***

Family and friends often function as a support network for returnees upon their return in Armenia. Families and friends have shown be important in providing pre-return information, housing and emotional support. Especially the extended family, and to a lesser extent friends, are crucial for facilitating economic, social and psycho-social network embeddedness. Transnational social networks can function as an important source of support but are often difficult to maintain due to financial restrictions. The majority of the returnees consider themselves to have enough social relations in Armenia. These social networks are considered more reliable for emotional needs than for material needs. A number of returnees do not have a social networks to rely on which has a negatively affect the ability to re-embed. Among those considered well embedded on a social networks level are those who consider themselves to have enough social relations in Armenia and who can rely on their social contacts for material as well as emotional needs.

A number of returnees experience that their experience of having migrated abroad and returned back to Armenia have affected their relations with friends and family. A number of returnees find it difficult to identify with and thus to socialize with Armenians. A few returnees have migration related traumas which make it difficult for them to socialize with people. Others report that due to the hardships abroad they became more friendly and grateful which have positively influenced their relations with people in Armenia. For a number of returnees, the loss of employment due to migration and financial restrictions has reduced their ability to maintain social networks.

#### **4.1.3 Psycho-social embeddedness**

For me, it is better to live in Europe. I used to live there for a long time so I feel more integrated in the European society than in the Armenian, and I see myself as one of the Europeans (Susanna, 33, 17 October, 2007).

The absolute majority of the returnees, 97 %, returned to the place where they lived before migration. Yet, in many cases, returning back to Armenia involved a start-up process which not only included obvious things as finding housing and employment, but also an adjustment to the economic and social environment in Armenia. Returnees experience this process differently. A considerable number of returnees feel happy to be back in their native country where they have their family and friends and where they

speak the language and understand the culture. Neither do they experience any resentment from the society towards them as returnees. In fact, 38 % of the returnees experience that migrating abroad and returning back to Armenia affected the quality of their lives in a positive way. The positive impact on the life quality is almost exclusively experienced on a personal level. These returnees feel that they have grown as persons and that they have become more open-minded and sophisticated. Of the returnees, 56 % also state that they are safe enough in Armenia to live their daily lives without restrictions.

A considerable 22 % do not feel at home in Armenia on a personal level and find it difficult to re-embed on a psycho-social level. They experience difficulties to adjust to the living conditions and the culture and sense homesickness for their former host country. Additionally, 69 % of the returnees feel that their personalities changed while they were abroad and 59 % also think that Armenia as a country changed during the time they were abroad. Today, they have difficulties re-embedding in Armenia on a psycho-social level.

**Table 3.4. Score on psychosocial network embeddedness in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

<b>Psychosocial embeddedness</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Low (0-40)	6	19
Middle (41-70)	7	22
High (71 – 100)	20	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007**

Those psycho-socially well embedded often feel welcome and understood in Armenia and feel safe enough to live their daily life without restrictions. Additionally, these returnees often experience that people in the society are friendly towards them and perceive them as one of them. These experiences are more diversified within the other two groups (see table). Within group one and group two a majority of the returnees still suffer from traumatic experiences from the past.

Low psycho-social embeddedness among Armenian returnees is caused by three major reasons. First, economic hardship in Armenia, unemployment and inability to support family, as well as a lack of future prospects, creates stress and psycho-social instability. Due to economic vulnerability, 41 % of the returnees do not feel safe enough in Armenia to live their daily life without restrictions, another three % are ambivalent.

The second major reason for psycho-social instability derives from the returnee's experiences during migration, especially ill-treatment in the host country. A considerable 56 % of the returnees still suffer from stress related afflictions due to traumatic experiences during the migration cycle, often from the living conditions abroad. For 25 % of these returnees, their traumatic memories have worsened since return and 25 % are unable to live their daily life due to these traumatic experiences. For some returnees, the difficult circumstances abroad made them more tolerant to new ideas but a large part of the returnees who lived in asylum centres express how they felt emotionally depressed abroad, mainly because of their passive life as asylum seekers. Several returnees also express their resentment towards the way they were treated during the asylum procedure and in asylum centres and degrading and patronizing behaviour on the behalf of staff members at asylum centres and authorities have left many returnees with emotional scars that still bother them both emotionally and physically.

People who go to Europe usually want to find a lawful country [...] but we could not find law, only discrimination, lawlessness and chauvinism (Hasmik, 52, 16 September, 2007).

The third reason for psycho-social unrest derives from difficulties to adjust to Armenian life after having lived a considerable time abroad. 'I feel disgusted. Ok, it's my home country and I'm not allowed to say so but I don't agree with people here. They are too old fashioned' (Zara, 26, 26 August 2007). Problems to express identity and adjust on a personal level to the life in Armenia are also important reasons for wanting to migrate again.

A number of returnees further stress that they felt economically and socially secured in their former host country. In Armenia, they often feel lonely and insecure. 'I consider the workers at the Red Cross as my relatives [...] I remember them everyday and I want to see them and talk to them. I consider them as my relatives, not someone here in Armenia' (Armen, 52, 5 September, 2007). A number of returnees still hope to find a way to go to Europe again, but do not know where to turn or what to do. This creates a feeling of restlessness and difficulties to mentally settle down. Moreover, those returnees who have lost their hope of making a living abroad feel frustrated and disappointed.

From the research it is clear that the different levels of embeddedness are interrelated. For instance, embeddedness in a social network helps returnees both materially and emotionally. Several returnees though report that they feel socially isolated because of unemployment. They spend most time at home and can not afford to participate in any social and cultural activities. The loss of employment has reduced their social life and the isolation and passivity they are forced into affect their psycho-social well-being negatively.

My social life has changed now because I don't have a job [...] before I used to participate in all kinds of cultural performances and meetings all the time, but now when I don't work I don't do that anymore. It is difficult for us to just sit at home all the time. For months we have been sitting home like this (Hasmik, 52, 16 September, 2007).

A low level of economic embeddedness also has large impact on psycho-social and social network embeddedness. An example of this is given by several male returnees who complain that, because of their unemployment and their inability to support a family, they have lost respect in the eyes of others and this affects their self-esteem negatively.

Now some people think about me in a negative way because I am unemployed [...] I am nervous because I can neither work nor get any money, I want to work and earn my own money (Ruben, 40, 31 August, 2007).

### ***Partial conclusion***

A large part of the returnees feel psycho-socially relatively embedded in Armenia. They identify strongly with the Armenian society, culture and people and do not experience any resentment from the society towards them as returnees. On a personal level, however, a considerable number find it difficult to re-embed on a psycho-social level. Those who are psycho-socially well embedded often feel welcome and understood in Armenia and feel safe enough to live their daily life without restrictions. Additionally, these returnees often experience that people in the society are friendly towards them and perceive them as one of them. These experiences are more diversified within the other two groups. Low

psychosocial network embeddedness derives mainly from three sources. First, the economic hardships in Armenia, the inability to support family and a lack of future prospects creates stress and psycho-social instability among several returnees. A number of returnees still suffer from stress related afflictions and traumas from their life abroad. Psychological problems also derive from experiences during migration, especially stressful living conditions and degrading treatment in the host country. This will be further elaborated on below. Thirdly, several returnees feel that they changed a lot while living abroad. They are struggling with ‘homesickness’ for their former host country and are not able to adjust to Armenian life.

#### 4.1.4 Conclusions on embeddedness

The process of re-embedding in Armenia has appeared to be a long process which not only includes obvious things such as finding housing and employment. For those returnees who have been away for a long time, return also includes a re-activation of social networks and a learning process of how to get by in the Armenian society. The different dimensions of embeddedness are interlinked and strongly re-enforce one another. Each returnee has a unique story and the ability to re-embed varies extensively, as does the willingness to re-emigrate. On an aggregated level, a few general patterns can be seen though.

Economic embeddedness among Armenian returnees is in general very low. The majority of the returnees live in a severe economic insecurity and long after return, a large part of the returnees do not yet partake in formal employment. Most returnees consider themselves to have enough social relations in Armenia but also stress that their social contacts are more reliable for emotional needs than for material needs. A number of returnees do not have a social network to rely on which negatively affect their ability to re-embed. A large part of the returnees identify strongly with the Armenian society, culture and people and do not experience any resentment from the society towards them as returnees. On a personal level however, a considerable number find it difficult to re-embed on a psycho-social level. The economic insecurity, stressful living conditions and degrading treatment in the host country and difficulties to identify with Armenian society are reasons that make it difficult to adjust to the life in Armenia.

The larger part of the returnees would prefer to stay in Armenia if they had the means to support them selves and their family. If the hard circumstances that caused them to leave in the first place do not change, however, re-emigration is seen as the only option.

**Table 3.5. Reasons for wanting to leave Armenia in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

<b>Psychosocial network embeddedness</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Economic reasons	9	28
Identity reasons	3	9
Safety reasons	1	3
Medical reasons	3	9
Social networks reasons	2	6
Don't know	1	3
Other	1	3
Missing (no desire to leave)	12	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007**



## 4.2 Factors influencing embeddedness

The context in Armenia gives returnees certain opportunities and obstacles to re-embed. Yet, the extent to which returnees manage to re-embed in Armenia upon return varies greatly. In this research various hypotheses have been tested, both statistically and qualitatively, to identify the factors that influence returnee's ability to re-embed upon return. The identified factors can be categorised into three different groups: factors related to the individual characteristics of the returnee; experiences and events during the different stages in the migration cycle; and various types of assistance before, during and after return. The research also shows that the identified factors strongly re-enforce each other and that it is important to consider all set of factors to understand the influence on embeddedness.

### 4.2.1 Individual characteristics

There seems to be a small gender pattern in the process of embeddedness. Whereas the overall level of embeddedness among men and women as groups does not differ, the notions of masculinity and femininity colours the experiences of male and female returnees in a specific way. For instance, economically, both men and women struggle with hardships and unemployment. However, unemployment affects men and women slightly different. Several men, both returnees and non returnees, stress that to gain respect as a man, you need to work and support your family. Not having a job has a negative impact on self-esteem and is not seen as acceptable. Not being able to work abroad therefore affected male returnees negatively on a psychological level. In Armenia, they feel more useful in the sense that they at least are allowed to work and can actively show that they are trying their best to find employment. Whereas unemployed male returnees often are active in searching for a job, formal or informal, unemployed female returnees often stay at home and keep themselves busy with household tasks. Although, economically it is desirable for women to work they do not have the same gender based social pressure as men. The unemployed female returnees, however, suffer more from social isolation as a consequence of unemployment. One unemployed female returnee specifically mention that she keeps herself very busy during the days with household tasks but that it is very different from being employed and having a work to go to. Socially and psycho-socially she suffers a lot from not having a job. Relatively to male returnees, a larger number of female returnees also express personal difficulties to re-adjust to Armenian life.

Age is another category that influences the process of re-embedding. Older returnees who are not yet in their pension age often complain that it is difficult for them to find work in Armenia. Being considered old, combined with having been off the job market for some time makes it difficult for them to get a job. Moreover, several older returnees suffer from the inability to pay for necessary health care. Younger returnees also experience problems in finding employment. Additionally, several younger returnees are still looking for opportunities to go back to Europe resent the economic and socio-cultural restrictions they have compared to European young people. On an emotional level, young returnees therefore appear to have more difficulties in adjusting to the life in Armenia. Several of the older returnees identify strongly with Armenia and are psycho-socially well embedded. On the other hand, younger returnees put more hope in the possibility to initiate their own business and are more active in trying to find jobs on their own.

Ethnicity is not an issue for the majority of the returnees since they are ethnically Armenians and constitute the vast ethnical majority in the country. Three of the

respondents are refugees from Azerbaijan; however they are from Armenian heritage and consider Armenia to be their native land. One of the respondents has a Turkish father. On behalf of her Turkish background she has suffered from threats and ill treatments from her former husband's friends. This indicates that ethnic discrimination does exist in Armenia towards the small minority who are not considered ethnic Armenians.

The statistical analyses<sup>6</sup> show that returnees' with higher education are more economically embedded. However, this relationship seems to be a result of the fact that those with higher education often were better off economically before migrating. Currently, however, several highly educated returnees are unemployed and educational qualifications do not appear to make it easier to find employment. Since none of the returnees were employed in high level jobs abroad and thus have been without formal employment for a long time, their level of education does not affect their embeddedness as highly as would be expected.

Embeddedness is also influenced by the size of the household in which the returnee lives. Returnees who live in a big family appear to be more embedded on an economic and psycho-social level. Within a household, the household members support each other materially and emotionally which makes the returnees feel more socially embedded. A big family often creates a sense of security since the support network is stronger than for a small family. Smaller households often consist of older couples, sometimes living together with one of their adult children. These couples appear to have limited social networks and rely mainly on each other which make it more difficult for them to embed socially. Since connections and good friends are important sources for finding jobs, limited social networks can be negative in the search for a job.

#### **4.2.2 Migration cycle**

The migration cycle is here conceptualized as starting with the reason to migrate, including the experiences and conditions abroad, and extending to the experiences and circumstances surrounding the return. Events and experiences in all these stages have shown to influence migrants in ways that strongly affect their ability to re-embed upon return.

##### ***Reason to migrate***

Migrants leave their countries of origin for various reasons. The reasons that cause migration influence the returnees' capacity to re-embed. The quantitative analysis also indicates a statistical significant between the reason that caused migration and all three dimensions on embeddedness.

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 4 for an overall table with quantitative analysis.

**Table 3.6. Combined reasons to migrate in percentages in frequencies and percentages of the total sample (n=32)**

Armenia	Frequencies	Percentages
Conflict & fear	2	6
Economic	10	31
Economic & personal	6	19
Fear & (economic or personal)	1	3
Personal or family	13	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

In this research it is shown that those returnees who migrated for economic reasons or due to conflict related reasons are less embedded, economically, socially, and psycho-socially than those who migrated due to educational reasons, personal and family related reasons, or a personal desire to go abroad. This is the case for both those migrants who intended their migration to be temporary and those who migrated with a permanent intention.

For those who migrated with a temporary intention, their goal was often to earn money, send remittances and to return back after some years when their economic situation had been stabilized. A large number of returnees have a migration history where they before migrating paid a high amount of money for ticket and visa to go abroad. To afford the travel expenses, some returnees sold house and belongings or borrowed money from friends or family. In their former host country, few returnees were allowed to work and could therefore not save any money. The vast majority, 84 %, of returnees report that neither did they learn any new skills abroad which are useful for them in Armenia. Upon return, many of them experienced a situation where the economic situation in Armenia that made them leave had in the best scenario remained the same, and in the worse scenario become even worse. Those who migrated with a permanent intention had reasons to sell their houses and belongings before migrating. Upon return they do not have any basic assets and experience an economic degradation compared to before they migrated. Irrespective of whether the intention of migrating was permanent or temporary, not having accomplished the mission of improving their economic situation that caused migration in the first place, affected these returnees both economically and emotionally and have had negative impact on their ability to re-embed in Armenia, both on an economic and psycho-social level. For those who migrated due to educational reasons, personal and family related reasons, or a personal desire to go abroad, were often economically better off before migrating and the investment to migrate did not influence their economic situation after return as severe.

Those who migrated due to conflict and fear related reasons are also less embedded, economically, socially and psycho-socially, than those who migrated due to educational reasons, personal and family related reasons, or a personal desire to go abroad. The number of returnees who left on these reasons is too small to draw any general conclusions. Analyses show that the expectations of receiving a permission to stay in the host country negatively affect the returnees' ability to re-embed psycho-socially once they have to return. The significance of such a relationship is supported by the statistical analyses. Returnees who did not expect a permanent permission to stay saw it was a natural thing to return at some point and were less frustrated after return than returnees who expected to stay abroad permanently. Those returnees who migrated due to

conflict and fear all expected to receive a permanent permission to stay in the host country. This might explain their individual difficulties to re-embed psycho-socially. Additionally, those returnees who left Armenia due to conflict or fear related reasons are still struggling with traumatic experiences preceding migration. To some extent they still feel unprotected from the problems that caused them to leave which might explain why they are less psycho-socially embedded than those who migrated due to educational reasons, personal and family related reasons, or a personal desire to go abroad.

### ***Living conditions and social networks abroad***

A remarkable finding in this research is that whether someone lived as an asylum seeker in Europe has a strong impact all the levels of embeddedness. Various statistical as well as qualitative analyses show that living in an asylum centre abroad has a significant negative effect on the ability to re-embed in the country of return on all levels compared to migrants who did not apply for asylum. Those who lived with family or friends have also re-embedded more on an economic and psycho-social level than those who lived in asylum centres.

One hypothesis that was tested in this research to explain the difference in embeddedness between those who lived independently and those who lived in asylum centres was whether their opportunities to participate in the host country, to learn skills and/or to save money through work differ. Those returnees who lived independently, legally or illegally, in their former host country were indeed often more economically and socially active. All returnees who stayed abroad illegally did some jobs in the black market in their former host country, with the exception of one pregnant woman whose husband worked. Although the jobs were often sporadic, informal jobs, for which they were overqualified, the work did provide them with some money as well as some contacts. Their activeness and independence abroad have had a positive effect on their ability to initiate economic activity in Armenia. Most of these returnees have managed to initiate businesses or found employment in Armenia. Similar results were obvious in a study carried out by Black et al. on returnees returning to Bosnia and Kosovo. They found that return was more sustainable for those returnees who had had employment, training, or education in their former host country in the sense that they show less likelihood to re-migrate and had higher income levels (Black et al 2004).

Whether the returnees worked abroad also influenced whether they were able to save money and/or send back remittances. However, working abroad was not a condition to save and/or send back money. Saving money abroad appeared to be difficult, because of the unstable work possibilities and the high living costs abroad, especially for those who brought their children abroad. Additionally, the journey to go to Europe was often financed partly by borrowed money that had to be repaid. Only four returnees were thus able to save money while abroad. The ability to save money abroad also influenced returnees' economic situation after return. Of the four returnees who returned to Armenia with savings, three of them invested the money in businesses. Those 34 % of the returnees who send money to friends or relatives in Armenia while they were abroad only did so very sporadically and in small amounts that often only covered the daily needs of the recipient.

Those 41 % of the returnees who lived in asylum centres in their former host countries often lived more passive lives with fewer opportunities to partake in social and economic activities. The larger number of those returnees who lived in asylum centres report that they felt very frustrated of not being allowed to work or decide for themselves. To initiate migration in the first place requires courage and ambition. Whereas those returnees who lived independently in their host countries have maintained the ability to

take own initiatives many of those returnees who lived in asylum centres often lost this drive to take initiatives. 'Whatever I know before, I forgot there. I was only fed and that was all' (Liana, 53, 10 September, 2007).

Several returnees even experience the time in the asylum centres as a traumatic experience that caused them physical as well as psychological pain. 'We were lacking spiritual feeding there [...] we like to work, and be able to earn our own money, instead of just being given' (Hasmik, 52, 16 September, 2007). Several returned asylum seekers also complain that they had to accept patronizing and degrading treatment from the staff and authorities. The experiences from asylum life left a number of returnees with traumatic afflictions that they still suffer from.

The asylum procedure stress people. It is awful. We could become crazy after the interviews. We knew some people who got crazy after these interviews. Immigrants are really humiliated by the interviewers there. The reality is, we went there for a rescuing hand but instead ... we got stressed. My blood pressure went up to 270 ...The staff was so ignorant, starting with the director and down to the doctor and the nurses in the asylum centre. They need to leave their work. Every time I think about this I get upset (Hasmik, 52, 3 October, 2007).

The living conditions in the asylum centres are by several returnees also reported to be very destructive for social interaction. A number of the asylum centres in which the returnees used to live were situated far away from the city in areas isolated from the local citizens. Most returnees who lived as asylum seekers were moreover regularly transferred to new places and were never allowed to settle in one place.

When we were in one place we started to feel at home there, but then we had to go to another place. You never know where, you make friendships with somebody in one place, and then you have to leave them and go to another place [...] we had a feeling that they were playing with us. They never said that we would not get asylum and that we should go back. No they told us to wait a little bit, maybe it will come. We were just treated like animals [...] we didn't want them to keep us, we just wanted them to give us the chance to go out and work and take care of ourselves (Zara, 26, 26 August, 2007).

Those returnees who lived independently had greater opportunities to socialize with non-asylum seekers and people who had a more stable position in the host society and could therefore build up a social network that was useful both during their time abroad, but also after return. Their social contacts in the host country provided them with practical assistance upon arrival, shelter, and information on their rights and obligations in the host country. Several returnees who lacked useful social contacts in their former host country complain that they did not know about asylum procedures and did not get enough information and assistance abroad. This put them in the vulnerable position of not knowing their rights and obligations.

Returnees who had social networks in their former host country were also often indirectly assisted by them in their process of return. A number of returnees gained information from the Armenian community or Armenian friends in their host country about conditions and opportunities for them in Armenia. Their social contacts played an important role in preparing them for the reality in Armenia and they were thus not dependent on information from organisations, which has been accused for being inaccurate or incorrect. Realistic expectations about the conditions and the opportunities in the home country gives the returnee a chance to prepare him or herself for the real

economic and social reality in Armenia, which has to be shown positive for the ability to re-embed, both economically and socially. The lack or insufficiency of such information makes the process of re-embedding more difficult. The research shows that those who experienced the conditions in Armenia to be worse than they had expected have a harder time to embed on a both an economic and social level than those who knew beforehand what to expect.

The living conditions and the well being of migrants in the host country affect their lives long after return to Armenia. The absence from the labour market and the social and economic isolation of several those returnees who lived in asylum centres, and the patronizing treatment towards them, has negatively affected their ability to re-embed in Armenia, economically, socially and psycho-socially. There are exceptions though. A few returnees who lived in asylum centres managed to make contacts outside the asylum centre and felt really integrated in their host society. They lived active lives abroad that kept them energetic and independent. Upon return, they have shown a greater ability to re-embed economically.

### ***Conditions surrounding return***

Those who were illegally staying in the host country at the point of their return have embedded better on a psycho-social level as compared to those who were still in the asylum procedure at the point of their return. This finding is supported by quantitative analyses which indicate a significant positive relationship between having lived illegally in the host country and psycho-social embeddedness. The statistical analyses also show that those returnees who returned under strong pressure from authorities or because of the lack of opportunities in the host country are less embedded than those returnees who had more influence over the decision to return. Similar results were found in a study on return migration to Balkan (Black, Gent 2005). They found that returnees who returned voluntary were less likely to express a desire to leave again and had higher income levels.

Since the majority of the asylum seekers returned without having accomplished their intention of working and earning money in the host country return, return was both practically and emotionally not a desirable option. Instead, several former asylum seekers emphasise that their time in the asylum centres were lost time. 'We paid so much money for nothing; we paid money for getting imprisoned in the asylum centre' (Hasmik, 52, 3 October, 2007). The pressure from the authorities, and the lack of opportunities in the host country forced them to return at a point in time when they were not economically and psychologically prepared to start up a life in Armenia.

Those who lived illegally appeared to have had a greater influence over when to return, in the sense that the authorities did not have directly control their decision to return. Although they also often left because of the lack of opportunities there was a small, but significant, degree of voluntariness in their decision to return, which made them more psychologically prepared. This came to have a positive impact on their ability to re-embed socially and psycho-socially upon return. In addition, the research shows that those returnees who think that gained something from having migrated often look more positively upon their migration experience. For instance, returnees who received healthcare abroad often value their migration experiences positively. This living illegally in their host country remained more economically and socially active during their migration time and did not considered the time spend abroad as lost time. Thus, the return was for them less of a failure than for those asylum seekers who returned without any assets or valuable skills. These findings are also supported by a previous study carried out by IOM in 2003 on the return and re-integration from the Netherlands of (rejected) asylum seekers from the Southern Caucasian states, Belarus, The Russian Federation and

Ukraine. The IOM study suggests that the willingness to return among irregular migrants is greater than among (rejected) asylum seekers. According to the IOM study, rejected asylum seekers foresee more problems upon return and are therefore more reluctant to return (IOM 2003:8). This also explains the findings in the IOM study that asylum seekers in general indicated a greater need of various types of reintegration assistance, such as job counselling, health assistance, psychological aid and help in finding adequate housing. Irregular migrants particularly expressed an interest in economic reintegration assistance and were much less interested in other types of assistance (IOM 2003:8).

Not surprisingly, there is a significant negative relationship between the number of years the returnee spent abroad and his or her psycho-social and social network embeddedness. Returnees who stayed away built up a life in their host country, both in an economic, social, and psycho-social way. A number of these returnees therefore experienced difficulties adjusting to Armenian conditions and culture. Returnees whose children lived abroad for a long time also report that their children have difficulties adjusting to the life in Armenia. For them, return also included a learning process of how to get by in the Armenian society and a re-activation of social networks.

Psychologically, we were not prepared. It was very hard the first time in Yerevan because the city had changed a lot ... we had problems because we were thinking like in Switzerland, it was very difficult to have connections with people, friends and we also had problems with our children (Movses, 37, 30 September, 2007).

How this process further developed was influenced by the experiences of the returnees after return. For instance if they were able to take up former social relations, if they could find suitable housing and a job, and if there were any (sudden) difficulties in the family, such the illness or death of a close relative. It appears in the statistical analyses that whilst the number of months back in Armenia has a small positive influence on the economic embeddedness, the number of months back has a small negative influence on social network embeddedness. This also indicates that embeddedness is not a linear process. When experiences after return were negative, initial happiness over return sometimes changed into feelings of frustration over return. In opposite, if experiences after return were positive, initial feelings of frustration sometimes developed into a positive feeling of being at home. For those returnees who returned recently this is yet to be shown.

Concluding, the living conditions abroad and the well being of migrants in the host country strongly affect their ability to re-embed in Armenia. To live an economically and socially active life in the host country has a positive effect on the ability to initiate economic activity in Armenia and to re-embed on all levels. Those returnees who lived in asylum centres had fewer opportunities to partake in social and economic activities which negatively affected their ability to re-embed in Armenia. A realistic expectation about the conditions and the opportunities in Armenia is moreover positive for the ability to re-embed, both economically and socially. Social networks are important for providing this information. If returnees themselves took the decision to return, without pressure from authorities and not as a response to the lack of opportunities in the host country, they were more emotionally, and sometimes economically, prepared and have shown greater abilities to re-embed upon return. Finally, for returnees who have been abroad for a long time, return often included a learning process of how to get by in the Armenian society and a re-activation of social networks. The process of embeddedness is not linear and initial contentment over return can be changed to frustration if the experiences after return do not live up to the returnees' expectations. Similarly, initial frustration over return can change into contentment if the returnee has positive experiences upon return.

### 4.2.3 Assistance

Included in this research were mainly returnees who were assisted by an organisation before, during or after their return. The type and scope of provided assistance varied greatly among them. Assistance is naturally a small part of the whole migration cycle. It can not change the ways previous events and experiences affected the returnee. However, potentially, it can remove initial obstacles and stimulate the embeddedness process for returnees upon return.

Depending on the returnees individual obstacles upon return, different types of assistance are needed in order to facilitate the return and re-embeddedness process. Initial obstacles that need to be solved are often provision of housing and medication. Several returnees received assistance from organisations to solve such immediate needs upon return but the type and scope of assistance looked very different depending on the return agency which they were supported by. The most common forms of assistance were payment of rent for a one-year period, payment for medical costs for a short period, and non-monetary material assistance, such as household devices and small reparations of houses. The majority of the assisted returnees think that the assistance they received responded to their needs and that the assistance fully or partially removed their obstacles to return. A little less than 50 % also think that the assistance they received made it easier to return, to build up their lives and feel at home again. Even if the assistance given did not have any major impact on their lives, the assistance did solve a few of their most urgent and immediate needs.

Assistance can and has been provided in different stages of the return, including before, during and after return. The absolute majority of the returnees think that assistance is most important after return. This is also the stage where assistance has shown to have most effect as those returnees assisted by NGOs after their return are more embedded on a social network and psycho-social level than those who did not receive assistance after return, this is especially the case for those who received assistance in starting up a business. These relationships between assistance after return from NGOs and embeddedness both on a social network and a psycho-social level are also statistically significant.

Not all types of assistance after return had this positive impact on embeddedness though. The research shows that material assistance, in the amount and form it was given, did not have an impact on embeddedness. Rather, statistically it is shown that those returnees who have received material assistance are worse off economically than those who did not receive material assistance. One reason is of course that those who received material assistance upon return often were in need of immediate assistance.

31 % of the returnees received assistance in setting up a business. Returnees who received assistance in setting up a business are relatively more economically embedded than those who received other types of assistance. A relationship also supported by statistical analyses. Although the generated income was small and difficult to survive on, a few returnees today run fairly stable businesses. One of the returnees however, has not been able to repay the loan and is afraid of having to sell off his business. Interestingly, there is also a significant statistical relationship between having received business assistance and psycho-social and social network embeddedness. Those returnees who run their own business also appear to have a more hopeful view of their future. These findings indicate the interrelatedness of the various levels of embeddedness.

Importantly to note as well is that the success of their economic embeddedness and the contribution of the business assistance were always related to the returnees' access to additional economic and social capital. In the cases where the returnees have managed to set up a business it was always with the help of own savings or assistance



from family. The main contribution of the business assistance was that it gave returnees more possibilities to invest in an enterprise and they felt more confident after return. These findings show that business assistance can contribute to embeddedness in combination with social capital and an additional financial basis.

The findings should also be viewed with some precaution. The respondents who received business assistance were all contacted by the organisations that assisted them. The fact that the organisations are still in contact with their beneficiaries indicates that they are still running a business. In cases where the beneficiaries have not managed to use the loan properly or failed to sustain their business, their contact with the organisation is often broken. Starting up a business with loaned money is also paired with a great insecurity and it is often emphasised that the money received or borrowed is sufficient only to start a business but not to run it. Returnees who do not have such additional capital social and economic capital therefore need more information and guidance in setting up a business.

Several returnees also emphasise the relevance of assistance before return, especially in the form of information about the opportunities in Armenia and in the decision-making to return. Several returnees stress that without the information about conditions and opportunities in Armenia that they got from friends and acquaintances they would not have known what to do upon return in Armenia. Those returnees who received assistance from family and friends before return in these fields were better informed and therefore knew what to expect from the life upon return. They also remained in contact with Armenia whilst abroad and are today socially more embedded than those who did not receive assistance from friends and family before return. The positive impact of receiving assistance from friends and family on social network embeddedness is also statistically significant.

Several returnees stress the importance of material and psycho-social assistance upon return, especially for those returnees who do not have a social network to rely on or who have serious immediate needs to be solved, such as housing or health issues. One returnee emphasise that if he would not have gotten any assistance after return he would have had to stay on the streets. Yet, several returnees stress that this type of immediate short-term assistance was only sufficient for a short period and often lacked a long-term vision. Therefore, it had limited influence on their ability to re-embed.

There are also cases where the returnee after a period of time regretted the ways the immediate assistance was spent. Immediately upon return they were not able to make accurate considerations and priorities. Their own need assessment after a couple of months would look different than immediately after return. One returnee was suggested by the assisting organisation to start up a business. At the time, she did not know how to initiate a business and she experienced that she was not properly informed about the procedures and the variety of possibilities and opportunities. Therefore, she chose to have her rent paid for one year instead. Today, she regrets it and would have preferred to have invested the money in a business. Several returnees indicate that if assistance is to promote embeddedness it has to be given in ways that enable them to stand on his or her own feet. Examples of such assistance are assistance in finding employment and in setting up a business.

Assistance before and during return, in the ways it was provided by NGOs or governments, did not have an effect on the returnees' ability to re-embed. Rather t, statistical analyses indicate that those returnees who were assisted during their return are less embedded on all levels than those who did not receive assistance before or during return. There is no reason to believe that assistance before return has a negative influence on embeddedness. Neither can we conclude that those returnees who received assistance

before their return were more economically vulnerable before return than those who received assistance during or after return. The reasons are two folded. First, when taking into account the migration history of those who did and those who did not receive assistance before or during return, it appears that all but one of those returnees who did not receive assistance before or during return worked while they were abroad. Of those who received assistance before or during their return no one worked in their former host country. Those who worked abroad have been more successful initiating businesses or in finding employment. These findings shows that whether someone was socially and economically active in their former host country is more important for their ability to re-embed economically upon return than whether they received assistance before and during return.

The other reason lies in the structure of the assistance. Assistance as it was given before and during return only facilitated the actual physical return through payment for ticket, transport to the airport and a small sum of pocket money and did not have any effect their ability to re-embed in Armenia. Although pocket money were only intended to cover a few of the initial needs of the returnee upon return, and can thus not be considered to having failed its attention, the amount received was considered sarcastically small by those returnees who experienced a lot of obstacles upon return. There are also returnees who do not consider themselves to have been assisted, although they would fall under the category of having been assisted. A number of returnees specifically emphasise that they benefited from all the assistance they got but because they could not work abroad, they are yet not able to stand on their own feet and to re-embed economically in Armenia.

Another important factor is that a number of those returnees who were assisted before or during return experienced that they were not accurately informed about their opportunities in the country of return. Information given by host governments and organisations in the host country was by a few returnees reported to be inaccurate or insufficient in preparing them for the conditions in Armenia. Upon return this created disappointment and frustration. A number of returnees also experienced that upon return they did not get the assistance they had been promised. Either the assistance did not meet the obstacles they had to deal with or the promised assistance was not provided at all. In a few cases, returnees are still awaiting promised assistance and are reluctant to accept that they will not receive more assistance. This created a situation of frustration which made them unwilling to initiate something on their own. It is difficult to judge, whether this disappointment derives from inaccurate and/or incorrect information from the organisations providing the information or from a misinterpretation of the information by the returnees themselves. However, from interviews with various stakeholders in the field it appears that the obstacles returnees face upon return is not always recognized. Additionally, there is limited and sometimes no awareness among the various stakeholders of available assistance and ongoing projects for returnees in Armenia.

Several returnees specifically stress the need for psychological, practical and informational assistance in the host country upon arrival and long before return. Abroad, several returnees felt a lack of information on their rights and opportunities in the host country which limited their ability to make the right decisions about whether to stay or return. Important to note is that there is no indication that returnees benefit more from assistance if they themselves took the initiative to receive it.

Concluding, the impact of assistance on embeddedness was shown to be strongly conditioned. Assistance was more effective in cases where the returnee was economically and socially active in his or her host country in cases. In cases where the living conditions in the host country prevented the returnee from engaging in social and economic activity

and/or when return was strongly enforced upon the returnee by the authorities, the returnees have shown to have reached a low degree of embeddedness upon return in Armenia, irregardless of whether they were provided with assistance or not. In cases where the returnee was economically and socially active in the host country and where the returnee had correct information about their opportunities upon return, the provision of return and re-integration assistance facilitated the returnee in ways which reduced their obstacles upon return and supported their re-embeddedness process. The impact of assistance on embeddedness was also shown to be an effect of the structure and content of the assistance. Assistance given after return had an impact on embeddedness if given in ways that stimulated economic activity. Other types of assistance remove some of their immediate obstacles upon return but due to the lack of continuation and long term vision had limited long term effect on their embeddedness process. Assistance before and during return was stressed as important but was given in ways that merely facilitated the physical return without stimulating embeddedness. Accurate information in the host country about the returnees' opportunities in Armenia was shown to be essential to prepare the returnees for the real circumstances in Armenia. Unfortunately, information provided by organisations or host governments often appeared to be inaccurate or insufficient.

#### **4.2.4 Conclusions on factors influencing embeddedness**

A major conclusion from the research is that events and experiences throughout the migration cycle, especially returnees' social and economic activity in the host country, affect their ability to re-embed in Armenia upon return. Many of the returnees who lived in asylum centres were economically and socially isolated during their stay abroad. Their absence from the labour market and their lack of social and cultural stimulation has negatively affected their abilities to re-embed upon return in Armenia. Those returnees who lived independently in their former host countries, who worked or were socially active have shown greater abilities to initiate businesses, find employment and re-embed on all levels upon return in Armenia. These findings are crucial and show that the policies and behaviour of host country related institutions had a great effect on the life of returnees long after their return to Armenia.

Assistance appeared to have a limited impact on the embeddedness of returnees. The reasons for this lie both in the content and structure of the assistance itself but are also dependent on the conditions under which assistance was given. Assistance after return showed to have a positive impact on embeddedness if given in ways that stimulated economic activity. Other types of non-monetary material assistance removed some immediate obstacles but had limited effect on the embeddedness process. Furthermore, assistance given by organisation before and during return, such as payment for ticket, transportation to airport and pocket money were appreciated by the returnees but had no impact on embeddedness. In the cases where assistance had a positive outcome on embeddedness it was always in addition to other elements such as economic and social activity abroad, strong social networks and personal savings. In cases where the returnee was economically and socially active in his or her host country, assistance was more effective. If the returnee were socially and economically isolated in their former host countries, if return was strongly enforced by the authorities against the will of the returnee, or if the returnee was insufficiently prepared for the conditions in the home country, assistance did not have an effect on their ability to re-embed upon return in Armenia.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

Following a strong focus on the return of (rejected) asylum seekers and irregular migrants in most European countries, many migrants will be returning back to their native countries in the years to come. Return migration is often seen as the end of the migration cycle in which migrants return back to their homelands. In reality, returnees often face difficulties in rebuilding their lives and in adjusting to the new circumstances upon return. Acknowledging this, attention to different types of return and re-integration programmes in both Europe and Armenia is increasing. Yet, there are few systematic monitoring studies of ongoing assisted return programmes or in-depth investigations on return migration and the specific knowledge on return of (rejected) asylum seekers and irregular migrants to Armenia is almost non-existing. This research attempts to help fill this research gap. The main question developed for this purpose is: *Which factors influence the process of re-embeddedness of involuntary returning ex-refugees, rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants and what is the role of assistance herein?* Below the concluding results from the research are presented, followed by recommendations to stakeholders involved in return migration.

### 5.1 Conclusions

The concept of embeddedness refers to an individual finding his/her position in society and feeling a sense of belonging to, and participating in, that society. In this study, embeddedness consists of three dimensions; economic, social networks, and psycho-social embeddedness. The context in Armenia gives returnees certain opportunities and obstacles to re-embed. Yet, the extent to which returnees manage to re-embed in Armenia upon return varies greatly. In this research various hypotheses were tested, both statistically and qualitatively, to identify the factors that influence returnees' ability to re-embed upon return. The identified factors can be categorised into three different groups: factors related to the individual characteristics of the returnee; experiences and events during the migration cycle; and assistance before, during and after return. These different factors were shown to be strongly interrelated in the way they influence embeddedness. Especially returnees' experiences abroad affect them in ways that have strong implications on their ability to re-embed in Armenia.

Whilst a large part of the returnees undertook migration as a livelihood strategy with the intention of earning money abroad and to eventually return to Armenia when their financial situation had stabilized, few returnees experience that migration had any major impact on the quality of their lives. In their former host country, few returnees were allowed to work and could therefore not save any money. The vast majority of returnees report that they did not learn any new skills abroad which are useful for them in Armenia. Upon return, they experienced a situation where the economic situation in Armenia that made them leave had in the best scenario remained the same, and in the worst scenario become even worse. Irrespective of whether the intention of migrating was permanent or temporary, being pressured to return, when not having accomplished the mission of improving their economic situation, affected these returnees negatively, both economically and psycho-socially. Returnees who used to live illegally appeared to have had a greater influence over when to return than those who lived in asylum centres. Although they often returned because of the lack of opportunities in the host country, there was a small, but significant, degree of voluntariness in their decision to return, which made them more psychologically prepared.

Returnees who lived in asylum centres often also lived more passive lives and had fewer opportunities to partake in social and economic activities than those who lived independently or with family or friends. Their absence from the labour market and their lack of social and cultural stimulation has negatively affected their abilities to re-embed upon return in Armenia. Those returnees who lived independently in their former host countries, who worked or were socially active have shown greater abilities to initiate businesses, find employment and re-embed on all levels upon return in Armenia.

The current embeddedness situation among returnees varies greatly. The research shows that return often includes the re-building of a livelihood, learning process of how to get by in the Armenian society, and a re-activation of social networks, especially for returnees who have been abroad for a long time.

The majority of the returnees struggle with meeting daily needs and several returnees can not pay for necessary healthcare. Unemployment levels among the returnees after their return are higher than before migration, which do not only create economic problems but also frustration, stress, and social isolation. Whereas a few returnees live under extreme insecure conditions and are worried of becoming homeless in a near future, most returnees meet economic ends today but run the risk of falling into deep poverty if unexpected costs befall the family.

Social networks, in Armenia as well as abroad, have been shown to be crucial in building up a life in Armenia upon return, both economically and psycho-socially. For some returnees, migration affected their social relations negatively in the sense that they have difficulties trusting people or relating to people in Armenia. The majority of the returnees consider themselves to have enough social relations in Armenia but stress that their social contacts are more reliable for emotional needs than for economic needs. A few returnees rely on family and friends abroad for material and emotional support but such relations are difficult to maintain due to financial restrictions. A number of returnees do not have any social contacts in Armenia which make them economically and psycho-socially vulnerable.

Returnees are often proud of their country and feel emotionally attached to Armenia. Whilst hardly any returnees experience resentment from the society towards them as returnees, several returnees experience difficulties in finding themselves at ease in the Armenian society and feel attached to their former host country. A considerable number of returnees are psychologically unstable due to economic insecurity, traumatic experiences abroad or difficulties relating to the Armenian society. Knowing the difficulties of being a migrant in Europe, the majority of the returnees are willing to stay in Armenia if they can support their family. However, if the problems that caused them to migrate in the first place do not change, the majority of the returnees would leave Armenia again if they had the opportunities to do so.

Assistance after return is considered most important by the returnees themselves. This is also the stage in which assistance, in the way it was provided by organisations and governments, was shown to have greatest impact on embeddedness. However, whether assistance influenced embeddedness was shown to be strongly dependent on both the content and structure of the assistance itself but also on the conditions under which assistance was given.

Assistance after return showed to have a positive impact on embeddedness if given in ways that stimulated economic activity. Other types of non-monetary material assistance removed some immediate obstacles but had limited effect on the embeddedness process. Assistance given by organisations before and during returns, such as payment for ticket, transportation to airport and pocket money were appreciated by the returnees but had no impact on embeddedness. In the cases where assistance had a

positive outcome on embeddedness it was always in addition to other elements such as economic and social activity abroad, strong social networks and personal savings. If the returnee was socially and economically isolated in the former host country, if return was strongly enforced by the authorities against the will of the returnee, or if the returnee was insufficiently prepared for the conditions in the home country, assistance did not have an affect on their ability to re-embed upon return in Armenia. These findings show that the policies and behaviour of host country related institutions had a great effect on the life of returnees long after their return to Armenia.

## 5.2 Recommendations

- *Take a more critical stance towards asylum policies that prevent asylum seekers from engaging economically and socially in their host country.*

The influence of assistance on the process of embeddedness appeared to be strongly conditioned. Assistance has largest impact on embeddedness if the returnee was economically and socially active in his or her former host country. If the returnee was economically and socially isolated in the host country, assistance has limited impact on embeddedness. If return migration and assistance herein is to be supported and financed it is therefore important to promote migrant and asylum related policies in host countries that do not contradict returnees' abilities to re-embed, irrespective of any legal responsibility to monitor the situation of returnees.

- *Invest in the well-being of migrants and asylum seekers in host countries.*

The process of embeddedness appeared to be strongly related to the returnees' experiences in the host countries. To create opportunities for asylum seekers to engage in activities that stimulate their economic and social participation in the host country can have a stronger long-term effect than current return assistance have shown to have.

- *Link return assistance that merely facilitates the physical return to assistance after return that aims at stimulating the returnees' economical activity in order to stimulate embeddedness and endorse sustainable return.*

The research findings indicate the importance of distinguishing between return assistance, such as arranging official documents, transport and tickets, which simply facilitate the return in itself, and assistance that stimulate the re-embeddedness of the returnee in their country of return. Merely facilitating the physical return does not stimulate embeddedness and can only be supported if return is fully voluntary. Instead, such assistance runs the risk of facilitating returns without providing the returnee with realistic opportunities to make a living in their country of return.

- *Invest in capacity building in the countries of return and stimulate cooperation between organisations and institutions in the countries of return..*

Assistance is naturally a small part the migration cycle and most organisations concerned with return and re-integration assistance has a limited budget. Therefore it is crucial to consider ways to use a small amount of money in a way that most efficiently stimulate embeddedness. This may involve a stronger focus on investment in the capacity and efficiency of organisations in the countries of return. One crucial element is to enhance cooperation between institutions and organisations in the country of return to avoid parallel projects and initiatives.

- *Create awareness among illegal immigrants and asylum seekers who have been abroad for a considerable time about their chances and opportunities in both the host and the home country.*

The research shows that returnees have greater abilities to re-embed in their countries of return if they were prepared for the living conditions upon return and if the decision to return involved a degree of voluntariness. Assistance in the host country must give a *realistic* picture of the *specific individual's* chances and opportunities both in the host and in the home country. Informational assistance could be improved by assessing the *individual* returnee's opportunities on the local labour market.

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## Appendix I: Individual characteristics and migration history of respondents

<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date(s) interview</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Left</b>	<b>Host Country</b>	<b>Back</b>	<b>Assisted by</b>
1	Zara	26 August and 27 September	woman	26	engaged	2001	Netherlands	2004	IOM Netherlands; COA
2	Alvina	27 August	woman	74	married	2001	Netherlands	2001	Maatwerk
3	Anna	27 August	woman	57	married	2006	France	2006	Maatwerk
4	Lusine	30 August	woman	32	married	2000	Netherlands/ Belgium	2004	Caritas Belgium
5	Ruben	31 August	man	40	married	2000	Netherlands	2004	Maatwerk
6	Armen	31 August and 5 September	man	52	single	2004	France/ Belgium	2006	Red Cross; Caritas Belgium
7	Armine	3 September	woman	72	widow	1999	Netherlands/ Belgium	2006	Caritas Belgium
8	Aram	5 September and 2 October	man	43	married	1996	Germany	2004	No one
9	Elena	5 September	woman	25	married	2000	Poland	2005	No one
10	Gagik	7 September and 1 October	man	36	married	2005	France	2007	Caritas Belgium
11	Marina	7 September	woman	57	divorced	2005	Netherlands	2006	Caritas Belgium
12	Ruzanna	9 September	woman	35	widow	2005	Belgium	2007	Caritas Belgium
13	Liana	10 September	woman	53	widow	2004	Belgium	2005	Caritas Belgium
14	Magda	10 September	woman	52	divorced	1998	Belgium	2006	Caritas Belgium
15	Irina	12 September	woman	45	widow	2006	Belgium	2007	Caritas Belgium
16	Lana	13 September	woman	33	divorced	2005	Belgium	2007	Caritas Belgium; Protestant Centre; IOM
17	Hasmik	16 September and 3 October	woman	52	married	2006	Belgium	2007	Caritas Belgium
19	Movses	20 September and 30 September	man	37	married	1999	Netherlands/ France/ Switzerland	2005	Swiss Government/ Church
20	Eduard	21 September	man	50	married	1990	Germany	1997	No one
21	Gohar	27 September	man	33	married	1999	Germany	2000	No one
23	Svetlana	30 September	woman	32	married	2003	Switzerland	2005	Swiss Government/ Church
24	Victor	2 October	man	26	single	2003	Germany	2007	Caritas Belgium;

Return Migration to Armenia

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									IOM
25	Ashot	4 October	man	45	married	2003	Spain	2006	Caritas Belgium
26	Tatiana	5 October	woman	47	married	2002	Germany	2004	No one
27	Vanya	15 October	woman	30	married	1999	Spain	2000	No one
28	Tamara	16 October	woman	54	married	2005	Belgium	2006	Caritas Belgium
29	Susanna	17 October	woman	33	married	2000	Belgium	2002	Caritas Belgium
30	Diana	17 October	woman	75	widow	2000	Belgium	2005	Caritas Belgium
31	Vladimir	18 October	man	40	married	2004	France	2006	FFAD
32	Mikael	18 October	man	30	married	2006	France	2006	FFAD
33	Narek	19 October	man	60	married	2005	France	2007	FFAD
34	Pegor	20 October	man	27	married	2005	France	2007	FFAD

## Appendix II: List of interviewed organisations and stakeholders in the return and reintegration process

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Type of work (in relation to refugees/returnees)</b>
Chobanyan Chobanyan	Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration	Leading specialist	Responsible institution for refugee issues, policy makers in the migration field and providers of return assistance
Victoria Hovhanisyan	Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration	Consultant of "The Return Assistance Program for Armenian Nationals from Europe and CIS countries" Program	Responsible institution for refugee issues, policy makers in the migration field and providers of return assistance
Hambardzum Abrahamyan	Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration	Chef specialist at the Migration Agency of the Ministry of Territorial Administration	Responsible institution for refugee issues, policy makers in the migration field and providers of return assistance
Prof. Gevorg Poghosyan	Armenian Sociological Association	President of the Armenian Association of Sociologists	Prominent writer on migration issues within an Armenian context
Tigranuhi Tarakhchian	Armenian Caritas	Project manager	Return and re-integration assistance
Zaruhi Tonoyan	EURASIA foundation	Program officer	Implementing Migration and Return Resource Centres targetting returnees and potential migrants
Armen Ayvazyan	French Armenian Development Foundation	Project Director	Return and re-integration assistance
Illona Ter-Minasyan	International Organisation of Migration	Head of office	Return and re-integration assistance for 'voluntary' returnees returning from Europe
Ph.D. Khachatur Kazazyan	International Organisation of Migration	Program manager for micro loan project	Micro-credit loans for vulnerble groups including returnees
Paruyr Amirjanyan	International Centre for Human Development	Head of project implementation unit	Awareness raising project on illegal migration, provision of training for returnees, aim to establish an institute for re-integration assistance
Bababyan Ovsanna	OSCE	National Associate Program Officer Democratization Program	Leading NGO and publisher on labor migration in an Armenian context

## Appendix III: Participation in migration related events

<b>Event</b>	<b>Organizer(s)</b>	<b>My role</b>
Workshop on Adult Education and Intercultural dialogue at the Crossroads of the Millennium	Tempus	Speaker on the topic of return migration to Armenia
TV interview for an awareness raising project on the topic of return migration to Armenia	International Centre for Human Development; British Council; the Armenian Migration Agency	Speaker on the topic of return migration to Armenia
Radio interview on the topic of return migration to Armenia and return assistance in Armenia	Unknown radio channel	Speaker on the topic of return migration to Armenia and return assistance in Armenia

## Appendix IV: Regression analyses

Factors	Economic embeddedness			Social Networks embeddedness			Psycho-social embeddedness		
	Constant	Coefficient B (*sig)	R square	Constant	Coefficient B (*sig)	R square	Constant	Coefficient B (*sig)	R square
<b>Assistance</b>									
Received assistance	62,500	-16,883 (*0,357)	0,028	41,250	11,825 (*0,540)	0,013	79,356	-11,793 (*0,573)	0,011
Assistance NGO Number of times	49,575	-0,830 (*0,575)	0,000	49,963	0,674 (*0,664)	0,007	69,013	-0,204 (*0,904)	0,010
Assistance NGO or not	53,800	-8,448 (*0,491)	0,001	41,583	12,792 (*0,319)	0,000	78,229	-11,768 (*0,398)	0,001
Assistance host government Number of times	48,014	-0,998 (*0,565)	0,131	53,866	-1,147 (*0,528)	0,005	68,876	-0,428 (*0,829)	0,019
Assistance host or not	52,591	-18,941 (*0,042)	0,002	55,966	-12,586 (*0,224)	0,010	70,990	-8,607 (*0,430)	0,016
Assistance home government or not	47,500	-26,500 (*0,298)	0,036	53,222	-28,222 (*0,290)	0,001	67,827	15,127 (*0,604)	0,003
Assistance institution	54,438	-1,593 (*0,271)	0,000	53,517	-0,247 (*0,872)	0,018	70,497	-0,451 (*0,786)	0,000
Assistance institution or not	55,333	-9,557 (*0,532)	-9,557	35,833	18,244 (*0,252)	0,004	81,203	-14,237 (*0,412)	0,000
Assistance family/friends Number of times	42,185	3,799 (*0,223)	0,000	48,533	3,082 (*0,351)	0,007	67,844	0,384 (*0,914)	0,000
Assistance family/friends or not	46,333	0,367 (*0,943)	0,004	50,089	4,053 (*0,671)	0,003	67,183	2,102 (*0,836)	0,001
Financial assistance	60,208	-15,470 (*0,247)	-0,126	36,563	18,083 (*0,196)	0,000	64,209	4,675 (*0,761)	0,005
Conditional financial assistance	60,208	-15,470 (*0,247)	0,034	36,563	18,083 (*0,196)	0,010	64,209	4,675 (*0,761)	0,010
Business assistance	41,492	16,574 (**0,078)	0,061	46,746	17,254 (**0,082)	0,006	61,637	21,320 (**0,04)	0,006
Non-material labour market assistance	43,494	25,423 (**0,052)	0,008	52,330	-0,143 (*0,992)	0,008	66,665	13,082 (*0,392)	0,006
Non material information assistance	52,519	-8,134 (*0,411)	0,006	51,806	0,713 (*0,946)	0,000	74,637	-8,817 (*0,433)	0,002
Other non material assistance	63,833	-21,967 (*0,035)	0,017	53,929	-2,088 (*0,854)	0,042	81,230	-16,550 (*0,172)	0,016
Psycho social or medical	44,362	8,212 (*0,406)	0,000	53,428	-3,845 (*0,714)	0,008	70,035	-6,170 (*0,584)	0,000

## Return Migration to Armenia

<b>assistance</b>										
<b>Assistance before return from NGO</b>	51,903	-8,369 (*0,361)	0,028	47,326	8,134 (*0,402)	0,024	71,615	-5,303 (*0,613)	0,009	
<b>Assistance before return from Home/host government</b>	50,958	-17,146 (*0,089)	0,093	54,427	-9,368 (*0,408)	0,024	72,068	-15,071 (*0,193)	0,056	
<b>Assistance before return from friends/family</b>	44,900	4,725 (*0,608)	0,009	46,535	14,923 (*0,119)	0,082	67,894	1,082 (*0,918)	0,000	
<b>Assistance before return total</b>	63,361	-20,541 (*0,065)	0,109	44,167	10,100 (*0,399)	0,025	84,872	-20,397 (*0,110)	0,083	
<b>Assistance during return</b>	65,333	-22,117 (*0,065)	0,109	44,250	9,612 (*0,455)	0,019	69,019	-0,852 (*0,951)	0,000	
<b>Assistance after return by NGO</b>	37,182	14,461 (*0,117)	0,080	38,788	20,962 (*0,028)	0,156	56,664	17,731 (*0,090)	0,093	
<b>Assistance after return by home/host government</b>	47,190	-5,523 (*0,719)	0,004	54,033	-17,783 (*0,264)	0,043	67,782	5,530 (*0,751)	0,003	
<b>Assistance after return by friends/family</b>	43,904	14,763 (*0,191)	0,056	52,300	0,061 (*0,996)	0,000	69,027	-3,877 (*0,766)	0,003	
<b>Assistance after return total</b>	38,714	10,186 (*0,343)	0,030	41,964	13,366 (*0,235)	0,048	51,429	21,595 (*0,071)	0,105	
<b>Individual categories</b>										
<b>Sex</b>	53,816	-4,482 (*0,622)	0,008	69,838	-11,088 (*0,245)	0,046	71,949	-2,298 (*0,825)	0,002	
<b>Age</b>	53,028		0,080	63,750		0,053	71,113		0,062	
Age2 31-47		-1,492 (*0,903)			-12,470 (*0,343)			1,227 (*0,931)		
Age3 48-65		-15,491 (*0,248)			-16,563 (*0,257)			-13,626 (*0,373)		
Age4 66- (Age 1 – 30 is constant)		-14,361 (*0,422)			-15,833 (*0,405)			5,150 (*0,801)		
<b>Marital status</b>										
In relationship	32,218	8,565 (*0,371)	0,027	51,540	0,460 (*0,964)	0,000	57,885	6,162 (*0,573)	0,11	
(No relationship is constant)										
<b>Children</b>	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	
<b>Ethnic minority/majority</b>	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx	
<b>Premigration education</b>	6,375	11,116 (*0,007)	0,219	50,199	0,580 (*0,900)	0,001	47,691	5,685 (*0,247)	0,044	
<b>Migration Cycle</b>										

## Return Migration to Armenia

<b>1st reason migrate</b>	37,864	-18,197 (*0,225)	0,305	50,125	-20,542 (*0,239)	0,164	65,402	-57,555 (*0,00)	0,655
Personal-Discrimination		15,636 (*0,208)			13,208 (*0,360)			23,698 (*0,022)	
Family/Partner		8,345 (*0,530)			6,438 (*0,678)			0,744 (*0,944)	
Health		29,136 (*0,035)			15,813 (*0,311)			28,912 (** 0,11)	
Housing/Personal		21,670 (**0,085)			-5,125 (*0,271)			5,657 (*0,565)	
Education or non-problematic ( <i>economic is constant</i> )									
<b>Combined reasons migrate</b>			0,509			0,246			0,629
Economic		-4,674 (*)			-5,772 (*)			-5,008 (*)	
Conflict/Fear		29,641 (*0,045)			-16,522 (*)			-70,169 (*0,00)	
Fear (econ/pers)		-59,141 (*0,005)			-60,897 (*0,022)			-81,940 (*0,00)	
Economic/Personal ( <i>Personal/Family is constant</i> )		-38,974 (*0,00)			-22,897 (**0,082)			-81,940 (* 0,005)	
<b>Expectations asylum</b>	42,103		0,299	47,821		0,038	70,903		0,161
Expect temporary		3,370 (*0,756)			6,971 (*0,601)			-5,277 (*0,695)	
Expect permanent		-11,519 (*0,292)			2,179 (*0,878)			22,378 (*0,105)	
Not applied/Other ( <i>No expectations is constant</i> )		27,874 (**0,011)			12,358 (*0,332)			11,807 (*0,360)	
<b>Duration abroad</b>	48,881	-0,061 (*0,612)	0,009	49,293	0,082 (*0,521)	0,014	78,350	-0,279 (* 0,036)	0,139
<b>Housing secure</b> 'Semi-secure'	32,692	16,208 (*0,175)	0,246	45,972	5,528 (*0,694)		55,149	26,376 (*0,069)	
Independent ( <i>Asylum centre is constant</i> )		26,165 (*0,005)			12,063 (*0,250)			20,640 (*0,053)	
<b>Education abroad</b>	55,417	35,417 (*0,155)	0,209	65,750	-34,500 (*0,201)	0,151	85,799	-36,424 (*0,197)	0,207
Yes		-8,845 (*0,444)			-5,554 (** 0,77)			-18,280 (*0,169)	
Not applicable		-18,095 (** 0,069)			-17,160 (*0,115)			-28,255 (* 0,015)	
Only language ( <i>No education is constant</i> )									
<b>Employed abroad</b>	43,769	4,889 (*0,388)	0,025	49,652	4,340 (*0,469)	0,018	64,652	6,144 (*0,339)	0,031
<b>Savings abroad</b>	44,784	12,083 (*0,322)	0,033	49,657	17,016 (*0,182)	0,061	66,056	14,361 (*0,301)	0,036



Return Migration to Armenia

<b>Remittances abroad</b>	40,008	19,386 (* 0,032)	0,144		48,375	11,095 (*0,259)	0,044		62,787	16,038 (*0,126)	0,076
<b>Contact abroad</b>	29,958	19,101 (*0,151)	0,068		33,125	22,029 (*0,113)	0,084		52,083	18,533 (*0,222)	0,049
<b>Health abroad</b>	64,222	-20,234 (*0,182)	0,060		66,667	-15,864 (*0,330)	0,034		86,995	-21,607 (*0,211)	0,053
<b>Status return</b>	41,718	Rejected asylum	0,095		58,021	-7,500 (*0,528)	0,144		69,851	-0,733 (*0,954)	0,127
Illegal		15,949 (*0,210)				1,563 (*0,904)				5,487 (*0,695)	
Don't know/Other		20,365 (*0,296)				-16,771 (*0,400)				7,943 (*0,713)	
Temporary Protection (In asylum procedure is constant)		-4,440 (*0,785)				-30,938 (**0,073)				-30,854 (**0,098)	
<b>Reason return</b>		49,597				0,104					
No opportunities		-5,824 (*0,582)			-17,563 (*0,112)			-15,626 (*0,203)			
Pressured		-9,931 (*0,544)			-21,840 (*0,187)			-13,871 (*0,460)			
Forcibly		36,236 (*0,176)			-15,313 (*0,561)			18,304 (*0,545)			
Other/personal (Fully voluntary is constant)		-7,197 (*0,593)			-29,312 (* 0,036)			-6,696 (*0,664)			
<b>Years back</b>	40,991	2,634 (*0,150)	0,068		58,912	-3,009 (*0,117)	0,083		67,151	0,533 (*0,801)	0,002

\*= significant at the 0.05 level

\*\*= significant at the 0.1 level

xxx = the factor does not vary within this subset of data: regression not possible

Appendix V: Factors influencing embeddedness<sup>7</sup>

<b>Embeddedness</b>	<b>Primary factors</b>	<b>Secondary factors</b>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for migrating</li> <li>• Expectations residence permit</li> <li>• Independency of housing in host country</li> <li>• Economic and social participation in host country</li> <li>• Business assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance after return</li> <li>• Educational level</li> <li>• Household size</li> <li>• Social networks in Armenia</li> <li>• Pre-departure expectations of opportunities in Armenia</li> </ul>
Social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for migrating</li> <li>• Independency of housing</li> <li>• Economic and social participation in host country</li> <li>• Legal status upon return</li> <li>• Voluntariness of return</li> <li>• Assistance from friends and family before return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social networks in Armenia</li> <li>• Assistance after return by NGO</li> <li>• Pre-departure expectations of opportunities in Armenia</li> </ul>
Psychosocial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for migrating</li> <li>• Expectations residence permit</li> <li>• Independency of housing in host country</li> <li>• Economic and social participation in host country</li> <li>• Number of years abroad</li> <li>• Business assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntariness of return</li> <li>• Social networks in Armenia</li> <li>• Assistance after return by NGO</li> <li>• Household size</li> <li>• Pre-departure expectations of opportunities in Armenia</li> </ul>

Source: Remigration monitoring study Armenia 2007

<sup>7</sup> Primary factors are those factors that are frequently and strongly emphasised in the qualitative data and that are statistically significant in the regression analyses. Secondary factors are those factors that are either frequently and strongly emphasised in the qualitative data or that shows to be statistically significant in the regression analyses.