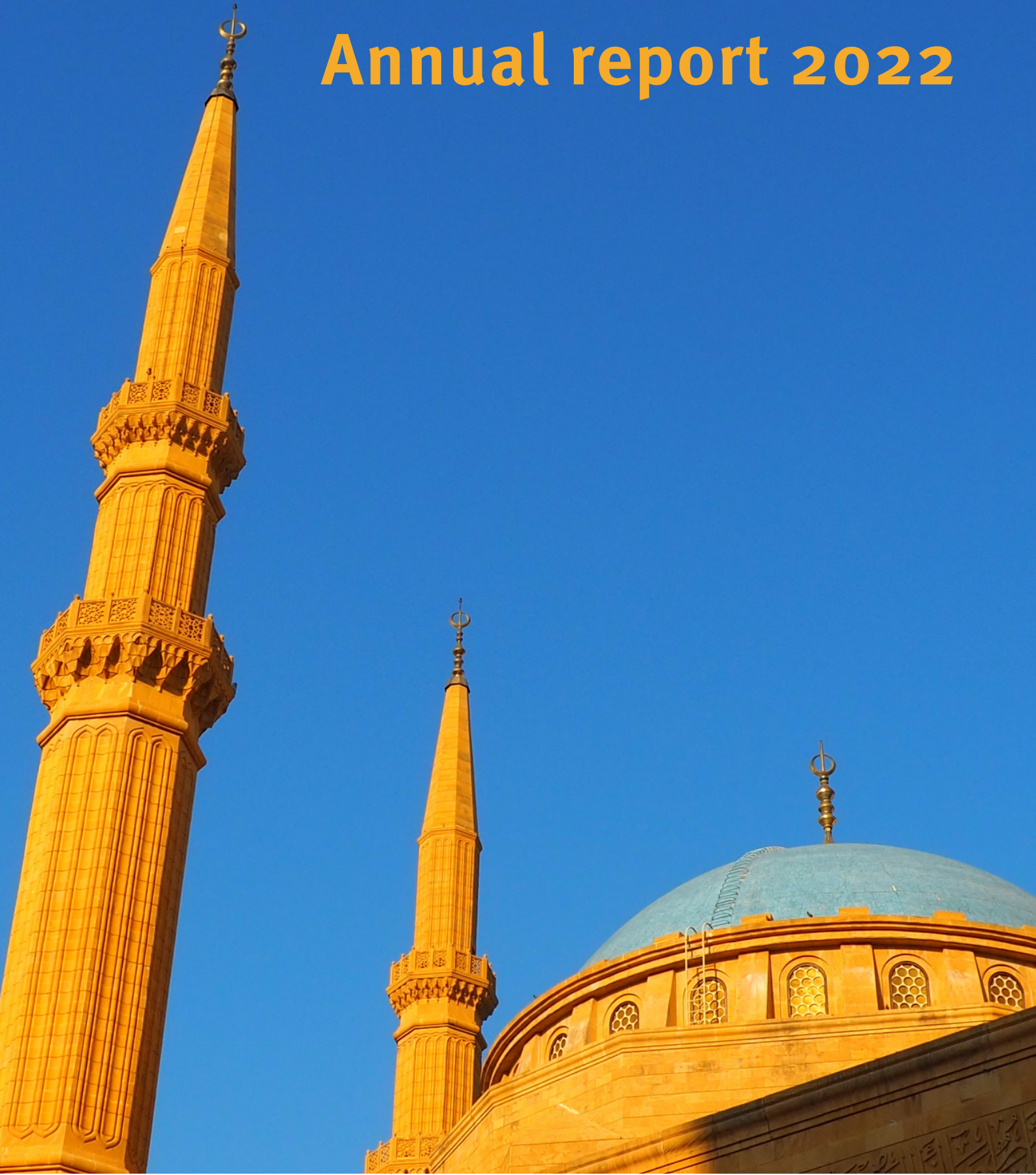




GOEDWERK
FOUNDATION

Annual report 2022



CONTENTS

2

About Goedwerk Foundation

5

Foreword

7

Our team

9

Abdul's return to Libya

14

Our projects: an update

17

Monitoring visit to Algeria

21

Meet our project leaders: an interview with Josephine and Amber

25

Working visit to Syria

30

Perspectives from a returnee: Soufiane

32

Goedwerk in numbers: OZV

35

Goedwerk in numbers: LVV

36

Colofon



About Goedwerk Foundation

Goedwerk Foundation was founded in 2014 by Elias Brhane. Elias came from Ethiopia to the Netherlands as a refugee and therefore knows the challenges of Goedwerk Foundation's clientele as no other. Despite all the challenges that came his way Elias was able to obtain asylum in the Netherlands. Over the years a lot of his peers however were still trying to survive in the Netherlands without documents. Elias was very moved by the circumstances of the people around him and decided to try and help them. Because of his ambition, Goedwerk Foundation was founded and has since its founding helped many (undocumented) migrants in the Netherlands.

The start of Goedwerk Foundation

After founding Goedwerk Foundation Elias started visiting locations where migrants without a residence permit stayed. The locations included detention centers, family locations and asylum centers. Elias discussed the opportunities and possibilities for the near future with the people he met in these different locations. Be it a future in their country of origin, in the Netherlands, or in a third country. Elias stood by them and advised them to the best of his abilities. During these conversations it was never his goal to convince those people to return to their country of origin, but to help them to imagine a dignified existence. Within a short period, Goedwerk made a name for itself within the migration working field.

Further developments

Within a relatively short period Goedwerk Foundation grew into a well-known voluntary return organization with an international network of partners. With time Goedwerk Foundation's focus broadened to supporting migrants' reintegration plans and monitoring activities in the returnees countries of origin, next to the initial counseling and supporting activities in the Netherlands. Due to the intensive contact Goedwerk Foundation has with its international network of partners, in time, Goedwerk Foundation further branched out into Afghanistan, Lebanon, Eritrea, and Surinam. These partners have played, and will continue to play, an enormous role in the counseling of the returnees.

Besides supporting (undocumented) migrants with the return to their countries of origin, Goedwerk Foundation also started counseling people within the LVV project. At first Goedwerk Foundation mainly focussed on return counseling. In time however the purpose of the counseling extended and focussed on the participant's possibilities and future in general instead of only discussing the possibility of return. 'Future orientation' counseling thus came to be.

About Goedwerk Foundation

These counseling sessions focus on providing information and empowering the participants to make a well-informed decision about a future other than a legal stay in the Netherlands. Goedwerk Foundation has been active in LVV Rotterdam since 2018, in LVV Amsterdam since 2019 and in LVV Eindhoven since 2021. Goedwerk Foundation has created its own methodology that fits the LVV program, the organization, and its target audience.

Goedwerk Foundation has not only grown in numbers but also in expertise. Goedwerk Foundation's team consists of a team with various cultural, educational and professional backgrounds. Within the team several different languages are spoken, and when necessary the team of Goedwerk Foundation has access to a network of professional and emphatic translators. Many interns have provided us with comprehensive research reports which aided the organization in its development.

Goedwerk Foundation is an organization that:

- Supports migrants with voluntary return to their country of origin practically, financially and mentally;
- Offers an empowerment program for undocumented migrants residing in the Netherlands within the Dutch LVV-pilot;
- Assists returnees with starting their own business with our project "Fund your Future".

Our principles

- Responsibility and empowerment
- Dignified and respectful approach
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Expertise
- Focus on a complex target audience
- Equality and inclusivity
- Low key, accessible, personal
- Tailor-made support

It's our mission to support (un)documented migrants with the decision for voluntary return by custom-made care and monitoring, and by giving the instruments and knowledge to build perspective and a future in the country of origin, so that (un)documented migrants can lead a sustainable and dignified life in their countries of origin.



Foreword by Elias Brhane

As I am writing this, I am thinking of the year 2022 and how the world slowly opened up again after the norm of staying at home for almost two years. The COVID crisis has had a huge impact on almost everyone's daily life, also on ours. The nature of our work changed, because we were forced to stop the counseling of our clients in person. Fortunately, we were able to continue the individual guidance of clients by (video) calling them. Still, the undivided attention we want to give to our clients is something we prioritize. The possibility to look someone directly in the eye and drink a cup of coffee together is something that we as an organization consider to be very important. The COVID crisis also heavily impacted return migration. The obstacles regarding flying and airspaces being closed, all played a part. Some of our clients, with a wish to return, had been waiting for months, sometimes years, before they could finally return back home. It was hard for me personally, but also for the team and our clients, to deal with these situations and strict regulations. When most of the restrictions were gone in March, we were very happy to all come back to the office and resume our work and doing it the way we used to. Slowly, the world started opening again and those people who had been waiting for so long, could finally return home. The feeling that I had when I first went back to Schiphol to bid a returnee a final farewell, was indescribable. For me, 2022 marks a year of re-opening, new possibilities and the realization of (old) wishes.



Foreword by Elias Brhane

With lots of new energy we got to work this year. Besides our work at the Amsterdam office, we also continued our work in Eindhoven for the purpose of our involvement in the ‘Landelijke Vreemdelingen Voorzieningen’ (LVV). In the past year we were also lucky to welcome three new colleagues. All of them bring their own expertise, but share the overarching drive to support (un)documented migrants and guide them in our projects. As the team has grown, we can pay close attention to the trajectories of our clients, while simultaneously having the time to unleash all of our ideas and creativity on other projects. In this report, you will read more about our new colleagues and the projects we are working on.

Something that really makes our job special, is the working visits we do to visit previous returnees and strengthen local contacts in different countries of origin. Because of the COVID crisis, we were unable to travel to these countries and were forced to maintain contact via telephone. In 2022 we were lucky enough to start traveling again and visit returnees in their home countries. To gain a good understanding of return migration, I believe it is very important to not stop the counselling at Schiphol at the moment of departure, but to support our clients for a longer period of time and stay in touch. Look at Ali Baba for example, an Algerian man who was visited by Goedwerk in December of 2022. He left the Netherlands four years ago, but welcomed our colleagues with open arms into his home in Algiers. Ultimately, this is what makes our work worthwhile.

I look back on some great moments and beautiful return stories in 2022. Additionally, the LVV program has also brought us heart-warming encounters and enlightening conversations. When I walk into our always busy office, I am grateful to see a place where my colleagues work on our plans, and where our clients feel welcome to come by anytime and chat to one of us. I look forward to many more beautiful moments in 2023.

Sincere greetings,
Elias Brhane

Our team

Goedwerk Foundation has welcomed three new colleagues in 2022. Hajar Ait Etaleb joined the team in April, Tom van der Bijl joined the team in March and Lonne Hintzbergen joined the team in April. Hajar supports the team by taking up the daily administration and, maybe more importantly, by translating from Arabic to Dutch (and visa versa) during counseling sessions with clients. In the short time that Hajar has been working at Goedwerk Foundation she has shown to be a valuable member of the Goedwerk Foundation team.

Both Tom and Lonne have a background in Social Studies with a focus on migration, and are currently supporting the Goedwerk Foundation team as case managers. Before joining Goedwerk Foundation Tom has worked at the IND (the Integration and Naturalization Department of the Dutch government) in the asylum and protection department of the organisation. Because of this experience Tom is very familiar with Goedwerk Foundation's clientele and their circumstances.

Lonne worked as a researcher at the Universiteit van Amsterdam (Amsterdam University) before starting as a case manager at Goedwerk Foundation. During her time at the university Lonne researched the lives and circumstances of long-term undocumented elderly in the Netherlands. Through her research experience Lonne is familiar with Goedwerk Foundation's target group and is aware of the challenges they face in their daily lives.

We are very happy that Hajar, Tom and Lonne joined our team last year and we are looking forward to keep on working with them!



Abdul's return to Libya

We would like to share the return story of Abdul. Abdul's story is full of surprises: it started in the LVV project (Landelijke Vreemdelingen Voorziening) and ended with his successful return to Libya. Continue reading for the full story of Abdul's return!

The LVV

We came in touch with Abdul through his registration in the LVV project. The goal of this project is to find a sustainable solution for undocumented migrants in the Netherlands. When somebody registers to take part in the LVV project he or she first receives a legal check. The goal of the legal check is to find out which chances the participant has for a legal stay in the Netherlands. If there is no legal perspective for the participant a future orientation trajectory starts with Goedwerk Foundation (GWF).

In February 2022 Abdul hears that he has no perspective on a legal stay in the Netherlands and starts his future orientation trajectory with GWF. Abdul's start in the LVV project is rocky. He cannot stay in the shelter because he causes too much trouble and he is repeatedly in contact with the police. On paper Abdul comes across as a tough guy, but when he comes to our office for his first appointment he is very friendly and has a big smile on his face. Abdul comes across as a respectful young man who is in search of guidance.

The first time we speak with Abdul it becomes clear that he feels lost and is disappointed about how his stay in the Netherlands has turned out. He left Libya in 2018 and arrived in the Netherlands with the hope to start a new and successful life here. He filed multiple asylum cases but none resulted in a positive outcome for him. Abdul tells us he had to be creative in order to survive in the Netherlands as an undocumented migrant. 'Before the LVV I had no place to stay, I could only stay with a friend for a couple of days before having to find a new temporary place. I always had to think about where to go next which was very stressful'. Abdul roamed all through the Netherlands before coming to Amsterdam. During this time Abdul survived by finding a temporary job as a car mechanic and by selling cars.





During the many conversations we have with Abdul he starts to have more trust in us. He explains that he left Libya because he wanted to start a new life in Europe and because he felt unsafe. His family is still in Libya and Abdul tells us he calls them everyday. He misses his family a lot. Abdul's parents worry about him a lot, and his brothers and sisters often ask what his life is like in the Netherlands. Abdul does not want to disappoint his family, which adds to the pressure Abdul feels to become successful and start a new life in the Netherlands. During the conversations we have with Abdul we explain to him what the possibilities are if he were to return to Libya. We talk a lot about his home country and share the experiences of previous returnees that returned to Libya with GWF. We feel like these conversations really make Abdul consider the options he has in his current situation. He actively asks GWF how we can help him if he wants to return to Libya, but he also asks what his other options are if he decides to stay in the Netherlands.

When we ask Abdul what his dream would be he answers: 'I just want a quiet life where I can settle down, find a job and start a family'. When we ask Abdul how he wants to achieve this he is unsure.

He agrees life is very difficult in the Netherlands but he still holds hope that something will change for him. After 6 months of future orientation and getting to know Abdul he initially makes the decision to stay in the Netherlands and maybe try to file another asylum case. We wish Abdul the best of luck and tell him our door is always open if he ever needs someone to talk to. With a heartfelt smile Abdul tells us he knows where to find us and that we will hear from him if he changes his mind.

Return

After the future orientation trajectory of Abdul ended we did not see, or hear from, him for a couple of months. At the beginning of October 2022 we suddenly see Abdul's name popping up on the office phone. We immediately have a suspicion why he is contacting us, and when we pick up the phone Abdul tells us that he has changed his mind. He tells us that after his future orientation ended he thought a lot about the conversations he had with us. He grew tired of the uncertainty of living without documents in the Netherlands, and came to the realization that nothing would change for him. Abdul tells us he is determined to return to Libya. He tells us that after the many conversations we had, and the stories we told him of previous returnees from Libya, he trusts that GWF can help him. Immediately we start the return process of Abdul.

We invite him to our office to discuss his plan and what he needs in order to successfully return to Libya. Abdul tells us he has a plan to start working as a taxi driver in his hometown Benghazi. GWF can help Abdul since we have a contact person in Libya who can assist him after his return and sell him a car. Because Abdul can only stay with his family for a short time he will need to find a place to live.

Because he will not immediately earn money as a taxi driver he needs financial support to bridge the initial period after his return without any income. Abdul is eligible to receive the standard amount of financial support, but in order for Abdul to purchase a car and rent a small living space for the first few months it is necessary to request additional financial support. Without this additional financial support it will be impossible for Abdul to have a successful start after his return to Libya. GWF advocates to Gemeente Amsterdam and Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek (DT&V) that without additional financial support Abdul cannot successfully reintegrate when he returns to Libya. After hearing the plan Abdul worked so hard, on both Gemeente Amsterdam and DT&V grant additional financial support for his return. When we tell Abdul that we can help him achieve his plan he is very grateful and cannot wait to return.

With the help of DT&V Abdul obtained a travel document and his flight could be booked. Because of a layover in Istanbul, a social escort from DT&V joins Abdul on the flight to make sure he safely returns to Libya. When the flight is finally booked and we inform Abdul he jokingly says: 'Is it not possible to book an earlier flight?'. We see a big contrast between how Abdul first came into the office, a young man who did not know what to do, and the determined man in front of us who is certain of his decision and wants to return to Libya as soon as possible. Abdul is ready for his return and looks forward to seeing his family again.

A few days before his departure Abdul has to wait two hours due to a misunderstanding before he can take his PCR test. To kill the time Abdul shows us a lot of pictures of Benghazi. 'Look, this is the street where I grew up!'. He continues to proudly show the skyline of Benghazi and paints a vivid picture of the place where he grew up. His face really shows how happy he is to have made the decision to return, and we feel he is ready. He promises us to videocall us once he has returned in order to show more of his city. Finally Abdul can take the PCR test and we discuss the last details of his return before his departure.

On the day of departure we meet Abdul on Schiphol and drink a last cup of coffee. With shaking hands he tells us he is nervous. Abdul smokes his last cigarette in the Netherlands and starts calling his friends in Libya to let them know he is coming home. When we ask Abdul if he will miss the Netherlands he smiles and says: 'The Netherlands will always be special, but I am ready to go'.

Latest news

After arriving in Libya Abdul has to take one more flight to return to Benghazi. On the 2nd of December Abdul lets us know he safely arrived in Benghazi, his hometown. He is very happy and relieved to see his family and friends and immediately starts working on his reintegration plan.

A few weeks later we call Abdul to ask how it is going. 'It is not an easy life, sometimes it can be tough but I am happy to be home' Abdul answers. We wish Abdul the best of luck and will continue to stay in touch with him. Special thanks goes out to the pleasant cooperation with DT&V and Gemeente Amsterdam who helped realise Abdul's return!





Our projects: an update

Research

In 2021 Goedwerk Foundation started conducting research in the field of voluntary return. The goal of this research was to gain insight into our target group: (undocumented) migrants with the wish to return to their country of origin. Through this research we hope to be able to better match the needs of our clientele.

In 2022 GWF started specifying this research and focused on two questions: what makes a client successfully reintegrate in the country of origin and what factors play a role in a client's decision to return to the country of origin. The aim of researching the first question was to gain insight into what makes someone successfully reintegrate in their country of origin, and which factors contribute to realizing this.

Furthermore GWF is researching the factors that play a role in a client's decision to return to his or her country of origin. By getting an insight into the possible motives for return we hope to offer the proper counseling during the return process. At this time several participants have been interviewed through a questionnaire. We expect to be able to share the first interim results of this study in 2023.

OZV 7.0

In October 2021, the seventh return project of Goedwerk Foundation started. The aim of the project is to allow migrants to return to their country of origin in a sustainable manner. In 2022 we have seen that the number of returnees has increased considerably compared to 2021. For example, in 2022 we have guided a total of 31 participants. In 2022, colleagues have invested a lot of energy and time in providing information to chain partners and the target group. We think it is important that both are well informed about what voluntary return can look like in concrete terms.

Fund Your Future

In 2021, the Goedwerk Foundation started the Fund Your Future pilot in Ethiopia. The aim of the pilot is to offer returnees from Ethiopia an additional loan to set up a small business. In 2022, this pilot will be followed up used by, among others, Tigist from Ethiopia from Ethiopia. The talks with our partner from Uganda have resulted in us soon announcing a second pilot country. It is expected that in 2023 we will be able to offer microcredit from several countries.

Our projects: an update

The Coffee Foundation

In 2022, Goedwerk Foundation started preparing for a new project, The Coffee Foundation. The aim of the new project is to set up a social enterprise focused on the sale of coffee. The profit from the company will be used for funding 'Fund Your Future'. In this way, returnees can continue to use an additional loan to start a small business after their return. At the moment the project is still in the preparatory phase and in 2023 we will keep you informed of developments via our newsletter and the symposium.





Monitoring visit to Algeria

In recent years, Goedwerk Foundation has gained extensive experience in assisting returnees to Algeria. In addition, a large group of Algerians has come into the picture in the LVV. The purpose of this working visit was to visit previous returnees, to speak to potential cooperation partners, to conduct the research into successful reintegration and to sort out matters for current LVV participants. This visit has given a realistic impression of what returning to Algeria looks like and what daily life is like (after returning).

Arrival in Algiers and visit with Said*

Upon arrival in Algiers, the two colleagues from Goedwerk are picked up by Said. After 25 difficult years in the Netherlands, mainly dominated by crime and addiction, Said decided six years ago to return to Algiers. He is now married and has three beautiful daughters. He describes his return to Algeria as a second chance at life. He now works as a security guard at a residence and can support his family. Said talks about his life in Amsterdam and his life now. In Algeria he feels that he can really do what he wants and what matters: "Here I can get married, drive a car and work." All kinds of things that were not possible before. He also talks about the help of Goedwerk and the fact that he was given honest advice that was very important in his decision. He is happy with his choice to return and regularly thinks along with other Algerians in the Netherlands who are thinking about returning.

Amnesty International and local NGO

To learn more about the current human rights situation in Algeria, colleagues from Goedwerk paid a visit to Amnesty International in Algiers. Amnesty's director talks about how the current situation in Algeria is causing people to leave the country. She attributes this mainly to the economic situation in the country. It is a challenge to find a job, and the wages are very low. In addition, there is corruption and it is difficult to climb the social ladder. This is discouraging and causes many Algerians to look elsewhere for a better future.

The colleagues from Goedwerk also visit a local NGO that deals with the theme of migration. The employee talks about possible reasons for Algerians (and migrants and refugees in Algeria) to leave the country.



He also stresses how difficult it is economically, including finding work. Goedwerk's colleagues ask him what can attract Algerians in Europe when they return. He indicates that skills are important. Especially if someone has spent a long time in Europe, it is valuable if this person can return with demonstrable skills. A certificate or diploma that recognizes this is of great value.



Return to Algeria: Soufiane

In Algiers, colleagues from Goedwerk also meet Soufiane*, who returned to Algeria in June this year. After seven years in the Netherlands, he was done with his undocumented existence. Soufiane is very happy to be with family again and is proud to show the city. He also talks about the difficulties he encounters. For example, he has not yet managed to find work, and due to problems in his private spheres, he cannot stay in his hometown of Oran. For this reason, he is now alone in a house in Algiers and has not really built up a network yet. When Soufiane hears that Goedwerk's colleagues will also travel to Oran, he immediately offers to go with them: "My house is your house". The three of them travel by train to Oran, where Soufiane's mother and sister are waiting with a table full of food. Soufiane brightens up now that he is back with family and friends in his home town. Soufiane's attitude about his return also changed with the days. He realizes that he also has to give himself some time to land well in Algeria again. One day he would like to come to Europe again: "but then as a tourist, together with mom and my sister."

Return to Algeria: Ali Baba

Ali Baba is well known in Amsterdam and the surrounding area. He lived in the Netherlands for 31 years, and he really was a man of the streets. Stealing from tourists and living without documents, he spends half of his time in the Netherlands in detention. Ali Baba returned in 2019, under the guidance of a colleague from Goedwerk. The colleagues of Goedwerk search for Ali Baba for a day and a half because of an address that is difficult to find. Eventually he is found through a local school, and Ali Baba immediately invites the colleagues to his home. His whole family is waiting there, including his mother. Tears stream down her cheeks when she sees Goedwerk's colleague again. Ali Baba talks about his life: he is doing well, but he also points out that it is difficult economically in Algeria. He has no fixed income and can only work occasionally. In addition, his mother is now ill, which makes him very worried. Yet he can still laugh a lot, and the colleagues notice that he looks good. He has left behind a life full of crime and uncertainty, and especially family seems to him to be a very stable factor in his life.



Conclusion

The working visit to Algeria has provided new insights into the current situation in the country and strengthened local contacts. It was very valuable to speak to the previous returnees in their own country and to hear their experiences.



Meet our project leaders: an interview with Josephine and Amber

Since the summer of 2022 Amber started as the new project coordinator of Goedwerk Foundation, while Josephine started working as a project lead for the Coffee Foundation. Read the interview below to get to know them a little better.

Can you tell us something about yourself? How did you end up with Goedwerk Foundation?

My name is Amber Khan. I was born in Belgium to a Belgian mother and a Pakistani father. My father always told us about his journey to Belgium and what he had been through. This inspired me to study Psychology and after that I did a masters in Migration Studies. I thought it would be a great way to be able to help migrants with their mental health. I started working in Maastricht as a counsellor for underaged refugees to help them integrate in The Netherlands. When moving to Amsterdam I saw the vacancy with Goedwerk Foundation and I immediately knew it would be a job I wanted to do. In 2020 I started working as a counsellor.

And my name is Josephine Jacobs. When my parents took me to India when I was 15 years old my curiosity about the world and other cultures started. So when I visited an introduction day for the studies of Anthropology and I heard there was the option of travelling during my studies, I registered right away. After graduation I started working as a teacher in Amsterdam-West. That's where I got inspired to learn Arabic. Despite my love for teaching I decided to quit and work and travel for a year in places like Bangladesh and Lebanon. When I came back I applied for the position of counsellor at the Goedwerk Foundation and here we are!



Meet our project leaders: an interview with Josephine and Amber

Josephine, recently you have started a different position at Goedwerk. Tell us something about that!

Happy to! A year after I started working as a counselor, the organization started growing and I became the project manager. For the first time I managed a team and an organization. I learned a lot. The part that I love most about Goedwerk is our entrepreneurial spirit. And that's what I do now. I am responsible for setting up our new project, The Coffee Foundation. The Coffee Foundation will be a social enterprise focusing on selling coffee with social impact. The profit of the organization will directly go to our Fund Your Future project. So currently I am working on a logo, talking with Ethiopian exporters of coffee, etc. There is a lot to learn again!



Amber, you have taken over the tasks of Josephine. What does that mean?

Josephine was the project manager before me. I have taken over those tasks. This means that I lead the team of counsellors with their daily tasks. Furthermore, I work on administrative tasks and I stay in touch with all of our partners, in The Netherlands as well as our partners in the countries of origin. Unfortunately this means I don't have a lot of clients anymore, but every now and then I counsel returnees because it really gives me energy to work with clients.

Meet our project leaders: an interview with Josephine and Amber

Goedwerk Foundation has grown a lot in the past time. What has changed in that time?

We got lucky that our team has grown in the last year with three new colleagues and at the end of 2021 Marlies joined to team. The new energy in the team is great! We are able to support a lot of returnees but are also able to take our time to support clients in the future orientation trajectories. The fact that we have more time to spend on our clients give us some freedom to work on creative solutions in terms of support. There are also some great new ideas and initiatives we are working on!

Moreover the organization has expanded to new locations. Next to our office in Amsterdam, we opened offices in Eindhoven and Rotterdam. And our partner network in the countries of origin has grown a lot, from Afghanistan to Surinam, and a lot of countries in between. Involving our local partners in the preparations for return, but also with re-integration after return really improved our counselling. Personally that gives me a lot of energy!

What route do you want Goedwerk to take in the next time?

Amber: We have been brainstorming a lot about new initiatives and projects, but because the organisation has grown so much in the past few years, we actually have the time to work on on those plan to make them a reality. We are working on a big symposium where we will present the new projects that we have been working on. I am personally very excited about the results of our research project.

This really gives us great insights which are very valuable for our counselling and monitoring activities after return.

Apart from that I am obviously excited to help more people return to their country of origin. The conversations we have with people give me energy for my personal life as well. The connections we make, the conversations we have and the moments of laughter with them mean a lot to me. Being able to mean something for them is the cherry on top.

Josephine: Yes, I completely agree with Amber and I am also excited about the social impact that we're going to make with our new project. Working with Ethiopian farmers, helping our Fund Your Future-project to grow and supporting local entrepreneurship. These are the big plans. But for me personally the highlight of 2022 was to re-connect with an Algerian returnee in his home country. About three years ago I travelled with him to his family and stayed there three days. In December of 2022 we brought a visit to the country and after more than a day looking for him, as we lost contact, we found him. It was emotional to see him and his family again, and I am excited for Amber and her team to have many moments like this as well in the upcoming years.



Working visit Syria

Since 2017, Goedwerk has been guiding migrants on their return to Syria. This is why one of our colleagues visited Syria in September 2022. The purpose of the visit was, on the one hand, to monitor returned migrants and, on the other hand, to meet the local partner. This visit has given us a valuable first insight into the experiences and possibilities of returning to Syria.

Local partnership

Since 2021, we have guided a number of Syrian migrants at Goedwerk in collaboration with the local partner of the ERRIN network. Previous returnees were accompanied by our own partner in Lebanon. However, due to the economic crisis there and the American embargo, this became increasingly difficult. After a first positive experience with the partner from the ERRIN network, we have assisted four people in recent months with their return to Syria. At Goedwerk we value cooperating with the local partner. We pay working visits to the countries of origin to evaluate the collaboration. Encouraged by the Repatriation and Departure Service and the umbrella partner organization ETTC, we receive the contact details of the local partner in Syria. On September 18, our colleague meets Mrs. Ghaitaa.

As a local partner, she guides migrants from various European countries, such as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. She underlines that every situation is different. For one person it is safe to go to Damascus, while for another it is complicated. The largest groups of migrants she sees are Syrian women divorced in Europe, families and migrants who have received a negative decision from the local migration services, especially from Austria. We discuss the limitations and possibilities when returning to Syria. We talk about the obligatory military service, safety issues, access to medical health, the taboo concerning (voluntary) return and the economic situation in Syria. Like many other Syrians, the partner emphasizes that the economic situation in Syria is dire. There is hardly any electricity and water, prices are rising while money is worth less and less. The American embargo and the withdrawal of NGOs means that the country can hardly move forward. Many Syrians have several jobs and are still dependent on relatives and acquaintances abroad due to their limited income (which is around \$40).

Ms. Ghaitaa stresses the importance of vocational training to increase job opportunities in Syria for returnees. For women, this could be training as a hairdresser or beautician. For men there is work in Syria as a mechanic of household appliances and solar panels. Because of the crisis, nothing is thrown away and everything is being repaired, she says. It is important for children to learn Arabic before arriving in Syria. This helps them to reintegrate sooner after return. We speak at length about the challenges of returning families with older children.

Mrs. Ghaitaa indicates that we can always ask her for advice when migrants are still in the process of deciding to return to Syria. She can then think together with us and the migrant. She also stresses the necessity of returnees having to contact their network in Syria. Remaining relatives, acquaintances or friends can paint a realistic picture of their personal situation. This is because it is person- and place-specific, says Ghaitaa. The situation can differ from neighborhood to neighborhood and it is therefore important to gain advice from people who are in a similar situation to which the migrant is returning.

Return to Syria

In Damascus and Homs, our colleague meets with migrants who have returned to Syria in recent years with the help of Goedwerk. Here is a small insight into the stories and experiences of some of these migrants.

Manal and Dana, returned to Syria on March 9, 2022

Our colleague talks to Manal and her daughter six months after their return to Syria. Together with her brother-in-law and sister, we meet in a hotel in Damascus. Her brother-in-law talks about the first period after Manal arrives in Syria. “Manal looked like a mummy, all white and very thin. Dana had become so isolated in the Netherlands that she talked to herself all the time, she was not doing well.” Mother and daughter had become homeless in the Netherlands due to troubling circumstances and wandered from place to place to for a year. Her brother-in-law says that Manal sometimes called him to say that she no longer envisioned a future for herself. The family in Syria then tried to support her and tried to help her from a distance. Eventually, her brother-in-law found the Goedwerk website and connected her to us. Her brother-in-law tells our colleague: “Going back to Syria may have saved Manal's life, thank you so much!”.



On the left: Dana and Manal during Goedwerk's visit



Adel and his son during Goedwerk's visit

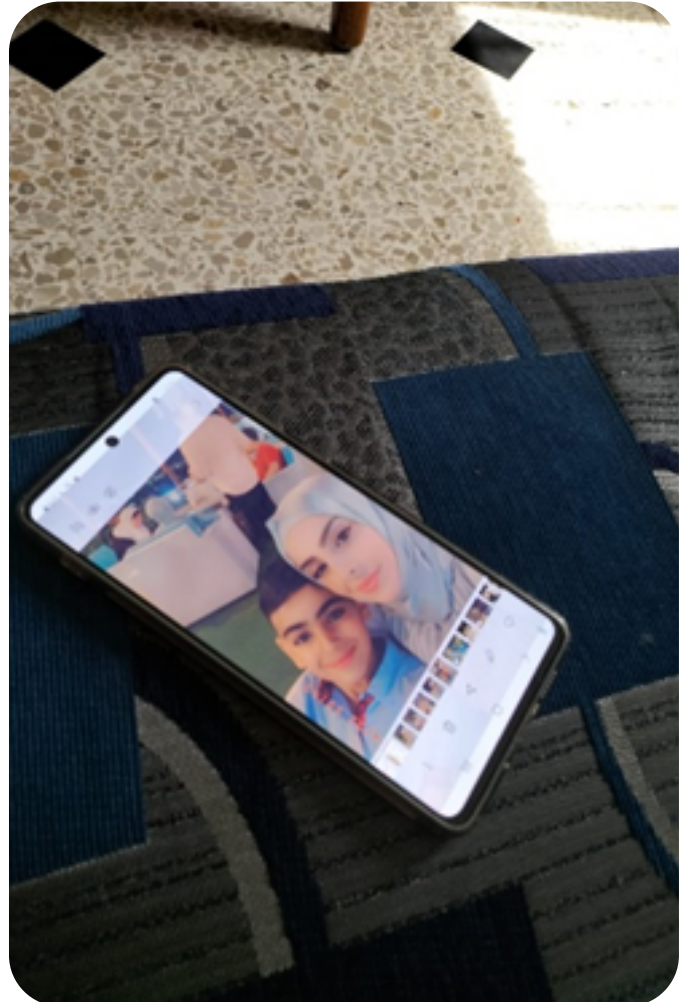
Adel, returned to Syria on June 29 2022

Together with his son, our colleague meets Adel in Damascus. When our colleague asks how he is doing, he says; "Everything is going well in Syria, except that there is not enough money". His son laughs and agrees with his father - "the economic situation in Syria is very difficult now". Although Adel knew this, he decided to return a few months ago. He lived in the Netherlands with his ex-wife and daughter. The relationship between the two was very bad and he felt compelled to return to his home country where many of his sons still live. He maintained daily contact with them from the Netherlands. He says that it was difficult for him to understand the system in the Netherlands and that he refused to learn the language. Adel feels at home in Syria and is therefore happy with his decision to return despite the difficult (economic) situation.



Soher, returned on November 13 2019

Seeing Soher again in Homs is heartwarming. Our colleague meets Soher's parents and other relatives. She has now been back in Syria for almost three years. She talks about her difficult life in the Netherlands. She lived with a man who physically, mentally and sexually abused her. The situation was unsustainable and she returned to her native country. Soher's situation is complicated. Her first husband took her two children to Jordan at a young age. She immediately shows me videos and photos from one month ago upon arrival. After ten years, she saw her children for the first time. The videos are emotional. Soher says that all the difficulties in life have made her strong and that she can handle anything. She sees a bright future ahead – despite the sadness of the war and the difficult current situation. ‘There is always hope’, she says with a smile.



Conclusion

Goedwerk's working visit to Syria has strengthened our cooperation with the local partner and has given us new insights into the limitations and possibilities of returning to Syria. It was valuable and heartwarming to meet the Syrian returnees again. This time in their native country. The main conclusion of the visit; every situation of a returnee is different and customization is the core of our guidance of migrants with the wish to return. The cooperation between Goedwerk and the local partner is essential in making this happen.



Perspectives from a returnee: Soufiane

After Goedwerk Foundation's clients return to their country of origin we stay in touch with them up to a year. Below you can read about Soufiane, who returned to Algeria, and how he has been since he returned to his home country.

What did you miss most about Algeria?

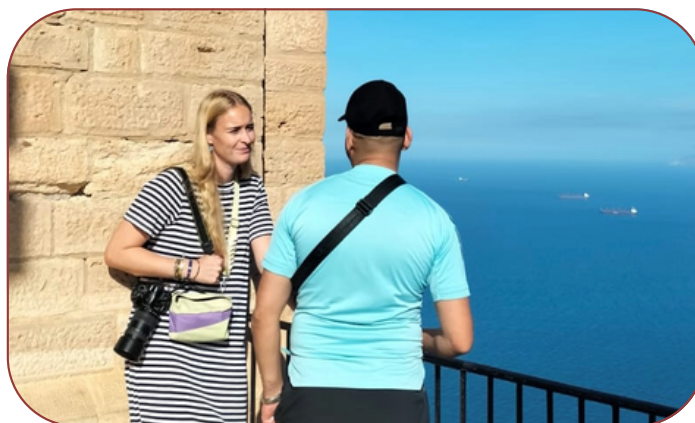
I missed my family the most. I hadn't seen them for a very long time and missed their presence. I also missed the hospitality of my country very much. In the Netherlands, I didn't feel that I really mattered and you are seen more as a 'foreigner'. In addition, in the Netherlands it is more everyone for himself, while in Algeria people look more towards each other. In Algeria I feel more seen and that I matter. The moment I saw and could hug my family, I immediately felt at home.

What do you remember about the first days you were back in Algeria?

I remember being very happy and feeling very fortunate. I looked with enthusiasm to the future and life again. It was very nice to see my family again and to give them some souvenirs from the Netherlands. Everyone was waiting for me and I was also very nervous to see them.

How did Goedwerk support you during your return process?

Goedwerk supported me from A to Z. They have always offered me a listening ear and given honest advice. I always felt supported by them, even at times when no one else supported me. They were also able to arrange a place to sleep for me in Amsterdam, where I could stay peacefully, to prepare for my return. In the end, they also made sure that I could get some money for when I return. They have kept in touch with me at all times, both in the Netherlands and in Algeria. They always asked how I was doing when I didn't know anyone here, supported me where needed and for that I am very grateful.



Lonne and Soufiane during Goedwerk's visit to Oran



What is a lesson you learned in the Netherlands that you will always take with you?

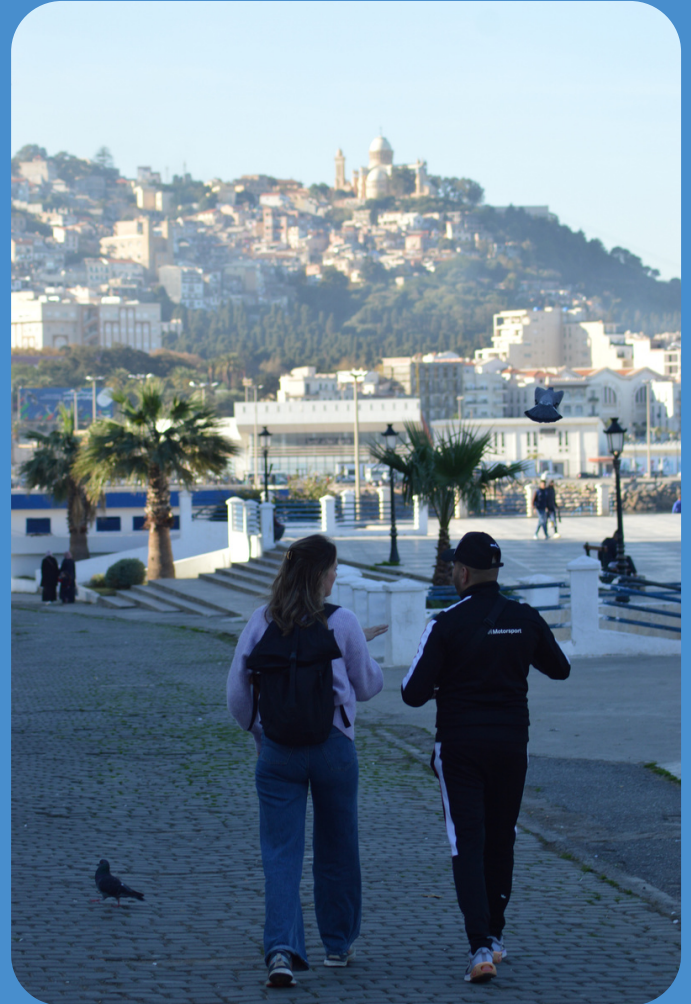
I used to be very busy, I always wanted to be everywhere and nowhere. The situation in the Netherlands meant that I have had to grow up and now I experience more peace. Friends I know from the past also tell me that I have changed and become wiser. The Netherlands showed me how life works and opened my eyes.

How did you feel about Lonne and Josephine visiting you in Algeria?

I was very pleased that Lonne and Josephine were visiting and I received them with great pleasure. I am very happy that they have met my friends and that I could welcome them to my house. We had dinner with my mother and sister. It is a very nice feeling for me that we are still in contact after my return. I am very glad that they have not forgotten me. If they ever want to come back, I'll be happy to welcome them.

What are your dreams for the future?

I dream of a peaceful life. I really want to find a nice job in which I can support myself well. I would like to start a family and get married. I also hope to visit Europe as a tourist in the future.



Josephine and Soufiane during Goedwerk's visit to Algiers

Goedwerk Foundation in numbers: OZV

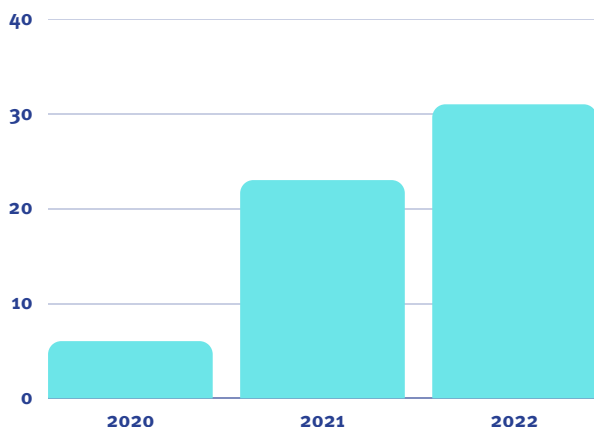
The OZV project focuses on offering people the help they need when making the decision to return to their country of origin. In 2022 we have helped a lot of people return to their country of origin. Each individual that we help comes with their own story. Our aim is to accommodate people in their individual needs which requires us to think creatively. The graphs below give you an idea of how diverse the group of people that returned is and what the OZV project entails.

OZV - Voluntary Return Assistance

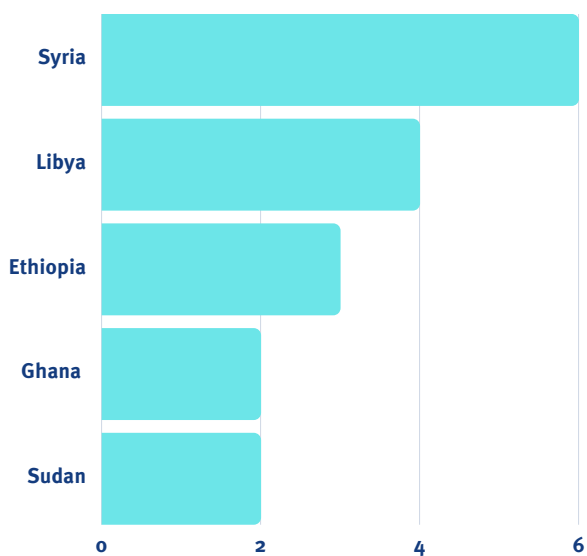
Within the OZV project we think with the participants about what they need to successfully return. We help them to set up a reintegration plan together with our local partner in their country of origin. Returning can be an emotional decision, therefore we find it important to offer emotional support when needed. We for example help participants get in touch with their families if necessary. Furthermore, we help participants with other practicalities such as organising (source) documents.

We see that compared to 2021 and 2020 we have significantly helped more people to return to their country of origin in 2022. In 2022 67 people have asked for our help, of which 31 people returned and 25 people are still actively in process.

Number of Returnees



Countries of origin of returnees



A diverse group of people

Throughout 2022 we have helped a very diverse group of people return to their country of origin. Most people that we helped returned to Syria, Libya and Ethiopia and Ghana. We see that 73% of the returnees is male, and 27% is female. Except for individuals, we have also helped three families return to their country of origin in 2022. We make it our mission to ensure that the whole family can return safely with a well thought of reintegration plan.





Reintegration budget

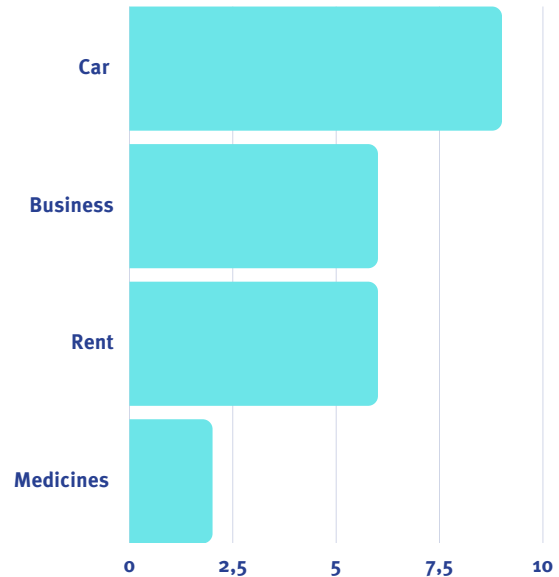
A large part of the assistance Goedwerk Foundation offers is to help with making a reintegration plan. In most cases, a returnee within the OZV project is entitled to the standard amount of 1800 euros, of which 300 euros will be given in cash and 1500 euros will be spent in-kind. Our local partners make a great effort to advise the participants on their reintegration plans. We see that most people spend their reintegration budget on buying a car, rent, starting their own business, or buying medical supplies.

A little extra help

Some of the people that we help to return come up with a business plan that requires additional financial support in order to realize their dreams. In the last year we have helped 31 people return to their country of origin. For 8 people we have organised additional financial support because their reintegration plans required more money. Together with the returnee we set up a request for additional money by explaining their situation and the need for additional financial support in great detail.

On average we have arranged an extra 2233 euros for the returnees that requested additional support

Reintegration plans expenditure



We present these plans to parties who already play a big role within the proces of voluntary return, such as DT&V and the municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Eindhoven, amongst others. Without their help and financial contribution it would not be possible for these returnees to fulfil their dreams, therefore we highly appreciate their help. Additional financial support has offered returnees the possibility to start businesses such as:

- Hairdressing salon
- Photography studio
- Nail salon
- Electronics shop
- Supermarket
- Sewing workshop

To conclude we see that additional financial support can make a huge difference, and significantly contribute to succesful reintegration.

Goedwerk Foundation in numbers: LVV

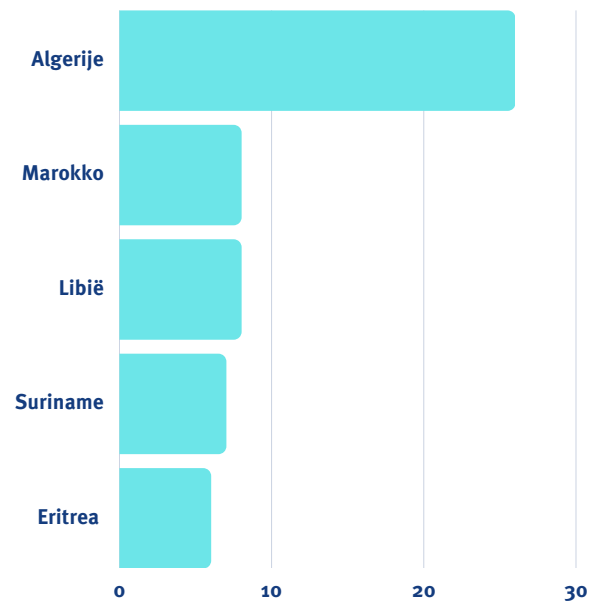
In 2022 we have participated in the LVV projects in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Eindhoven by offering future orientation to the participants. We would like to explain the goal of future orientation and give some insight into the diverse group of people we speak to on a daily basis!

Future Orientation

Goedwerk Foundation offers future orientation counseling sessions to people who have no legal perspective in the Netherlands. The main goal of future orientation is to empower people to make an active choice about their lives. We offer individual, custom made counseling which focuses on the person in front of us and their strengths.

In 2022 Goedwerk Foundation has talked to 111 people during future orientation, from 30 different countries

Together with our clients we discuss three main themes: what to expect when living in the Netherlands as an undocumented migrant, the possibilities of migration to a third country, and the option of returning to someone's country of origin. Throughout the entire proces we offer emotional support and think together with the client about their options and what the best choice is for them. We explore each option and give them the possibilty to get in touch with family and professionals, such as our local partner in their country of origin. By informing participants about each choice they can make the decision that is best for them.



Effects of Future Orientation

Throughout the counseling we aim for people to actively make a choice about their future, whatever that choice is. We also see the lasting impact of future orientation after counseling has ended. In 2022 three previous participants in the LVV project, who's future orientation counseling had already ended came back to Goedwerk for help because they wanted to return to their country of origin. This shows the long term effect of future orientation counseling.

18 people who participated in future orientation in 2022 have actively discussed returning, and 7 people returned to their country of origin.

Colofon

Goedwerk Foundation would like to thank our colleagues at the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Municipality of Rotterdam, the Municipality of Eindhoven and the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) who make our work possible.



Gemeente
Rotterdam



EINDHOVEN



Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek
Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid

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