

**RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF
QUALIFIED AFRICAN NATIONALS PROGRAMME (RQAN III)
Conclusions of the Survey and their Accuracy:
September 1999 – January 2000**

Phase 3 Report

**by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the third phase of the research on the impact of returnees in the workplace, on the Programme of Return and Reintegration of African Nationals (RQAN). The International Organization for Immigration (IOM) established the RQAN Programme in 1983 with the main objective of mobilizing and promoting the utilization of highly qualified, qualified and skilled personnel in the development of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries through voluntary migration. This is the 3rd phase of the Programme, but this is the first impact evaluation since the inception of the Programme. This report therefore discusses the impact the returnees have made in the workplace.

A sample of 433 returnees was chosen out of 664 selected from 19 target and non-target countries. Out of the 433 questionnaires mailed out, a total of 214 (49.4%) were returned. This percentage of the returned questionnaires falls below the target of 67%. Out of the 214 returned questionnaires, 45 did not fulfill all the conditions for analysis and therefore were treated as unsuitable. Hence the true response rate declined from 49.4% to 39%. The unsuitable questionnaires also reduced the true sample size from 49.4% (214/664) to 25.5% (169/664).¹

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and presented in tables. Key attention was paid to questions on Returnees Performance Evaluation (RPE) and Balance Score Card (BSC) as these indicators form the framework upon which the study was done.

The findings show that the returnees were mostly specialized personnel in top and middle management (95.1%) with 68.7% of them in normal operational management of the organizations. This opened opportunities to practice their skills in both management and technical fields. In these fields, the employers (90.5%) reported that they always/sometimes delegated work and made decisions often/always (50.4%). Delegation of work was practiced in all the countries with Ghana, Zambia and Cape Verde (90.0%) leading. Decision making by the returnees in Ghana, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe were done very often/always (above 40% as opposed to other countries with less than this). Delegation and frequency in decision making are higher in the private (84.8% and 52.1%) and quasi-public sectors (75.0% and 25.0%). In addition, the performance of the returnees was outstanding.

79.8% of the returnees contributed to the financial growth of the organizations through income generation and cost-saving measures (67.7%). Uganda and Zambia had the highest (95.2% and 88.%) reported returnees contributing to the financial growth of the organizations. Whereas those in the private (95.1%) and quasi-public sectors (90.9%) contributed much more financially.

The results of the study also show that most of the returnees made the performance of the organizations better (89.9%). The Organizations were stable and growing (87.4%). The same applies to the self-employed returnees businesses (94.7%). They brought new skills (24.8%) and transferred (39.8%) the same to the organizations. In Uganda (73.6%), Zambia (76.9%) and Cape Verde (80%) there was much transfer of new skills than in the other countries. These percentages were higher in both quasi-public and private sectors (80% and 69.3% respectively). Almost (93.6%) all the returnees transferred both new knowledge, technology and management skills to the organizations and were always/sometimes (90.5%) competent in doing so.

¹ For inclusion in the analysis returnees employed must have worked for at least 10 months while the self-employed for 6 months.

The study also showed that the self-employed returnees reported transferring technical skills (66.7%) and management skills (61.1%) to the organizations and countries where they are working in. In addition, they adopted modern management practices and information technology (55.6%) and formation of strategic networks (27.8%) to bring about innovation.

The employers stated that competitors rated them very highly/highly (92.6%) and 90.2% of the employers attributed this perception to the returnees. The results for the specific countries and sectors (public, private & quasi-public) were similar. The self-employed returnees also reported that professional bodies were happy with them (58.8%) and continued to get many customers despite high competition (94.7%). Specialized skills and dedication to work (76.5%) assisted them to overcome competition.

To strengthen the impact of the returnees in the workplace in the future, in addition to more countries benefiting, it is hereby recommended that:

- The programme should be extended to enable more returnees to go back to their developing countries so that they could participate in national building, as the knowledge they have is scarce and highly needed. Poor countries spend a lot of resources in human capital development, especially training in developed countries. It is good, if the trained personnel return to their countries to participate in national building. Since voluntary return has been difficult for the most qualified professionals, then IOM could be used to bridge this gap;
- Baseline data should be collected at the time the returnee reports to the organization. During the evaluation period, the assessor should visit these organizations to collect data on the major factors to be considered (like finance, technology and so on) which would be compared with the baseline data. This would require more financial resources and time. This could assist in quantifying impact at the workplace and therefore increase the quality in the measurement of impact;
- For closer monitoring, effectiveness and efficiency during assessment stage, IOM needs to forge closer links with the organizations the returnees are working. Some of the returnees could be used as case studies during recruitment of returnees. This could increase motivation and acceptability of the programme;
- To increase the quality in the measurement of impact, the designing of programmes should include impact measures at the design stage;
- In future impact assessment, case studies could be used to strengthen the reports;
- The study should be repeated after 2 or 3 years. Impact assessment is a dynamic concept and measuring it at different times, with varied factors, would reduce externalities and other causal effects; and
- Only 10 countries out of 19 responded (a small percentage given that IOM was in touch with the employers), therefore the eight weeks should be increased to twelve weeks to ensure the employers have sufficient time to respond.