

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

EVALUATION UNIT

**EVALUATION OF THE RETURN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
FOR CROATIA (RAP)**

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IOM International Organization for Migration

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Return Assistance Program (RAP) implemented in Croatia during 1998 and 1999 was a response to the needs of that country, as seen through the eyes of the donor, in the areas of reconciliation, return, and reconstruction. RAP was a USD 13.6 million program, funded entirely by USAID. This evaluation focuses on two problematic elements of the program; construction and management.

The success of the program, or the lack thereof, has to be seen in light of constraints resulting from what was a very problematic decision-making process and relationship among three partners: USAID, the US Embassy, and IOM. The partners found it very difficult to come to decisions on policies, partnership agreements, which projects to implement, measurements of success, etc. To add to that there were significant personality clashes that made a difficult situation even worse.

In general, the program was more successful in the more political aspects, e.g., reconciliation, and IOM staff were respected for their knowledge of the four geographic sectors in which RAP operated. There were certainly successes in opening up the administrative structure at the local level to policies intended to promote reconciliation and return.

Some targets were established by the program, e.g., to reach partnership agreements with 16 municipalities to which 30,000 people would return, although no direct assistance was provided to returnees under the program. These targets were nearly met, as agreements were signed with 14 municipalities, with 2 additional agreements ready for signing at the time that the program ended. To those 16 municipalities, the program final report records 30,100 returns, which included returns to all municipalities as from 1 January 1998, irrespective of when the agreement was signed.

The more problematic part of the program was that of project implementation, where construction was the main activity, as only USD 2.9 million was spent of the USD 10 million available. As nearly all of the budget for staff and office costs was spent, this meant that the ratio of staff and office costs to projects delivered was very high.

IOM's lack of success in construction can be attributed to having no institutional capacity in that field and to insufficient recognition of what this lack would mean in project implementation. IOM decisions, including staffing choices, made at both the Headquarters and Field level, contributed to these problems.

