



**Evaluating IOM's  
Return and  
Reintegration  
Activities for  
Returnees and  
Other Displaced  
Populations  
AFGHANISTAN**

**FULL REPORT**



**Samuel Hall.** ([www.samuelhall.org](http://www.samuelhall.org)) is a research and consulting company with headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. We specialise in socio-economic surveys, private and public sector studies, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessments for governmental, non-governmental and international organisations. Our teams of field practitioners, academic experts and local interviewers have years of experience leading research in Afghanistan. We use our expertise to balance needs of beneficiaries with the requirements of development actors. This has enabled us to acquire a firm grasp of the political and socio-cultural context in the country; design data collection methods and statistical analyses for monitoring, evaluating, and planning sustainable programmes and to apply cross-disciplinary knowledge in providing integrated solutions for efficient and effective interventions.

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**This report should be cited using the following reference:**

**Samuel Hall Consulting (2014), “Evaluating IOM’s Return and Reintegration activities for Returnees and Other Displaced Populations”, commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kabul.**

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## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANDMA</b>	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
<b>BPRM</b>	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
<b>BDS</b>	Business Development Support
<b>BSC</b>	Beneficiary Selection Committee
<b>CDC</b>	Community Development Council
<b>CPAN</b>	Child Protection Action Network
<b>DoRR</b>	Department of Refugees and Repatriation
<b>EVI</b>	Extremely Vulnerable Individual
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IP</b>	Implementing Partner
<b>LAS</b>	Land Allocation Site
<b>MoLSAMD</b>	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
<b>MoRR</b>	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MRRD</b>	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>NSDP</b>	National Skills Development Programme
<b>PSN</b>	Persons with Special Needs
<b>SAP</b>	Shelter Assistance Programme
<b>SCA</b>	Swedish Committee of Afghanistan
<b>UNAMA</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>VRF</b>	Voluntary Repatriation Form
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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How can IOM best achieve the dual objective of return and reintegration in challenging and complex environments that are conflict and post conflict settings? This question drives IOM's strategic and operational efforts given the inherent difficulty of balancing short-term (return) and long-term (reintegration) needs of uprooted populations.

This evaluation presents key findings from an assessment of IOM's return and reintegration activities (2008 – 2013) in the Kabul, Nangarhar, Nimroz and Herat. These activities included: post-arrival assistance, livelihood assistance and shelter assistance for deported and voluntary returnees and other vulnerable groups. The evaluation draws lessons on the relevance and impact of return and reintegration activities – these lessons can be used to strengthen future iterations of these projects in Afghanistan, and can provide lessons learned for other country contexts. Building on the strengths of IOM, this evaluation recommends actions to allow the organisation to reach *beyond* its current achievements, address *gaps*, and increase the wellbeing of the uprooted.

**Beyond return, aiming for reintegration:** Overall, the evaluation finds that IOM's strength lies in emergency assistance rather than efforts to build livelihoods: immediate needs upon return are addressed more adequately than longer-term reintegration needs. IOM's strength also lies in its flexibility and ability to target vulnerable groups with specific needs within the returnee populations. These groups are particularly likely to face difficulties in their reintegration process. Recommendations are made in this report to balance out IOM's achievements for greater impact and sustainability, targeting vulnerable sub-groups with specific types of vulnerability, should reintegration – and not just a safe return – remain a programming focus.

**Beyond a strategy, addressing common implementation challenges:** The implementation of the projects present several crosscutting issues that create obstacles on the ground. These include the limited ability of staff to properly select beneficiaries and target groups, a disparate coverage of provinces and finally, a lack of coordination with stakeholders. These are problems for which solutions rest in: increasing the training of staff to

properly identify and target vulnerable groups, tightening the geographic coverage and communicating more frequently with other agencies to increase IOM's added value and limit the overlap of resources and activities.

**Beyond a project-based perspective, fostering programming synergies:** IOM is a project-based organisation, which comes with its challenges, such as the limited synergies between projects. However, with the backing of one donor – the Government of Japan – IOM can push for greater synergies between projects, from emergency return assistance to livelihood and longer-term interventions, to integrate beneficiaries within a 'cycle of assistance' and to consolidate follow-up and monitoring activities.

This executive summary presents challenges and recommendations of use to IOM's return and reintegration programmes globally. Challenges pertain to the complexities of conflict and post-conflict settings, as well as to inherent strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. These can be addressed to ensure that return and reintegration remains a balanced approach – rather than a logistical operation – focused on safe and dignified return. The key for IOM is to build on the flexibility it gets from its project-based approach by

addressing challenges that this very approach creates. How can IOM best develop a model of reintegration for returnees and other uprooted populations?

## **1. BEYOND RETURN, AIMING FOR REINTEGRATION**

*The evaluation finds a clear short-term impact across provinces and activities, with a greater strength in emergency assistance and limited long-lasting effects on reintegration. Overall, the evaluation shows that IOM's ability to address the immediate needs of returnees is not matched by a similar ability to respond to the longer-term challenges of reintegration. IOM's focus on vulnerable groups with specific needs is welcome but incomplete: more attention on the impact and sustainability of IOM's activities is needed to go beyond the safe return of these groups and facilitate their reintegration.*

**IOM's post-arrival activities proved reliable and efficient at supporting the safe return of IOM's population of concern and at bearing a specific attention to most vulnerable sub-groups within its population of concern.**

- In particular, **the evaluation found that IOM's post arrival activities**

ran smoothly, a high level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries and that the activities had been efficiently adjusted to the migratory context, including an increasing number of vulnerable populations based on the needs on the ground. It appears that **IOM is particularly good at providing post-arrival support to sub-groups in need of specific assistance modalities.** IOM's attention to unaccompanied minors is a case in point.

- More strategically though, **the impact of post-arrival activities is constrained by the poor articulation between IOM's return and reintegration components** of the projects that prevent a longitudinal follow-up on the most vulnerable supported by the organisation.

→ The evaluation recommends building on IOM's successful support to the most vulnerable by developing tailored interventions up until reintegration for Unaccompanied Minors (UAM), male drug-addicts and female heads of household.

**IOM's livelihood assistance activities are hugely relevant in the Afghan context but the evaluation found internal flaws that limit its impact on**

**the socio-economic reintegration of target populations.**

- The study found a **limited impact of the programme on livelihood**, especially for female beneficiaries as i) 62% of women reported only partial to no knowledge of the skills they were taught; ii) 75% of beneficiaries neither use their skills in a job nor earn money using the skills they learnt. The long-term impact of livelihood assistance is therefore questionable.

Three aspects can be evoked to explain this weakness of the assistance:

**High reliance on traditional skills**, in particular for women, limits the capacity of beneficiaries to meet the demands of the labour market. Increasingly urban skills have been included in the project, a positive trend that should be encouraged.

The **limited level of qualification of trainers** is overall lower in rural areas, limiting the quality of the training provided.

**Insufficient monitoring and follow-up mechanisms** are also critical in limiting access to livelihood for beneficiaries and in preventing IOM from assessing the impact of its programme in the mid- and long run.

- **Positive effects include the space opened for women's sociability.** This should be built upon.

→ The research recommends that the livelihood assistance be better tailored to address the needs of specific vulnerable sub-groups – through greater training and strengthening of the training staff and content: IOM will achieve its objectives only through a stronger **Training of Trainers (ToT)** programme component. Follow-up mechanisms and a focus on the market integration of beneficiaries should be included in the design of the future projects. IOM should also develop a causal chain model to develop the positive effects that the programme has on the community, from an increased sociability for women to a stronger training of trainers.

**Shelter assistance addresses a proven need of populations on the move and represents a first step in the reintegration process.**

- In terms of sustainability, the impact of the shelter project depends heavily on the local economic conditions and the availability of basic services. When those are lacking, secondary displacement

occurrence can be high, limiting the sustainability of the intervention.

- The study found different levels of IP performance across provinces and accusations of graft from beneficiaries that are concerning. IOM's monitoring system needs be consolidated for greater accountability and transparency.
- Community-based monitoring systems are to be relied upon for an increase in oversight of IPs.
- Coordination with UNHCR, NRC and other shelter providers is the only way to ensure changes in a more holistic way.
- Advocacy efforts to adapt shelter assistance across agencies will benefit from stronger partnership, to speak with a louder voice to donors and government alike.

## **2. BEYOND A STRATEGY, ADDRESSING COMMON IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

*The evaluation finds that IOM's activities were implemented relatively smoothly, across provinces and activities. Yet, a series of key cross-cutting issues have to be addressed in priority as they limit the longer-term impact of IOM's projects:*

**Loose beneficiary selection mechanisms** due to the lack of clarity of projects' documents and guidelines. In particular, vulnerability criteria are not well operationalized in the field and those who are easily identified are more likely to receive aid than the most vulnerable. This is particularly true for reintegration activities characterized by a poor integration of IDPs and other vulnerable returnees, especially female-headed households and widows.

→ Clarifying selection guidelines and vulnerability criteria for staff on the ground through improved training and sensitisation of IOM field staff – this is a need that is both constant and cyclical

→ Reinforcing links between return and reintegration to better identify the most vulnerable at the time of return and keeping track of them throughout the reintegration process.

→ A layered targeting – first, aiming at the most vulnerable; second, at those with the most potential within the vulnerable. This will create a positive cycle by example, and will nurture sustainability and empowerment.

**The relevance of locations selected to implement IOM activities can be questioned** at two levels:

- **Overlap in** the number of organisations limit the relevance and efficiency of IOM's activities.
- **Geographic characteristics** limit the sustainability of the projects' outcomes (e.g. Taqi Naqi township in Herat province). IOM's presence in Nimroz, on the other hand, is useful given the lack of attention that this province receives.

→ In order to optimize the use of limited resources and funds, the selection of areas of implementation should be more structured and based on pre-assessments of needs as well as a robust mapping of actors.

→ This mapping of actors will then inform IOM's future Partnership Strategy on return and reintegration.

**Whilst IOM and UNHCR have set up coordination mechanisms for post-arrival assistance, the evaluation found disconnects in further coordination:**

- Between IOM and IPs leading to delays in implementation;
- With other assistance providers as shelter and livelihood are not included in the existing coordination mechanisms.

→ IOM should advocate for a better inclusion of shelter and livelihood within the existing coordination framework to bridge this coordination gap.

- **The lack of financial and technical follow-up limits the sustainability and effectiveness of IOM's activities.**
- In particular, the lack of start-up funds for livelihood assistance limited the ability of beneficiaries to use their new skills and earn money.
- The lack of post-activity monitoring also weakens IOM's ability to identify issues and follow-up on them once the activity is over.
- The in-existent monitoring of beneficiaries after activities are over reduces the chances for IOM to draw lessons from projects' implementation and for beneficiaries to give their opinion on the assistance they received.

→ There is a clear need for the establishment of a robust monitoring, evaluation and follow-up framework for IOM's activities on return and reintegration. The lack thereof is clearly impeding the sustainability of IOM's interventions.

## CONCLUSION - CREATING SYNERGIES BEYOND IOM'S PROJECT-BASED APPROACH

Overall, the evaluation shows that IOM's project-based approach is both a strength and a weakness when it comes to addressing the needs of uprooted populations through return and reintegration activities.

*On the one hand*, it gives IOM the flexibility to adapt rapidly its activities to a changing context – a precious capacity in conflict and post-conflict settings, where movements of population fluctuate rapidly. In the Afghan context, IOM proved able to re-define its target groups and increasingly include sub-groups with specific needs.

*On the other hand*, implementation challenges are also linked with its project-based approach, which reduces IOM's capacities to implement sufficient pre-implementation and post-implementation mechanisms to guarantee the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of its activities. It also limits the overall logic of IOM's intervention on return and reintegration as the organization does not respond to a larger framework that would articulate the projects to optimize IOM's impact. Reintegration is the component that suffers the most from this delinking.

Recommendations in this report propose ways to go beyond the shortcomings of IOM's project-based approach, while making the most of its advantages. For an optimal use of resources, this evaluation recommends to reduce IOM's geographic scope and target groups to a few of the most vulnerable sub-groups, such as unaccompanied minors, female-headed households, drug-addicted households and IDPs. On the other hand, the evaluation recommends integrating these beneficiaries in a cycle of assistance that would link IOM's return and reintegration activities, creating synergies between each of its projects. This would allow IOM to increase the relevance of its intervention in a field where numerous actors are active, while increasing the long-term impact of its activities for groups who face the greatest challenges to reintegrate in the Afghan society.

A key point is that IOM is not to do all this alone. But It should be at the forefront of efforts to build a robust partnership strategy and referral system to include beneficiaries from the vulnerable groups identified above in a proper cycle of assistance, starting with the safe return and finishing with a sustainable reintegration.

This strategic plan is an opportunity for IOM to rationalise its return and reintegration activities and to optimise

the use of its resources through the focus on a few key target groups. The following three-step action plan details which actions IOM should follow to operationalize this strategic plan.

Based on the results of this evaluation, a three-step action plan is recommended to strengthen future IOM programming:

STEPS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY
<p><b>STRENGTHEN POST-ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE AND LINKAGES TO DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE</b></p>	<p><b>Addressing the weaknesses of 2008-2013 round of projects to increase impact and sustainability:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly define vulnerability criteria</li> <li>2. Streamline IP's interventions to implement guidelines equally across provinces and households</li> <li>3. Create synergies with livelihood assistance</li> <li>4. Create synergies with shelter assistance</li> </ol>	<p><b>Integrate post-arrival assistance and reintegration activities in a cycle of assistance.</b> Linkages should be made with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migration and Displacement partners on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Protection</li> <li>o Livelihoods</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Development partners: to link emergency assistance with early recovery and development assistance</li> </ul>
<p><b>DEVELOP FOUR STAND-ALONE PROGRAMMES TO TARGET VULNERABLE SUB-GROUPS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IDPs</li> <li>- UAMs</li> <li>- DISPLACED WOMEN</li> <li>- DRUG-AFFECTED HOUSEHOLDS</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prioritize the following target groups:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>IOM Programme to facilitate the return of IDPs:</b> Although IDPs predominantly wish for local integration, IOM should assess the needs of those who want to return, but are unable to, return to their homes. The return and reintegration of IDPs is a separate programme that focuses on immediate and shelter needs of IDPs.</li> <li>2. <b>IOM support to Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs):</b> this programme should focus on an extended period of immediate and post arrival assistance with greater shelter and transportation assistance, and child protection activities tailored to integrating UAMs in schools, clinics and supporting livelihoods training for their families.</li> <li>3. <b>IOM support to women's resilience in displacement:</b> IOM programming to strengthen women's resilience with the following components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Tighter skills assessments: <b>An Urban Skills Toolkit</b></li> <li>b) <b>Training of Trainers:</b> curriculum of training best tailored to women and local labour market needs</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. <b>IOM support to drug-affected households:</b> Improve programmes targeting drug-affected households returning from Iran in Herat and</li> </ol>	<p><b>Develop a separate partnership strategy for each of these programmes:</b></p> <p>A robust identification system – to identify IDPs, UAMs, vulnerable women and female-headed households, and drug-affected households – will require the input of specialists from the following entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child protection partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o CPAN members</li> <li>o UNICEF</li> <li>o Child protection NGOs</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Medical partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Médecins du Monde</li> <li>o WHO</li> <li>o Health Cluster members</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Research partners</li> </ul>

	<p>Nimroz. Adopt a two-phased approach: i) identification of cases at the transit centre; ii) Specific assistance cycle including medical treatment and a social and economic re-integration programme</p>	
<p><b>BUILD A SYSTEMATIC MONITORING FRAMEWORK BASED ON GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFICITIES AND CAUSAL CHAIN MECHANISMS</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Build a provincial evaluation mechanism and lessons learned to strengthen national programming</b> – the evaluation found differences across provinces and a lack of mechanisms to learn from past implementation and replicate best practices. A solid internal M&amp;E structure should be developed for return &amp; reintegration activities.</li> <li><b>2. Identify IOM’s geographic added value:</b> The study shows positive results in Nimroz, a left-out province in terms of the assistance delivered and of the number of stakeholders present. IOM’s added value in a province left out by other stakeholders, a province at the border of both Iran and Pakistan and home to mixed migration trends (cross-border irregular movements, trafficking in persons, voluntary and forced returns, as well as increasing internal displacement trends) should be strengthened.</li> </ol>	<p>IOM will need to improve its information base to build a monitoring framework, based on the cooperation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Community members</b> through a community-based monitoring system. This can be done through CDCs or focal points that will report incidents and complaints directly to IOM</li> <li>- <b>Implementing partners</b> will have to strengthen their reporting mechanism in line with new guidelines built to highlight local specificities (both successes and weaknesses to be addressed). IPs will be required to provide solutions.</li> <li>- <b>Third party evaluators</b> who will track objectives using a longitudinal and comparative perspective</li> </ul>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. Context: IOM and the evolving Afghan return and reintegration context

In 2014 Afghanistan, migratory movements represent a key dynamic in a country where various types of movements form the texture of a fluid society: voluntary returns, cross-border migration, internal displacement, forced returns, human trafficking or rural to urban migration are the canvas of a complex and evolving migratory context. These different types of migration come with their specific forms of vulnerability, rendering complex the response to the growing needs of a population on the move. Current migratory trends do call for an appraisal of the most effective forms of humanitarian assistance to returnees and IDPs in the country:

- Internal displacement due to both conflict and natural disasters is on the rise. UNHCR estimates conflict-induced IDPs to be over 630,000 in the country and the current political and security transition may push further groups into forced internal displacement,
- A noticeable increase of deportation with a peak at more than 250,000 deportees in 2012 from Iran has yet to abate<sup>1</sup>,
- The decrease of voluntary returns to the country has been a steady trend over the past years and the numbers are likely to keep going down. UNHCR recorded only about 30,000 voluntary returns between January and end of August 2013, representing one of the lowest rates of voluntary returns since the beginning of UNHCR return operation in 2002<sup>2</sup>,
- Urbanisation of returnee and IDPs caseloads, as both groups are increasingly unable or unwilling to return to their place of origin, resulting in a 'massive influx of returnee and IDPs to urban areas'<sup>3</sup> changing drastically the context of assistance.

For organisations assisting populations on the move, like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), one key challenge is then to keep adapting its activities to a dynamic environment. A second important challenge is to map the needs adequately to avoid seeing specific groups of concern falling into the cracks of assistance.

IOM has a specific role to play in that matter, as the organisation has the flexibility to develop activities tailored to the needs of migrant groups, such as victims of human trafficking or unaccompanied minors, and has the experience in addressing their needs.<sup>4</sup> On the other side of the coin, IOM's project-based functioning makes it more difficult to develop a coherent and continuous strategy towards its population of concern. In particular, robust monitoring and evaluation and internal systems of lessons learned are sometimes missing. In order to bridge that gap, IOM commissioned Samuel Hall to evaluate its return and reintegration activities for returnees and other vulnerable populations between 2008 and 2013. The present evaluation represents a great

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (August 2013), "Volrep and Border Monitoring Monthly Update," <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5230447b4.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Hall Consulting / MGSOG (2012), "UNHCR Shelter Assistance Programme Evaluation," for UNHCR,

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Hall (2014), "Old Practice, New Chains : Modern Slavery in Afghanistan. A study of Human Trafficking from 2003 to 2013," for IOM, forthcoming publication.

opportunity to draw on lessons learned and identify the key strategic and programmatic adjustments necessary for IOM to adapt to the 2014 Afghan migratory context.

## 1.2. Background: Assessing the impact of IOM's return and reintegration activities for returnees from Iran/Pakistan and returned IDPs

IOM has been active in Afghanistan since 1991. For five years, from March 2008 to February 2013, the IOM Mission in Afghanistan has implemented five programmes for returnees from Iran and Pakistan, as well as for returned internally displaced persons (IDPs), funded by the Government of Japan. These include activities cover a range of humanitarian to development assistance, as follows:

- *Post-arrival transportation and humanitarian assistance* to vulnerable undocumented (non-refugee) Afghans from Iran and Pakistan,
- *Shelter assistance* through the support for the community-based construction of permanent shelters,
- *Individual livelihood assistance* through the provision of vocational and business skills training or the provision of business start-up support,
- *Community development projects* to support the construction of small community infrastructures as community development projects led by Community Development Councils (CDCs).

The objectives and goals of the project are broad as they cover a range of activities from emergency relief to development assistance – and further target different groups, from returning undocumented Afghans from Iran and Pakistan, to deportees and other displaced groups, and internally displaced persons.

This evaluation will focus on three of these objectives (leaving out community development projects), and will focus on two beneficiary groups namely, returning Afghans from Iran and Pakistan and returning IDPs in four target provinces: Herat, Nimroz, Kabul and Nangarhar.

## 1.3. Objectives of the research

This external evaluation assesses the extent to which the activities have succeeded in fulfilling objectives, identifies the strengths and weaknesses of IOM activities in supporting the return and reintegration process of IOM's beneficiaries and provides recommendations to improve future programming activities. The evaluation framework relies on the five OECD-DAC evaluation criteria - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – to reach three sets of objectives:

**First, from a strict evaluation perspective, the research asks if IOM's projects contribute to the safe return and reintegration of returnees and IDPs and to what extent?**

- A. Assessing fulfilment of programme objectives:** quantitative and qualitative research will enable determination of whether or not activities performed correspond to the objectives defined in the five project documents.
- B. Identifying strengths and weaknesses of IOM activities:** this SWOT analysis will enable researchers to provide an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of activities according to the five evaluation criteria to be reviewed.

**Second, from a strategic perspective, the research assesses whether IOM activities target returnees and IDPs appropriately?**

**C. Evaluates IOM activities in the context of broader return and reintegration challenges in Afghanistan by analysing the:**

- Relevance of target population,
- Geographic focus of IOM programming,
- Appropriateness of safe return and reintegration as programming objectives.

**Third and to conclude, the research provides recommendations based on the above to better inform IOM strategic decisions and programming:**

**D. Focus of efforts:** based on the previous two analyses, where is the intersection between IOM operations, IOM's skills and its target population's needs? Which lessons can be taken away from this evaluation and how can IOM's programming adapt to the current migratory context in Afghanistan for its future programming?

#### **Box 1.1 - Key Concepts and Definitions**

The 2011 *IOM Glossary on Migration 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* defines **reintegration** as the “Re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence”. Reintegration is three-fold: cultural, economic and social.

IOM targeted groups with differing backgrounds and needs with the same post-arrival and reintegration activities:

- **Returnees:** Those who have gone through the process of return, that is to say, “the act or process of going back to the point of departure.” This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning IDPs and demobilized combatants; or from a host country to the country of origin, as in the case of refugees, asylum seekers, and qualified nationals. There are subcategories of return which can describe the way the return is implemented, e.g. voluntary, forced, assisted and spontaneous return; as well as sub-categories which describe who is participating in the return, e.g. repatriation (for refugees). *2011 IOM Glossary on Migration*
- These **returnees** can be both **undocumented** or **refugees**: “A refugee, according to the Convention, is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” *Introductory note to 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Geneva 2010*
- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** “Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.” *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (as cited in “Challenges of IDP Protection”*

## 1.4. Report Outline

**Chapters 1 and 2** – Background, objectives, key concepts and methodology

**Chapter 3** – Evaluation of post-arrival activities

**Chapter 4** – Evaluation of the livelihood component of the reintegration activities,

**Chapter 5** – Evaluation of shelter assistance activities

**Chapter 6** – Cross-cutting issues

**Chapter 7** – SWOT analysis of IOM's activities and recommendations for IOM in its future strategic planning regarding return and reintegration assistance to target populations.



## 2.METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1. RESEARCH STRUCTURE

#### Research components

Research for this project included a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative component was composed of:

- 588 household surveys, and
- 15 community leader surveys.

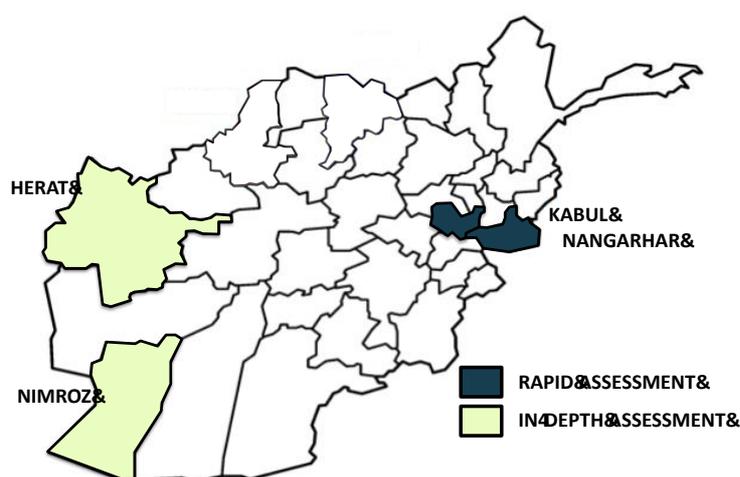
The qualitative component consisted of:

- 3 focus group discussions,
- 13 case studies,
- 16 field site observations, and
- 27 key informant interviews.

The research was designed to allow for 2 types of analysis:

- **Longitudinal analysis:**  
The research tools were structured to allow for comparison to the 2009 Evaluation of the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Returnees from Iran and Pakistan (IOM's RARIP programme). The data from the 2009 evaluation was used as a baseline to measure progress.
- **Comparative assessment:**  
A control group of non-beneficiaries presenting similar profiles to beneficiaries (but, where possible, who had never been displaced / migrated) was included to strengthen understanding of the activities' impact.

#### Geographic Scope



Research was conducted in two phases: one in-depth and one rapid assessment.

- **Phase I. In-depth assessment: HERAT, NIMROZ**

Herat and Nimroz were chosen for in-depth coverage due to the presence and volume of all three activities. Nimroz province was also chosen for an in-depth assessment to fill in the

Figure 2.1 - Geographic scope of the evaluation

knowledge and data gaps that exist about this key border province.

- **Phase II. Rapid assessment: KABUL, NANGARHAR**

Kabul’s assessment focused on livelihood assistance, while in Nangarhar the focus was on post-arrival assistance and shelter assistance. The smaller scope of IOM activities in both provinces called for a rapid assessment.

## 2.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

### Household Survey

The household survey consisted of 117 closed-ended questions organized in distinct sections about migration history, socio-economic situation, reintegration measures and assistance received – including three sections on post-arrival assistance, livelihood assistance and shelter assistance.

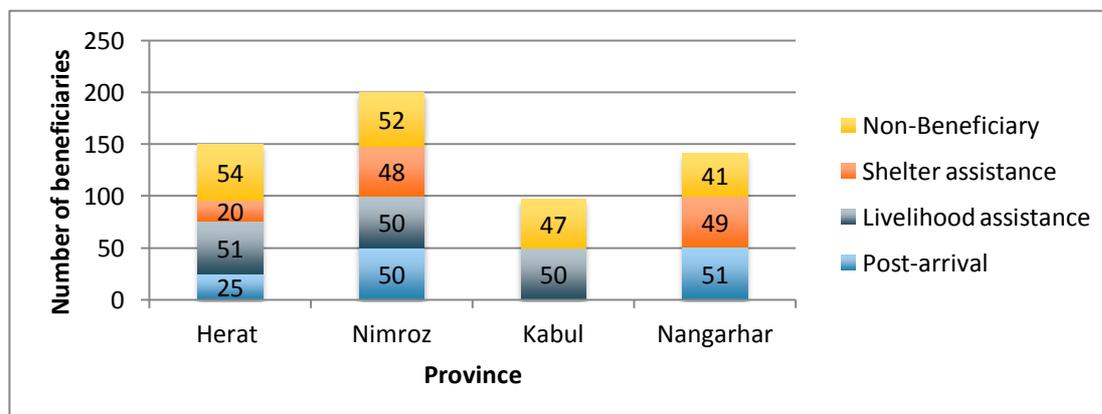
IOM staff, implementing partners (IPs) and National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) representatives provided the research team with partial lists of beneficiaries in each area. The research team selected villages to visit at random, within the constraints of safety and accessibility.

Within each village, **the research team interviewed beneficiaries chosen at random from the contact lists given to Samuel Hall**; choice of respondents was guided by presence and availability of the beneficiaries, and as such is not necessarily representative. Research team spoke village leaders and beneficiaries to find potential non-beneficiary respondents fulfilling the criteria above.

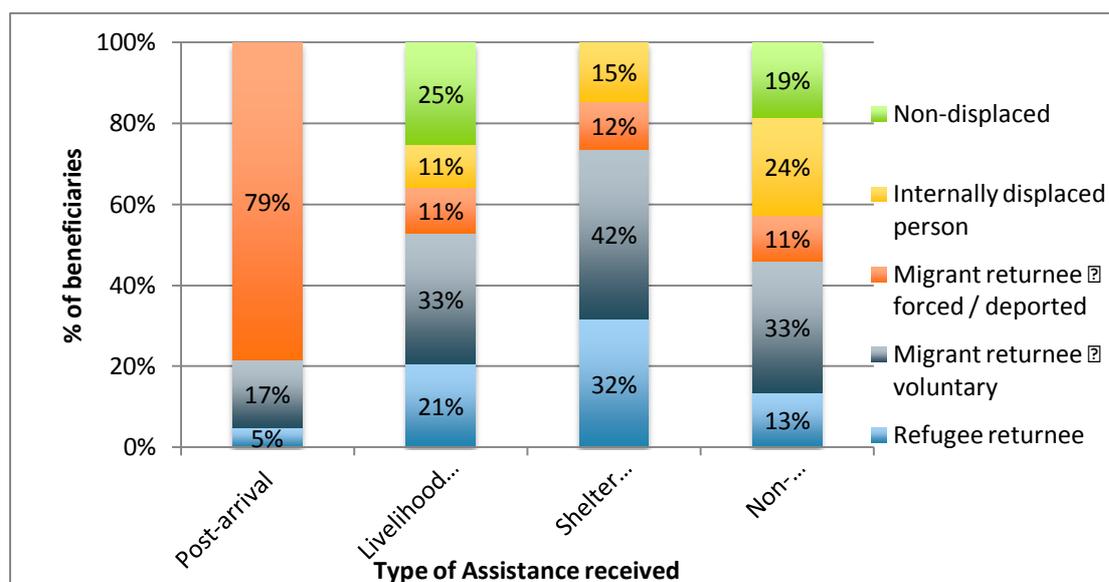
The 588 household survey respondents belonged to 4 categories:

- 126 beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance,
- 151 beneficiaries of livelihood assistance,
- 117 beneficiaries of shelter assistance, and
- 194 non-beneficiaries.

**Figure 2.2 - HH Survey Respondents by Province and Type of Assistance Received**



**Figure 2.3 - HH Survey Respondents by Province and Type of Assistance Received**



While the vast majority of interviews were conducted in person, the addition of telephone interviews with beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance enabled the inclusion of beneficiaries currently located in areas inaccessible to researchers for safety reasons. When conducting telephone interviews, researchers purposefully selected beneficiaries in districts otherwise inaccessible to make beneficiary sample more representative of activities as a whole.

### Community Leader Survey

To triangulate information, the research team interviewed community leaders in the villages visited, inquiring about the assistance provided in the community and general socio-economic profile of the community. The majority of community leaders interviewed were either members or leaders of the *shura* (11 of 15), although *Maliks* (1 of 15), *Wakils* (2 of 15) and one representative of local migrants (1 of 15) were also interviewed.

## 2.3. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

### Focus Group Discussions and Case Studies

The research team conducted **3 focus group discussions**, and **13 case studies** with questions intended to elicit a more nuanced understanding of the needs and challenges facing IOM's beneficiaries. These interviews included questions on:

- Nature of assistance provided (type, quality, duration, etc.),
- Selection process,
- Correspondence of assistance provided to greatest needs of beneficiaries, and
- Community attitudes towards assistance and beneficiaries.

The low concentration and availability of beneficiaries in one location made it difficult for the field team to conduct as many focus group discussions as initially envisaged. For example, the research team found villages where very few shelters had been constructed by IOM, making it impossible to conduct the quantitative survey and a focus group in the same location. To go round this difficulty, the team conducted **case studies in locations where focus groups were impossible**. These followed the structure of the FGD questions but were conducted one-on-one with beneficiaries, either in person or by the phone, and provided in-depth individual profiles. The **13 case studies** conducted include the following:

- 3 case studies with beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance,
- 6 case studies with beneficiaries of livelihood training, and
- 4 case studies with beneficiaries of shelter assistance.

### Field Site Observations

To supplement and triangulate the information gathered during community leader interviews, researchers also completed **16 field site observation** forms. These provided information about access to services at the site, IPs operating in the area, assistance provided, any tensions caused by the assistance and the relative integration of beneficiaries. They were implemented to better understand the local context where IOM provided assistance and to assess key geographic variations.

### Key Informant Interviews

In order to get the view of national and international stakeholders on IOM activities, strategy and the general migratory context, researchers conducted a total of **27 key informant interviews** with IOM representatives, IP staff, and other local, national and international stakeholders (UNHCR, NRC, DRC, etc.). These interviews, consisting of open-ended questions, captured information about:

- IOM return and reintegration activities,
- Other organisations working in return and reintegration and their programming, and
- The evolution of the broader return and reintegration context in Afghanistan

## 2.4. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The main challenges faced include the following:

- **Security concerns limited access to certain districts and villages.** Particularly in Nangarhar and Nimroz, the regular presence of insurgents in areas where projects were implemented meant that the research team could not visit beneficiaries of all IPs. For example, in Nangarhar one of the two IPs' activities were entirely conducted in Rodat and Baktikot districts, both of which were inaccessible at the time of this evaluation.
- **The beneficiary contact information provided by IOM and IPs, when available, was out-of-date and limited.** As IPs were responsible for contact lists, and due to the time since implementation of many of the activities, the research team was not given complete beneficiary lists. This impeded the ability to implement fully randomized beneficiary

selection, and made finding beneficiaries challenging. This was particularly problematic in the case of post-arrival beneficiaries from Herat, as, prior to 2013 post-arrival beneficiaries were not asked to provide telephone numbers. The only way to identify them was thus to go to villages where several beneficiaries had stated the intention to go and inquire with community members to try to find them. In Nangarhar and Nimroz researchers found communities with high enough densities of post-arrival beneficiaries to be able to find them. However, in Herat province, the low numbers of beneficiaries in the communities visited made identification very challenging.

- **Beneficiary selection was further impacted by the input of IP/ village leaders on selection.** When the research teams did not have direct beneficiary contact information, they were in many cases forced to go through the implementing partner or local community leaders to identify beneficiaries. This may have introduced a selection bias as IPs, for example, may be more likely to put the team in touch with beneficiaries whom they know were satisfied with the services provided. In Nimroz, a representative from the IPs was necessary to find shelters in the given time. Bias was however mitigated by the fact that within the villages identified by the IP the research team generally tried to reach all shelter beneficiaries.

## 3. POST-ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE

IOM's track record on post-arrival assistance is positive – this is partly due to the fact that, logistically, post-arrival assistance follows a linear trajectory that facilitates design and implementation phases. Activities are focused on returning Afghan households (mainly unregistered/undocumented returnees) from Iran and Pakistan, who are identified at centres at border points and who are given a set of post-arrival support including transportation, non food items and cash for transportation. Within this pre-defined framework, IOM has managed to adapt to the evolving migration context by including deportees, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable families who required additional and special attention.

With this positive evolution in mind, our recommendation is two-fold:

*First*, build on lessons learned outlined in this section to strengthen post-arrival assistance, these include: strengthening vulnerability criteria, streamlining IPs' interventions to ensure that they follow the set guidelines equally across all households, increasing cooperation with UNHCR to avoid duplication of efforts and with other stakeholders to improve responsiveness and fill in gaps in assistance that result from variations in beneficiary numbers across time and locations.

*Second*, strengthen support to vulnerable groups by developing three stand-alone programmes and tailored interventions for: unaccompanied minors (UAMs), male drug-addicts and female-headed households, both being particularly numerous on the Iran border provinces since addiction begins in Iran and since heads of households are known to return to Iran for work in a mixed migration movement that will increasingly shape households' migration dynamics in Afghanistan.

### RELEVANCE

#### How relevant are the targets of post-arrival assistance?

- ✓ Over the course of the 5 projects evaluated, the target group for post-arrival assistance broadened, from uniquely including vulnerable deported families, to deported EVIs and vulnerable families and individuals who returned spontaneously to Afghanistan. This increased target population was based on robust field observations and identification of gaps in assistance, in coordination with UNHCR. The integration of individual deportees reflected the increase in deportations from Iran, whilst the inclusion of vulnerable spontaneous returnees responded to a gap in assistance.
- ✓ This shows a strong degree of flexibility and level of adaptation to the provincial migratory context, and a welcome vigilance to the relevance of their activities. **IOM optimizes its project-based approach by adapting its assistance to the relevant needs.**

#### How well does the assistance provided correspond to beneficiary needs?

- ✓ IOM also adapted the modalities of its projects to the special needs of some segments of its target population. In particular, unaccompanied minors, large families and single women were given specific assistance matching their needs, another positive result in terms of relevance of IOM activities.

- ✓ Beneficiaries are generally satisfied with the assistance they receive but ask for more. While it is sufficient to palliate the most immediate humanitarian needs, across provinces beneficiaries report the need for further help. Whilst it is normal for an emergency mechanism not to cover longer-term needs, these requests call for a better integration
- ✓ Between IOM's activities, especially return and reintegration.

#### Are there gaps in post-arrival assistance?

- ✓ The main gap identified for post-arrival is geographic: some returnees – mostly spontaneous ones – do not return to the country through the 3 transit centres, are missed by IOM.
- ✓ The NFI kits do not fully answer the needs of returnees. In particular, seasonality could be taken into account to avoid further protection issues upon return.

### EFFICIENCY

#### Have the projects inputs been used and converted into desired results in an efficient manner?

Barring a few instances of NFI supplies running out, **post-arrival assistance runs smoothly within its current objectives** but there remain a few shortcomings that limit an efficient implementation:

- ✓ The vulnerability criterion is relatively loosely applied. For example, the definition of 'very poor families' used in Nangarhar province to determine which families would get further assistance, including NFI kits, is very loose.
- ✓ On the other hand, large families were sometimes given 2 kits, opening the door for uncertainty in the process and inequality between households.
- ✓ Logistics failed at adapting the process to daily variations in the number of returnees, leading to gaps in assistance.
- ✓ Coordination with UNHCR does not prevent frauds and duplication. For example, IOM has no means of preventing people who have gone back and forth between Afghanistan and Iran or Pakistan several times and who have benefited from assistance from UNHCR in the past from subsequently going to IOM for help as an undocumented returnee.
- ✓ Rare instances of mishandling of NFI kits by IPs were reported, suggesting that this may be a weakness in IOM's system.

### IMPACT

#### What is the impact of IOM post-arrival assistance on return?

- ✓ IOM's post-arrival assistance contributes positively to the **safe return** of vulnerable categories of returnees, especially unaccompanied minors. Its transportation component is strong and helps people commuting to the place of their choice.
- ✓ The impact of IOM is the greatest in Herat and Nimroz, when the organization targets deportees and UAMs as these populations present the highest level of vulnerability and benefit more from the services offered in the transit centres.
- ✓ The impact of the NFI kits is debatable, as people do not always agree on the relevance of the items they receive. An alternative cash-based assistance could provide more flexibility and a greater impact on returnees' return.
- ✓ A lack of articulation with longer-term needs, especially shelter and livelihood, limits the sustainability and safety of the return of IOM beneficiaries, of whom a proportion may attempt to migrate again to Iran.

- ✓ Further specific needs upon return could be envisaged to increase the impact of IOM’s post-arrival activities. For example, 4 and 6% of returnees in Herat and Nimroz declared being drug-addicts, a situation that is likely to endanger the return and reintegration process and brings further risks. Specific mechanisms should be in place to assist persons with specific needs straight from the point of return but that requires a more robust identification.

### 3.1. Adjusting post-arrival services and targeting to the needs

#### Post-arrival services tailored to a variety of target groups

IOM has been providing assistance funded by the Government of Japan at several border crossings since 2008. During this time period, programme activities have experienced both a **broadening of the definition of target beneficiaries as well as refinements in the manner in which assistance is provided.**

Potential beneficiaries are first screened at the border, as returnees (both deported and voluntary) are split by DoRR representatives into undocumented and documented groups, the former going to IOM and the latter to UNHCR. **IOM representatives then screen the undocumented population to identify the most vulnerable people.** At this point, IOM provides **immediate emergency aid to qualified individuals:** currently, vulnerable deported families, deported EVIs, vulnerable undocumented returnees and vulnerable documents claimants. IOM offers, at this “zero-point”,

- Basic medical facilities and care,
- Food,
- Hygienic facilities, and
- Transportation to the transit centre.

At the transit centre, all types of beneficiaries are eligible for the following types of **short-term aid:**

- Cash/ bus tickets home, and
- Accommodations for 1-2 nights until departure for final destination (certain cases, such as medical cases and unaccompanied minor, may benefit from more long-term accommodations)

While beneficiaries are staying at the transit centres they are provided with meals and shelter. And additional efforts have been made to ensure their comfort, like in Herat for example where the GTC has a game room for unaccompanied minors.

**Families** may also receive:

- Packages of non-food items (1-2 per family depending on family size) when without household items,<sup>5</sup> and
- World Food Programme one time 1 month packages of food.

**The main difference in the specific modalities of help offered is in transportation:** in Herat and Nimroz, Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) are provided with a bus ticket to get home, and cash for the second leg of the journey, if need be, while both vulnerable spontaneous and deported

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Afghan blankets, 2 cooking pots, 2 10-liter jerry cans, 1 kitchen knife, 1 serving spoon, 7 plastic mugs, 1 plastic bucket, 7 steel plates, 7 table size spoons, 1 hand soap bar, and 1 laundry soap, as detailed in IOM (2009) “Project CS. 0229 proposal,” pp. 5-6.

families are given a cash grant to this purpose (\$20-\$48) based on destination.<sup>6</sup> In Nangarhar, no cash was given for transportation, although transportation was arranged with drivers through IOM, so as to avoid beneficiaries using cash to return to Pakistan as that this is much easier than crossing back to Iran illegally.<sup>7</sup>

**Since 2012, new procedures have been in place to assist unaccompanied minors** in their return: to ensure their safety, they are accompanied from the transit centres to their home. When this particular programme was piloted in 2012, CPAN (the Child Protection Action Network) was involved in this portion of the aid, at the request of UNICEF. IOM soon shifted to sending its own social workers with unaccompanied minors to avoid the potential for corruption.<sup>8</sup> Social workers take groups of several minors together to their home districts, be they across the country, and fund family coming to pick them up in district centres. **Extra support was also provided to single females via referrals to local shelters if they were in need of longer-term help.**

→ Overall, IOM has proven able to adjust efficiently the modalities of post-arrival assistance to the evolving needs of target population and to the constraints of programming, especially in terms of protection of the most vulnerable, guaranteeing a high level of relevance of the programme to the needs of its target groups.

#### Housing at the transit centre in Herat Province



<sup>6</sup> UNHCR and IOM have a shared table for this purpose to reduce returnees trying to “game” the system by going to one rather than the other.

<sup>7</sup> IOM (2013), “CS. 0396 Final Narrative Report,” p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> IOM representatives in Kabul alleged direct requests for money by CPAN members during the pilot.

## Target Population, Beneficiary selection criteria and their evolution

Over the course of the five projects concerned here IOM adjusted the categories of people being assisted. The first project (CS.0101) in 2008, focused on **vulnerable deported** families. In 2009, with the second project (CS.0149), IOM added **deported extremely vulnerable individuals** to the target beneficiary pool. This followed the increase of deportations from Iran and adapted to their specific profiles: UNHCR recorded an increase of 26% of deportations from Iran between 2011 and 2012, of which 98% were single men.<sup>9</sup> Continued monitoring at the border showed that many undocumented voluntary returnees, while not deported, were extremely vulnerable and ineligible for UNHCR assistance. Beginning in 2010 (CS.0229) IOM therefore agreed to **cover voluntary undocumented returnees in cases of vulnerability and documents claimants**.

IOM Project CS. 0101 (2008)	IOM Project CS. 0149 (2009)	IOM Project CS. 0229, DP. 0546, CS. 0396 (2010-2013)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable deported families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable deported families</li> <li>Deported Extremely Vulnerable Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable deported families</li> <li>Deported Extremely Vulnerable Individuals               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific procedures for unaccompanied minors</li> </ul> </li> <li>Vulnerable undocumented returnees</li> <li>Document claimants</li> </ul>

To define **vulnerability** criteria, IOM followed the guidelines defined by UNHCR and confirmed by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR). During the time period under consideration, **extremely vulnerable individuals** included the following: unaccompanied elderly (over 60), unaccompanied minors (under 18), single women, physically and mentally disabled people, elderly- and child- head households, the chronically ill, gender-based violence survivors, poor families (with the guidelines of large families with 6 or more children and no livelihoods), single head of household, drug addicts, and special cases.<sup>10</sup> The IOM staff now use the **persons with special needs** guidelines developed as a result of a 2011 of UNHCR aid to EVIs.

The major theoretical difference with beneficiaries of similar assistance from UNHCR is the possession of refugee documents while abroad, as these people fall under UNHCR's mandate. The concept of "returnee" in IOM activity thus is a broad one, encompassing those who have gone through the "act or process of going back," both voluntarily and not. Whilst the division between UNHCR and IOM's target population is clear on paper, field observations showed that it is not always easy to implement in practice (see below).

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR, (October 2012), "Volrep and Border Monitoring Monthly Update," <http://www.unhcr.org/50ab463b6.pdf>, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Special cases give IOM staff freedom to help people in need of assistance who do not fit into the above categories; one example given was of a family bringing back the body of a deceased family member to Afghanistan.

In Herat, 50% of post-arrival beneficiaries between March of 2012 and February of 2013 were non-familial EVI cases, versus only 4% in Nimroz.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of vulnerable, undocumented spontaneous returns had the most impact in Nangarhar: in the first two months of 2013, 96.6% of beneficiaries in Nangarhar were vulnerable spontaneous undocumented returnees, showing the relevance of adding this group to IOM target population.<sup>12</sup>

### **Box. 3.1: SPECIFIC TARGET GROUP: UNACCOMPANIED MINORS**

IOM has developed a specific method of dealing with unaccompanied minors (UAM), which reflects the evolving requirements of the migratory situation in Afghanistan as well as improvements suggested by staff. Initially, these UAM qualified similar help to other EVIs helped at the border: short-term assistance, shelter/food in the transit centres, medical treatment, financial support. After this immediate help, they were provided with bus tickets to go home. IOM coordinated with UNICEF, AIHRC, UNHCR and the Child Protection Afghan Network (CPAN) to help with transportation and familial reunification, but did not organize this directly.

UAMs make up the largest group of EVIs helped among returnees from Iran. 2,594 were helped between March of 2011 and February of 2012, and 5,597 between March of 2012 and February of 2013. These are mostly boys between 13 and 17, travelling to Iran in search of work opportunities. Given the importance of this population, and the difficulties in finding family members to come to transit centre to accompany the UAMs home, IOM piloted a new programme at the end of 2011: social workers would escort UAMs home to their families or relatives. Generally, social workers would accompany a group of several UAMs going to the same part of the country at once. The success of this pilot was such that it was integrated into project CS. 0396. Through it, 81.2% of UAMs who passed through Islam Qala and 8% of those who passed through Nimroz were accompanied home with social workers. Most recently this programme was extended to Torkham as the one UAM passing through there was accompanied home.

IOM also successfully improved one other problem facing unaccompanied minors: the “escape” of unaccompanied minors from transit centres. Such minors would leave transit centres without being provided with transportation home. At the Herat transit centre efforts have been made to improve conditions for those UAMs forced to spend time there waiting to go home with the installation of a game room. The “escape” rate dropped from 15.4% in 2011 to 3.6% in 2012-2013.

Looking forward, IOM faces one major challenge with this programme: that of security. Increasingly insecure situations in many parts of the country may make it difficult for social workers to accompany UAM back to their homes

**→ This evolution of selection criteria reflects a better understanding of the migratory profiles of the provinces under review here. In particular, it has made activities in Herat province more relevant to individual deportees. It has also induced the introduction of a key province for return - Nangarhar – and its specific needs within the frame of IOM’s activities, increasing the relevance of its activities.**

<sup>11</sup> IOM (2013), “CS. 0396 Final Narrative Report,” p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

## Profiles of Post-arrival Beneficiaries

Researchers spoke with **126 beneficiaries** of post-arrival assistance, 51 in Nangarhar, 50 in Nimroz and 25 in Herat. Despite non-random selection of beneficiaries due to limitations described in the previous chapter, they provide a useful snapshot of the populations facing IOM staff in each region, and **suggest that migratory profile trumps vulnerability in the selection process but that IOM is efficient at targeting vulnerable sub-groups, such as unaccompanied minors.**

### Vulnerability Profiles

The types of vulnerabilities self-reported by the beneficiaries (see Table 3.1) interviewed confirm the differences in the types of beneficiaries helped in each province: as discussed in the previous section, Herat assistance centres more around individual EVIs, in particular UAMs, while Nimroz helps a greater proportion of deportee families, and in Nangarhar the primary focus is on vulnerable spontaneous return families. Respondents from Nangarhar were most likely to report that they had returned to Afghanistan voluntarily (nearly 40%, versus 5% in Nimroz and none of those responding to the question in Herat).

**Table 3.1 – Types of Vulnerabilities Self-Reported by Beneficiaries Interviewed**

*NB: Respondents could select more than one answer*

	Herat	Nimroz	Nangarhar
Unaccompanied Elderly (over 60)	4%		
Unaccompanied minor (under 18)	56%	2%	4%
Single woman			2%
Physically Disabled	12%	14%	2%
Mentally disabled	12%	18%	6%
Elderly-Headed Household		2%	2%
Child-Headed Household		4%	
Chronically ill	16%	32%	4%
Single head of household			6%
Drug addict	4%	6%	
None of the above	20%	52%	76%

Table 3.1 shows the vulnerability profiles of IOM target groups in each province where post-arrival assistance is implemented. **Particularly striking in this table is the important proportion of ‘none of the above’ in Nimroz (52%) and Nangarhar (76%) provinces.** In Nangarhar, in particular, IOM project’s documentation shows that these families were considered for post-arrival assistance and NFI kits based on their categorisation as ‘poor families’. This is based on the overall assumption that undocumented families returning spontaneously from Pakistan are vulnerable and that this vulnerability is at the source of their return, which is why this category was added in the first place to IOM’s target groups. There is therefore a very high proportion of families crossing the border being selected for post-arrival: between January and February 2013 for example, 449 out of 542 undocumented families who came back spontaneously were categorised as very poor families and included in post-arrival assistance. The definition of very poor families for IOM is not clear. Following UNHCR’s definition, it corresponds to families of 6+ children with no sources of livelihood.

Yet, a closer look at the profile of these families showed that this definition was not applied on the ground, suggesting that the assessment of vulnerability is relatively loose. The research found that in Nangarhar 27 out of 39 families who received post-arrival assistance, including NFI kits, had fewer than 6 children. Whilst the study did not measure their access to livelihood upon return, this discrepancy confirms that vulnerability is less important of a criterion than migratory status in the field, as IOM IPs focus on a few criteria of selection, easy to

***Some deportees were rich but they were assisted by IOM just because they were deportees.***

FGD – Female –  
Nimroz province

implement. This is also the perception of returnees, who do not seem to get a clear idea of the selection criteria that led to the selection of some households for additional post-arrival services. Whilst the research does not dispute the assumption that there is a need for special assistance for undocumented returnee families, it suggests that more robust vulnerability assessment could have led to a more effective allocation of resources.

On a positive note, Table 3.1 shows that **a few additional features of vulnerability have been successfully integrated to the programme, in particular when it comes to unaccompanied minors** (cf. 56% of respondents in Herat). IOM also has specific procedures for single women but the caseload is extremely limited. The table also shows other types of vulnerability that could require specific assistance. Further assistance may be warranted, for example, for physically disabled cases in returning home, as both Herat and Nimroz showed relatively high proportions of people suffering from physical disabilities. Another important feature of vulnerability, which may prevent safe return, is drug addiction, a recurring issue amongst returnees from Iran and a feature probably underestimated in the data but already represented 4 and 6% of respondents in Herat and Nimroz respectively.

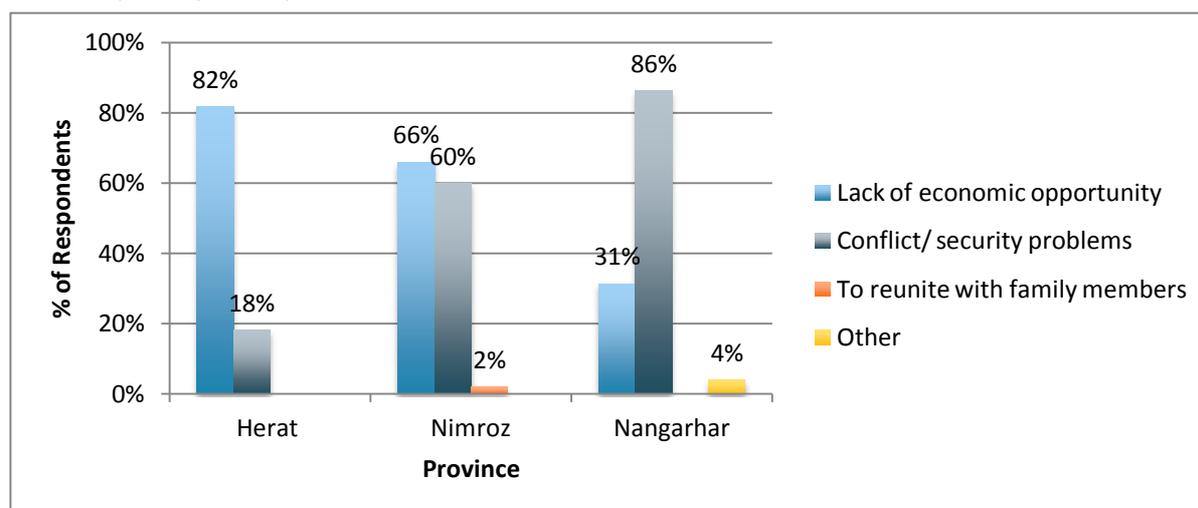
### **Migration profiles of beneficiaries**

Respondents’ families’ province of origin tends to be near where they re-entered the country, a geographic proximity that heightens the chance that they will stay in that area while also providing an opportunity for re-migration across the border: Nimroz respondents came overwhelmingly from Nimroz (86%), Farah (8%) and Badghis (6%); Herat respondents were most likely to originate in Herat

(24%), Ghor (28%), and Farah (20%);<sup>13</sup> Nangarhar beneficiaries interviewed were primarily from Kunar (78%) and Nangarhar (16%). The profiles of returning beneficiaries can thus be used to inform planning of reintegration activities in each province; beneficiary reason for departure and return, vulnerabilities that they present and time abroad will all impact their immediate needs upon return. Finally, the proximity to the border provides an outlet for households to send at least one of their family members abroad as a coping mechanism upon return; or for the entire household to re-migrate, a possible outcome that may limit the sustainability of IOM activities if post-arrival assistance is not better linked to livelihood assistance to further decrease the gaps in assistance.

**Figure 3.1 - Reason for Original Departure from Afghanistan**

*NB: Multiple responses possible*



Looking at the reasons for original departure from Afghanistan highlights the specific profile of provinces where IOM is conducting activities and shows potential threats to the sustainability of the project: can “safe return” be achieved the same way in each province? IOM has made efforts with its post-arrival assistance to allow beneficiaries to return “home” or wherever they wish to settle. However, the 82% of beneficiaries in Herat who had left Afghanistan because of lack of opportunity, as shown in the graph above, and were deported back to Afghanistan, are likely to plan to migrate again to Iran as the economic opportunities available to them are unlikely to have changed. If anything then, bringing UAM back to their home, for example, without further assistance, may increase the chances of their being harmed should they try to make their way back to Iran. **This suggests that a more efficient articulation between post-arrival activities and reintegration activities may help prevent further detrimental migration for unaccompanied minors to Iran** – however, this would require a separate assessment of the factors pushing UAMs to flee to Iran, notably covering family and community pressures to understand the structural, family and individual factors leading to migration. Overall, the continuity and articulation between the two activities is loose and contingent on where reintegration activities are implemented. A better integration of both sets of activities could help increase the sustainability of IOM’s projects and could help address specific vulnerable groups such as UAMs, households which presents instances of drug addiction notably among the heads of households and female-headed households.

<sup>13</sup> Although this is also skewed by the fact that respondents interviewed were those who had remained in the province, Herat figures, consisting of people who had just returned, also support this geographic concentration.

## 3.2. Implementing post-arrival assistance on the ground: efficiency and effectiveness

### Major Challenges with the implementation of Post-Arrival Assistance

Cross-cutting challenges will be discussed at length in section 6; however, some difficulties identified were specific to post-arrival assistance and limited the efficiency and effectiveness of the projects.

- **Limited supplies:** the flow of returnees, both voluntary and deported, to the Islam Qala, Torkham and Zaranj border sites varies from day to day based on conditions in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan and the policies of the Iranian and Pakistani governments towards Afghan citizens within their borders. On days when there is a large influx of arrivals, beneficiaries reported that supplies run out and some do not get the help to which they are entitled.<sup>14</sup> IP staff in Nimroz also noted this limitation.
- **Gaming the system:** researcher received several reports of new arrivals attempting to cheat the system by splitting families, sending some members to UNHCR with their VRF/Amayesh card and others to IOM as though they did not have it.<sup>15</sup> While systems are being put in place to avoid repeat beneficiaries (UNHCR has implemented an iris-scanning system) there is nothing to prevent beneficiaries of UNHCR aid from getting IOM aid on a subsequent return from abroad if they fall into the vulnerability categories. A centralized database of IOM beneficiaries was already called for in project CS 0396; refining this further to a joint database with UNHCR and inclusion of the iris-scanning system could prevent “double-dipping”; as of now no system was identified that prevented this.
- **Geographical gap in post-arrival assistance:** IOM post-arrival aid centres around its three border crossings transit centres in Islam Qala, Torkham and Zaranj. However, key informant interviews underlined the fact that vulnerable individuals may come into the country elsewhere, unaware of the aid available to them.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, this would include just spontaneous returnees, but among them may be some very vulnerable individuals taking advantage of border porosity to avoid problems with officials.
- **Security during unaccompanied minor programme:** However, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan calls into question its sustainability as IOM social workers may not be able to continue returning young people to all 34 provinces.
- **Trustworthiness of IP staff:** while general satisfaction with IP staff was high, there was a report of IP staff taking items from NFI packages prior to handing them out.<sup>17</sup>

→ Overall, qualitative data and the high level of beneficiary selection show that the implementation of post-arrival assistance is going relatively smoothly and does not face major challenges, as the issues listed above remain limited in scale.

<sup>14</sup> One case study respondent reported being told, when complaining to transit centre staff that others had received NFI kits but not her, that “the tools/assurances were finished.”

<sup>15</sup> Both IOM staff and UNHCR staff mentioned this concern, which they are clearly aware of.

<sup>16</sup> Based on key informant interview with UNOCHA in Kabul.

<sup>17</sup> Based on case study from Nimroz Province. Case study respondent stated, “the staff would give us a package which they would open and take some stuffs from, before giving it to us.”

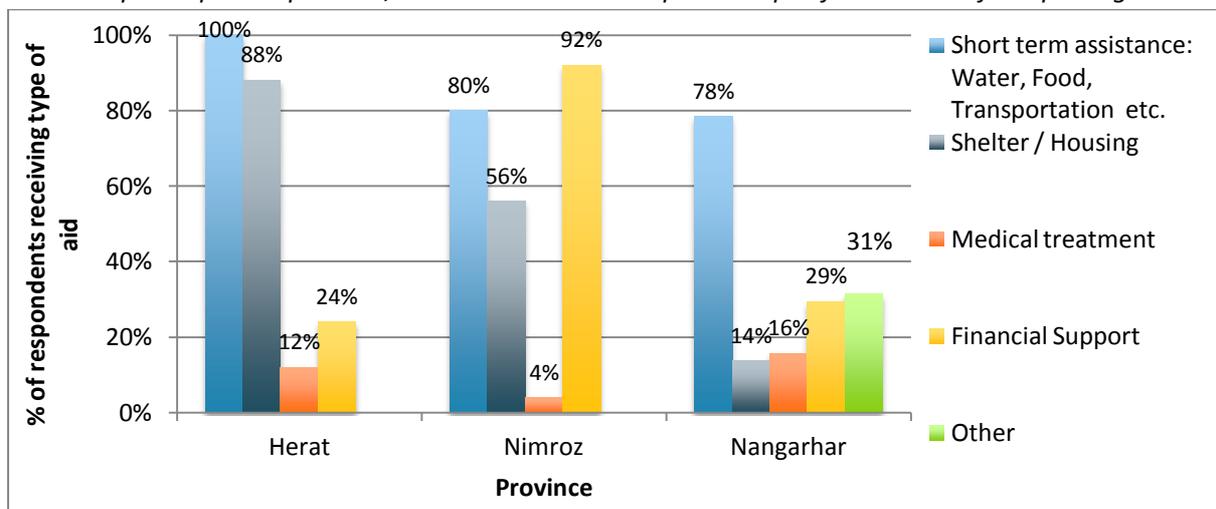
### 3.3. Beneficiary Satisfaction and Needs

#### Assistance Received by Post-Arrival Beneficiaries

The Samuel Hall research teams spoke with beneficiaries of the various types of post-arrival assistance provided; the **variations in the help provided are a reflection of the differing types of beneficiaries in each province and suggest that the specific modalities of assistance are indeed being followed.** For example, in the figure below one can observe that Nangarhar, which has the highest proportion of family beneficiaries, has the highest proportion of beneficiaries receiving NFI packages, whilst a high proportion of beneficiaries in Herat had received accommodation, a logical finding given the high proportion of unaccompanied minors in the Herat caseload.

**Figure 3.2 - Types of Post-Arrival Assistance Provided by IOM**

*NB: Multiple responses possible; "other" here all correspond to specific mention of NFI packages*



**Transit centres:** The usage of transit centres varied by province. Overall, 50% of respondent households stayed in an IOM transit centre but this reflects high provincial variations: 100% respondents stayed there in Herat. Only 14% of respondents in Nangarhar had stayed in a transit centre, versus 62% of those in Nimroz, a finding that reflects the conditions of return of beneficiaries.

**Transportation assistance:** Provincial differences in transportation assistance provided reflect the types of beneficiaries being helped in each provinces; IOM provides cash for travel to deportee families but EVIs generally receive bus tickets. In Nimroz, 88% of respondents received cash to get to their final destination (and an additional 2% received cash and bus tickets) whereas in Nangarhar 28% did and in Herat 24% did. The balance of respondents in Nangarhar reported having received neither cash nor bus tickets (59%) whereas in Herat 76% received bus tickets. **The 28% of beneficiaries in Nangarhar who reported receiving cash assistance for transportation are the most problematic: the final report for project CS 0396 reported that beneficiaries there were not supposed to receive cash assistance for transportation, to avoid them using cash to return to Pakistan. In addition, anecdotally, transportation assistance was not always received by those who needed it.** The latter two points suggest care needs to be taken in monitoring to ensure that transportation assistance is indeed being provided when appropriate.

“I am not satisfied with the assistances I received because I am a widowed and they didn’t pay me money to pay for my fare neither they gave me food items. The people giving the assistances treated me fairly. When I returned to Nimroz they only gave me dishes while I needed other things.

– Mariam, beneficiary of post-arrival assistance in Nimroz Province

### Beneficiary satisfaction with post-arrival assistance

General evaluation of assistance provided was overall positive; qualitative research however revealed criticisms not so much at the **manner** in which assistance was provided but rather in the **types and quantities** of assistance provided.

The table below details respondent satisfaction with various elements of assistance; those who were not satisfied with the elements above were generally neutral towards them. **There was no particular component about which returnees were particularly dissatisfied.**

**Table 3.2 – Satisfaction with Post-Arrival Assistance Provided by Location**

*% of Respondents either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied”; majority of remainder are “neutral”*

Indicator	Herat	Nimroz	Nangarhar
IOM / IP staff helpfulness	92%	74%	75%
Access to useful information	92%	70%	67%
Transit centre housing	88%	44%	37%
Transit centre food	100%	38%	47%
Length of time IOM helped your household	68%	54%	53%
Help in going to your final destination	68%	70%	47%

The strong positive evaluation above in Herat province can be in great part attributed to the presence of beneficiaries in transit centre when interviewed, decreasing the proportion answering “neutral” because they had not used it. It shows that, when they have to use transit centre facilities, most beneficiaries are highly satisfied: 88% for housing condition and 100% for food for example. Women were also more likely to be positive about help provided, explaining why Nangarhar beneficiaries are less positive than Nimroz beneficiaries.

**Perceptions of unfairness:** one recurring criticism from beneficiaries was of having seen others receive help that they themselves did not receive. The visibility of the NFI kits being handed out was a frequent case of jealousy. The various types of assistance modalities, depending on one’s migratory and vulnerability status, therefore need to be better explained and more transparent for voluntary and forced returnees passing through the transit centres.

“My household and I are not satisfied with the assistances given because we were only given money which was 10 dollars per person. Other families received assistances like oil, home appliances, kitchen tools, blankets and others.”

- Sherin, Post-arrival beneficiary, Nimroz province<sup>18</sup>

**Disconnect between assistance given and perceived needs of beneficiaries:** while respondents acknowledged the value of IOM assistance, some complained that it was not helpful because the amount of money received could not address needs – described as “long-term shelter” and “food items”.<sup>19</sup> **The major problem with NFI kits was in quantity** as 44% of respondent households receiving NFI kits reported that “there were not enough of the items because there are many people in my household”. To alleviate this problem IP staff reported giving 2 packages rather than one to particularly large households; given the high average number of members in an Afghan household increasing the basic package size would allow aid to better help families without creating problems because some households get more packages than others. **Anecdotally, however, one more issue must be considered: the kits were sometimes reported as not containing certain objects they should have carried.** In some cases, as discussed earlier, it seemed that in Nimroz objects had been removed from kits. In Nangarhar province, one respondent described the NFI kit as just containing “kitchen tools” and another stated that he was just given “three blankets, wheat, two torches, some dishes, and cooking oil”.<sup>20</sup>

“The assistance I received was not helpful to me. My biggest problems on my return to Afghanistan were the lack of shelter, poverty and unemployment. When we returned to Afghanistan we needed money, food items, clothing and shelter which we did not receive. We are not much satisfied with the assistances received because they were not effective.”

- Halima, Post-arrival beneficiary, Nimroz province<sup>21</sup>

**Seasonal conditions:** priority of returnee needs varies by season, but this is not reflected in the NFI kits. One respondent described receiving tools but not enough blankets when returning in winter, when the reverse would have been more useful.<sup>22</sup>

### Extant Needs Reported by Beneficiaries

Understanding beneficiary needs upon arrival goes a long way to explaining much of the above: **just 24% of respondents listed short-term assistance with water, food, transportation, etc. – provided by IOM at transit centres – as their first concern upon return to Afghanistan.** More long-term needs were generally the uppermost problems, as shelter/housing (44%), financial support (30%) made up the responses of the others. This is not to say that short-term assistance is not desired: 73% of respondents listed it as a top three concern, confirming that post-arrival assistance does

<sup>18</sup> Based on case study from Nimroz Province.

<sup>19</sup> Based on case study from Nimroz Province.

<sup>20</sup> Based on case study from Nangarhar Province.

<sup>21</sup> Based on case study from Nimroz Province.

<sup>22</sup> Based on case study from Nangarhar Province.

answer a key need of population upon return. The table below highlights the self-reported top needs of post-arrival assistance beneficiary respondents to the household questionnaire.

**Table 3.3 – Needs Listed by Respondents as “Top Three” Upon Return to Afghanistan**

	Herat	Nimroz	Nangarhar
<b>Short term assistance: Water, Food, Transportation etc.</b>	76%	78%	67%
<b>Shelter / Housing</b>	84%	72%	92%
<b>Medical treatment</b>	4%	6%	12%
<b>Financial Support</b>	92%	78%	69%
<b>Advice/ counseling</b>		2%	2%
<b>Job placement/ employment</b>	4%	22%	22%
<b>Business start-up grant</b>	8%		
<b>Education opportunities for children</b>	4%		2%

The lower proportion of immediate short-term assistance needs in Nangarhar can be attributed to the fact that few beneficiaries there are deported, and hence more of them are able to prepare their return to Afghanistan at least somewhat, confirming that **the post-arrival services provided by IOM – be it through transit centres or immediate assistance – is particularly relevant in the context of Nirmroz and Herat provinces.** This also explains differences in the need for financial support: Herat’s unaccompanied minors, deported back to Afghanistan, are at higher risk on this front than Nangarhar’s voluntarily returned families. In Nangarhar, respondents are able to focus more on longer-term needs: job placement and shelter/housing.

The desire for financial and shelter support is consistent with the perception of the top difficulties facing respondents upon return to Afghanistan, as poverty (27%), unemployment (28%) and lack of access to housing (30%) were all more likely to be listed as the top difficulty facing returnees than lack of security (1%). **Clearly, there is a need for the type of assistance provided by IOM’s reintegration activities – confirming that they are an appropriate response to IOM’s objective of helping returnees safely return. Currently, however, there is no articulation between IOM post-arrival and reintegration activities and the continuum of activities is not possible as the selection of target areas and beneficiaries for reintegration activities is not linked to post-arrival assistance.**

### 3.4. Impact of post-arrival assistance

In evaluating the impact of IOM post-arrival assistance, two major points must be considered:

- How well does the post-arrival assistance fulfil its objectives?
- Do these objectives correspond to the declared needs of beneficiaries and allow for safe return of beneficiaries?

The goal of the post-arrival assistance is to provide short-term, emergency humanitarian aid to potential beneficiaries, and general project goal is described as “to assist vulnerable deportees by addressing their immediate needs at the border”.<sup>23</sup> The general satisfaction of beneficiaries with the immediate help at the border suggests that this short-term goal is met – yet one has to consider general beneficiary acquiescence bias, as any help is better than no help. Beneficiaries rarely criticize openly the hand that feeds them. One cannot deny that beneficiaries are indeed the better off for the assistance provided by IOM at these border facilities, nor that the assistance theoretically provided fulfils the immediate needs detailed. The attention paid to especially vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors and medical cases is particularly consistent with objectives.

**However, this help can be improved.** Qualitative research has highlighted several areas of concern in the implementation of assistance:

- Quality of NFI kits and food: several reports of items missing or of poor quality, notably reporting low wheat quality,
- Appropriateness of NFI kits to immediate needs: these can be adapted to the season to be more effective (blankets in winter, tools in the spring for agriculture, etc.),
- Ensuring transportation assistance is being given as detailed in proposals and project reports.

The areas most highlighted as requiring improvement are those which particularly affect **families** rather than the single extremely vulnerable individuals. This confirms that the **project impact is greatest in Herat province** – where EVIs make up a greater proportion of beneficiaries – as compared to Nimroz province and especially Nangarhar province. **This underscores that post-arrival services have the most relevance and the greatest impact when they target sub-groups with specific vulnerabilities.** Unaccompanied minors are a case in point. This type of expertise is useful and can be extended to other vulnerable sub-groups such as drug addicts for example.

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<sup>23</sup> IOM (2009), “CS 0149 PAMP Proposal Revised,” p. 11.

## 4. LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Access to livelihood and income-generating activities is an acute need across the board in Afghanistan. Regarding IOM's population of concern, the inclusion of a livelihood component in reintegration activities is needed, especially as an important part of the caseload left Afghanistan to Iran to access better economic conditions (see above). Furthermore, past studies have shown that access to employment and livelihood was one of the greatest needs of IDPs in the country.<sup>24</sup> Yet, whilst IOM training ran relatively smoothly, its impact on returnees and IDPs' access to livelihood remain short-term and very limited. Beyond the overall difficult economic context of the country, this is also linked to inherent weaknesses in the implementation of IOM's livelihood activities. As a result, our survey found a limited impact of the programme on livelihood and access to income-generating activities, further limiting the overall impact of the programme on reintegration.

Building on the findings of this chapter, the research provides three recommendations:

*First*, IOM's livelihood assistance should be further fine-tuned to address the needs of specific subgroups defined in a three-tiered approach with subgroups defined by i) vulnerability, ii) migration group, and iii) levels of skills. In this logic, the needs of UAMs, IDPs, potential entrepreneurs and women should be better addressed. The current livelihood assistance framework does not allow sufficient support to the most vulnerable groups and hence does not provide a way out of poverty for those most in need. The survey shows a weak integration of IDPs in the livelihood programme, and women's skills training that do not match local demand or that are not sufficiently diversified, with over half beneficiaries having received training in tailoring. The research also shows tensions between vulnerability and entrepreneurial potential, as vulnerability often trumps entrepreneurial potential and may lead to incoherence in the selection. Supporting the most vulnerable should not be done at the expense of supporting those who offer the most potential: they could more easily be turned into success stories for IOM to replicate and learn from, and for communities to benefit from.

*Second*, IOM's livelihood assistance will have to be designed with secondary effects in mind by developing a causal chain model to build its programming. Specifically, the research finds that a secondary effect of the livelihood assistance can be the increased sociability for women, lower dependency ratios by strengthening entrepreneurship among men, providing trainings in services that are beneficial to the community – beyond an individualistic approach, and in the same vein, developing programmes that benefit the community through a stronger training of trainers. As a result, looking beyond the individual will have to be a priority of future livelihood assistance in order to increase the sustainability and impact of such aid.

*Third*, successes from IOM's urban programming should be drawn to benefit a strengthened rural programming in livelihood assistance. Most notably, urban beneficiaries benefit from better tailored training in two ways: skills offered are well adapted to urban settings and trainers are more qualified. In rural areas on the other hand, the linkages with the local labor market remains weak and trainers are often merely people from the community who have not received training. This is an

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<sup>24</sup> NRC/SH/IDMC/JIPS (2012), "Challenges of IDP protection in Afghanistan," for NRC, <http://samuelhall.org/REPORTS/Challenges%20of%20IDP%20Protection%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf>, p. 6.

opportunity for IOM to improve its programming and “causal chain” as highlighted in the previous point by increasing training of trainers in rural areas of high return.

## RELEVANCE

### How relevant are the targets of livelihood assistance?

- ✓ A balance has been struck in the field between vulnerability and entrepreneurship potential as selection criteria: beneficiaries show higher work-preparedness than the rest of respondents and a middle ground in terms of vulnerability.
- ✓ Insufficient assessment of financial and entrepreneurship potential for beneficiary selection.
- ✓ Poor integration of IDPs in the livelihood component of IOM’s activities.
- ✓ Refugee returnees should be covered by UNHCR.

### How relevant are the skills taught to IOM’s target population?

- ✓ Low relevance of certain skills taught, especially for women: high focus on traditional skills, especially tailoring (almost half of surveyed beneficiaries) limit post-training economic integration.
- ✓ ‘Urban skills’ – increasingly present in the IOM project – are indeed more relevant in the current context, characterized by the urbanization of returnee and IDP caseloads.

### How relevant is livelihood assistance for returnees and IDPs?

- ✓ High relevance, as access to livelihood is one of the greatest needs of IOM’s population of concern, especially as poor economic conditions fuel risky migration to Iran.

## EFFICIENCY

### Have the projects inputs been used and converted into desired results in an efficient manner?

- ✓ The beneficiary selection process was generally successful in choosing needy beneficiaries. However, lack of clarity around selection criteria, attempts at nepotism and a negative financial incentive on the part of certain potential beneficiaries to following training prevented it from being fully effective.
  - Staff and project proposals agreed on the broad selection elements but details given (e.g. minimum beneficiary age) varied.
  - The actual selection process did not always follow that given in project documents; *shura* members and government officials tried to push people as beneficiaries.
- ✓ The two layers of market survey supposed to inform the choice of skills taught do not represent a mechanism robust enough to guarantee a shift from traditional skills to skills reaching to less saturated markets, especially urban skills.
- ✓ Selection of trainer proves difficult in the field, especially in rural areas, where the qualification of trainers is not always guaranteed.
- ✓ Successful distribution of toolkits

## EFFECTIVENESS

### Did IOM meet its projects’ outputs?

- ✓ Insufficient complementary training – especially the business component. Low proportion of beneficiaries who received complementary business training (23% in our survey).

## IMPACT

### Did the livelihood assistance have a sustainable impact on beneficiaries?

- ✓ The livelihood training has a relative impact on the skill set of beneficiaries as 43% of male beneficiaries and 38% of female beneficiaries reported having acquired a full knowledge of the skills they were trained in. For women in particular, the trainings only partially succeed in helping beneficiaries reach satisfying level of proficiency in the skills in which they are trained: 62% of women reported having acquired only partial to no knowledge of the skill they were taught. This can be linked to the short duration of training and low level of qualification of some trainers.
- ✓ The survey found that the long-term impact of the livelihood activity on beneficiaries' livelihood and access to employment remains very limited, as 74.4% of beneficiaries neither use their skills in a job nor earn money using the skills they were trained in.
- ✓ Toolkits of poor quality and often distributed in an untimely fashion limit their impact in supporting beneficiaries' access to self-employment and income-generating activities.
- ✓ The trainings have positive – but secondary – effects, such as increasing access to sociability for women trainees. Such secondary effects need to be better identified and hence better supported in future programming. This will require further assessments on the chain of impact of IOM's programming – beyond immediate objectives to a more holistic approach.

## 4.1. Beneficiary Selection – Relevance of selection criteria

### Beneficiary Selection Criteria and Process

#### Tension in the Selection Criteria

**IPs, IOM and NSDP staff stated clear ideas of the selection criteria for beneficiaries of vocational and business training programmes. However, the research showed a tension between vulnerability and entrepreneurial potential, as vulnerability often trumps entrepreneurial potential in the field and may lead to incoherence in the selection.**

The guidelines of the first projects were quite vague in their description of beneficiaries to be targeted by the livelihood assistance programmes, specifying only “returnees”. The proposal for CS. 0229 was far clearer, specifying that the target group included “returned refugees from Iran and Pakistan and IDPs in the age range 15-45 years old” exhibiting at least one of a list of characteristics suggesting either increased vulnerability or entrepreneurial aptitude. More specifically, it detailed target beneficiaries as follows:

- “IDPs, deportees and returned refugees able and willing to make an investment in cash or kind to any new enterprise they wish to start, and who exhibit entrepreneurial aptitude/characteristics when assessed,
- IDPs, deportees and returned refugees who are unemployed or underemployed – including those having significant levels of education,

- IDPs, deportees and returned refugees who are female and household ‘breadwinners’ (particularly widows),
- IDPs, deportees and returned refugees who are single and household ‘breadwinners’, and
- Those who are assessed as moderately ‘needy’—including those who are disabled”

On the ground, IOM staff and IPs emphasized the importance of **vulnerability** as a criterion when discussing beneficiary selection. There is therefore an inherent **tension between the two primary criteria of selection: vulnerability and entrepreneurial potential**. IOM is right to consider entrepreneurial potential as a criterion of selection, as it is an important component to increase the impact of the programme but clarity is needed as to which aspect IOM would like to prioritize in the field to allow for an efficient implementation of selection criteria.

### Selection Process

The actual selection process for beneficiaries involves much collaboration to avoid accusations of favouritism or lack of objectivity in the selection process; but again, discussions with stakeholders evidenced differing understandings of the specifics of this collaboration. The only proposal to specify beneficiary selection was CS.0229 which mentioned that “once selected, training partners will have one month to complete beneficiary selection.”<sup>25</sup> On the ground, the process seemed to go as follows:

- The IP would go to the village to explain the project and the criteria guiding beneficiary selection,
- The local *shura* would help the IP identify potential beneficiaries, and
- A selection committee, composed of IOM, the IP, NSDP, and local *shuras*, would decide who could participate in the training. Influence and role of each actor seemed to vary quite significantly across locations: varying roles were attributed to these in the selection committee, ranging from observer to decider, depending on the speaker.<sup>26</sup>

A further layer of selection was necessary to choose the 50% of vocational training beneficiaries who were also to get BDS training. For this, the major criteria described was that of potential – NSDP, IOM and IP again sat together to see which beneficiaries would be most able to take advantage of this additional training.<sup>27</sup>

**On the ground, beneficiaries reported in some cases a different process from the one designed by IOM to ensure impartiality.**

“We were informed [...] in the bazaar that there was a tailoring course and we could join it. There were around 50 of us who wanted to join the course from whom 32 were selected. They selected those who were interested in tailoring. They paid only 500 AFN monthly for the participants. Most of the people didn’t want the course because it paid a small amount of money.”

<sup>25</sup> IOM (2009), “Project CS. 0229 proposal,” p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> NSDP staff in Herat, for example, detailed a committee composed of “IOM, dOLSA, NSDP, IP, people from the local *shura*”, while IOM staff there also described advertising for these vocational trainings followed by eligibility tests. One IP there, CRS, said that they would go to the villages and speak with the local *shura* there, with the help of IOM as coordinating force, but CRS would make the final decision on potential beneficiaries, with no input from NSDP.

<sup>27</sup> Based on key informant interview with IOM Herat staff.

- Gul Ahmad, livelihood assistance beneficiary, Herat province

“Our trainer was named Fazil who had a shop in Kota-e-Sangi. My dad knew him and we were informed about the assistance by him so I went there and registered myself after showing my migrant card. They selected those who had migrant cards.”

- Mohammad Rajab, livelihood assistance beneficiary, Kabul province

“The registration forms for the training was distributed by the AWO to the fresh school graduates and those who had returned from Iran and Pakistan [...] The criteria was having a migrant card or 12th grade graduation documents.”

- Ali Reza, livelihood assistance beneficiary, Kabul province

**Thus, while a robust selection process has been designed, it was not always implemented as such. Additionally, beneficiaries lacked clarity as to how exactly they were chosen.**

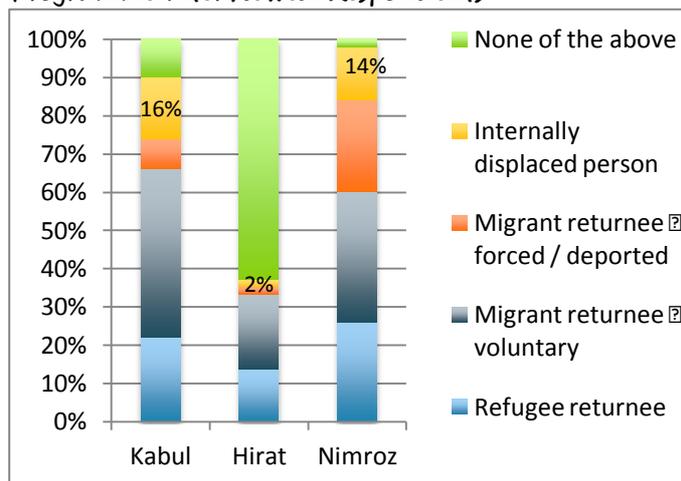
### Profile of Beneficiaries

The Samuel Hall research team spoke with **151 beneficiaries** of individual livelihood programming in Kabul, Herat and Nimroz. Beneficiaries were identified by beneficiary lists provided by IOM, NSDP and implementing partners. In each province, interviewers spoke with beneficiaries of several different types of livelihood assistance programmes, including both vocational and business trainings, both male and female.

### Migratory Profile

**The survey shows a weak integration of IDPs in the livelihood programme, as only 16% of livelihood beneficiaries were IDPs in Kabul, 14% in Nimroz and 2% in Herat province.** In Herat, the proportion of non-migrant ‘community members’ was high, 63%. Whilst there may be a selection bias, as IDPs may have been more likely to have moved again than other beneficiaries, it still suggests that the integration of IDPs in IOM reintegration activities remains relatively

Figure 4.1 - Migratory profile of Livelihood Programme Interviewed Respondents



limited. It is particularly striking in a province like Herat, which counts a very high caseload of IDPs, who seem to have been left out of the livelihood activities in the province. Balance between other categories of returnees was relatively well kept across the provinces. Interestingly, IOM did not ask for particular categories of migrants and did not restrict its selection to its main ‘population of concern’, a point that is visible in the field, as about 20% of beneficiaries of livelihood activities were refugee returnees. This may require a more systematic strategy, especially given the scope of

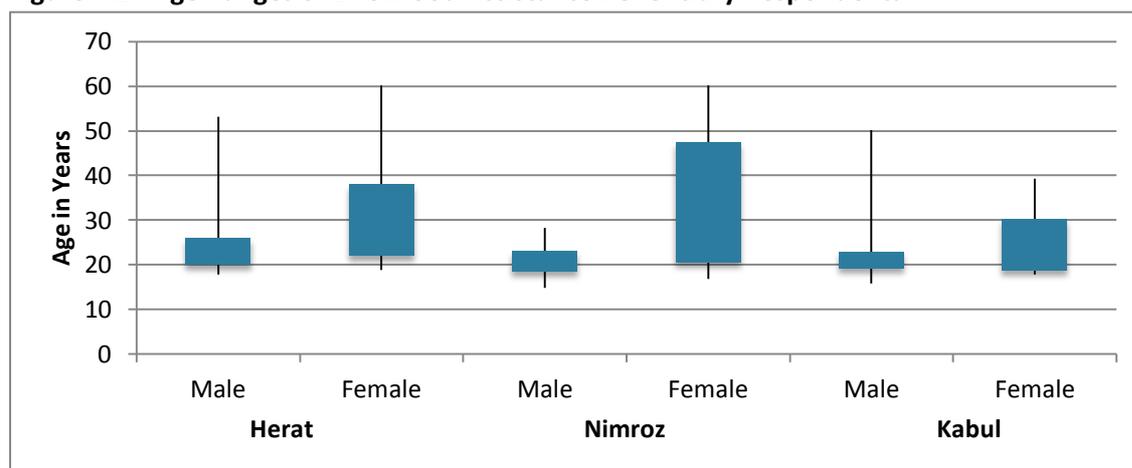
UNHCR’s activities for refugee returnees and the gap in assistance for other population. IOM may have interest in prioritizing more its target population.

**Migratory profile also shows that there is usually an important gap in time between the moment of return and participation in the livelihood training:** 82% of beneficiaries in Kabul and 68% of those in Nimroz had been back for more than 5 years before receiving the training; women were even more likely to have been back for more than five years. Although no time limits had been included in programme guidelines, one might expect more recent migrants to be more vulnerable and have access to fewer coping strategies having had less time to settle in their new environment. Whilst this fact **highlights the enduring cycle of poverty and vulnerability in which returnees may remain even a long time after return, it may raise the question of relevance. Livelihood training should not be implemented immediately upon return but returnees who have been in country for a few months to 1 or 2 years in order to support the reintegration process relatively early on.**

### Age of Beneficiaries

Respondents were on average youngest in Kabul (23 years) but the spread was greatest in Nimroz, where respondents ranged from 15 to 60 years of age. This is in contrast to the latest programme directives specifying that beneficiaries should be between 15 and 45.

**Figure 4.2 - Age Ranges of Livelihood Assistance Beneficiary Respondents**



The age spread is a lot wider for women beneficiaries than men, which suggests that the criteria of vulnerability and willingness to participate trumps entrepreneurship potential for women. This is not a bad thing in practice given that finding women with financial capacities to invest or business skills may be too difficult to be operational in the field. This was less the case in Kabul, where these characteristics are found more easily.

### Vulnerability profile of livelihood beneficiaries

Literacy and level of education can be used as proxies to estimate the work-preparedness of beneficiaries. The profile of livelihood beneficiaries show that they are on average more literate than the other groups of respondents: 65% of livelihood trainees could read and write, as against 40% on average across the board, and 38% of non-beneficiaries or 32% of shelter beneficiaries in particular. The survey finds particularly high level of literacy amongst Kabul livelihood beneficiaries, where 90% of the 45 beneficiaries interviewed could read and write. In Nimroz, livelihood beneficiaries were also significantly more literate than beneficiaries from other projects and non-beneficiaries,

indicating that the selection process had adequately targeted returnees and IDPs more likely to access employment and IGAs. This is particularly true in Kabul, where 46% the beneficiaries were high school graduates.

Nevertheless, the project guidelines remain unclear in terms of how to assess the ‘ability and willingness to invest in-kind or financial resources or exhibit entrepreneurial characteristics when assessed’.<sup>28</sup> Whilst literacy and education may reflect a certain level of work-preparedness, these indicators do not reflect any particular financial capacities. To take that aspect into account more systematically, more specific guidelines should be envisaged.

The proportion of extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) amongst livelihood beneficiaries interviewed was of 39% as against 46% of EVIs amongst non-beneficiaries. Within each province, beneficiaries from livelihood activities and from other projects also showed similar proportions of EVIs, showing that the EVI categorization is used as a selection tool across the board. As beneficiaries were given little to no financial incentive to participate in the programme, there was a negative selection of the most vulnerable respondents who could not afford to stop working to subsist to their families’ needs.

**Overall, the profile of beneficiaries show that IOM navigates relatively well the tension between vulnerability and entrepreneurship, as beneficiaries present higher levels of literacy and education but similar levels of vulnerability as non-beneficiaries.**

## 4.2. Assessing livelihood training implementation on the ground

### Type of training received

**Type of Training** - Three of the projects within the scope of this evaluation offered individual livelihood assistance in Herat, Nimroz and Kabul (CS. 0101, CS. 0149, CS. 0229). To provide this assistance, IOM worked in collaboration with the National Skills Development Program (NSDP) which depends on the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD). This assistance was comprised of two major components:

- **Vocational training**
- **Business development training**

Training offered varied. The research team spoke with beneficiaries of 14 different types of trainings.

**Table 4.1 – Training Given to Respondents Benefitting from Livelihood Assistance**

Herat	Nimroz	Kabul
Poultry raising	Livestock related activities	Plumbing
Plumbing	Electric wiring	Electric wiring
Vehicle and motorcycle repair	Vehicle and motorcycle repair	Vehicle and motorcycle repair
Hair styling	Tailoring	Electronic equipment repair
Computer repair	Learning computer	Metalworking
Tailoring	Mobile repairing	Carpentry

<sup>28</sup> IOM (2009), “Project CS. 0229 proposal,” p. 6.

Learning computer	Business training	Tailoring
Mobile repairing		Mobile repairing
Business training		Trade development service
		Business training

Activities dedicated to womens' livelihood were mostly: a) tailoring; b) hair styling; c) livestock-related activities and poultry raising. Livestock-related and poultry raising are interesting attempts at diversifying women's livelihood, as these activities have proven relatively useful in other programmes. Yet, the diversity of skills noted above should not hide the fact that **almost half of the beneficiaries surveyed had received tailoring training**. This was particularly true for female beneficiaries.

The IOM project plans that activities for training would be chosen based on two layers of labour market surveys:

- Each year, MOLSAMD releases an annual report detailing labour market demand by province. Based on this, IOM planned out in which districts it wanted to offer vocational and business training opportunities. Before implementing these projects, the NSDP does an area market survey targeting returnees and IDPs, to determine both which courses these potential beneficiaries are interested in as well as the needs of the market. From this, specific skills to target are selected.
- The implementing partners were to conduct a second labour market survey the results of which were included in their proposals to make sure that the situation had not evolved.<sup>29</sup>

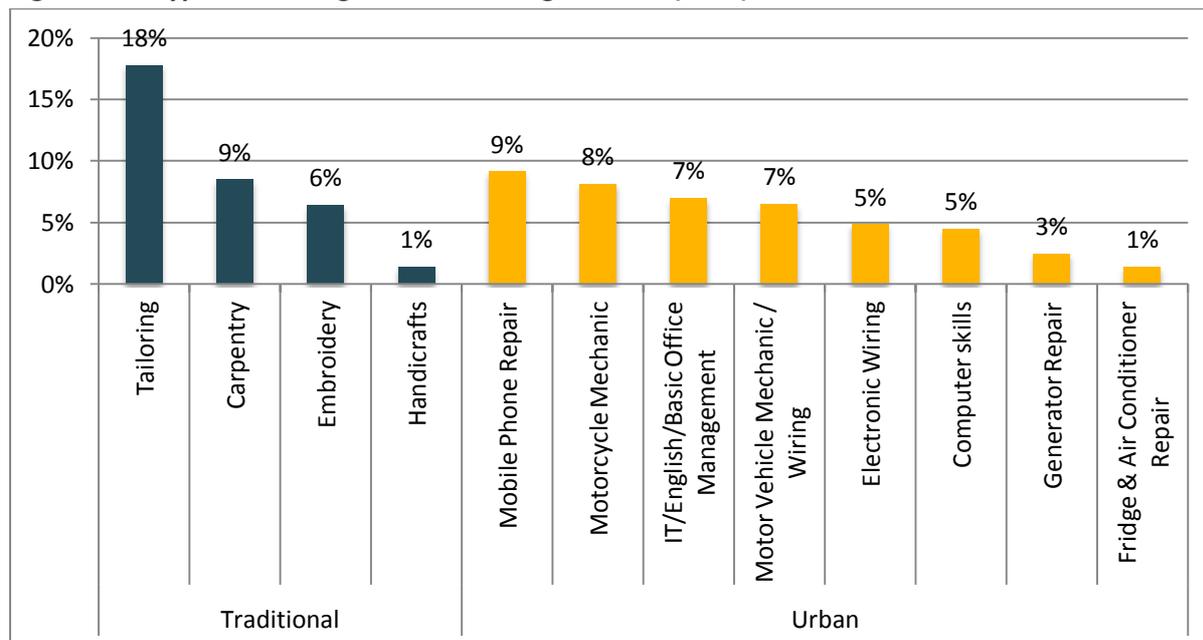
**Yet, the importance of tailoring – especially for female beneficiaries – in the training questions whether this robust procedure is well implemented in the field. This points towards a mismatch between labour market and vocational skills offered in certain context. It is particularly true for female beneficiaries, for whom access to market is structurally more difficult.** The systematic implementation of tailoring trainings is particularly problematic, as 79% of respondents who had benefitted from tailoring training state that they have not earned money using these skills since the end of the training. This finding is not surprising given that the market for tailoring is saturated.

Yet, a look at the last project's documents allows us to qualify this finding, as shown the by the figure below:

- Tailoring remained the first type of training provided to beneficiaries (249 trainees out of 1396);
- Other traditional skills were also well represented (carpentry: 119/1396 and embroidery: 90/1396)
- An increasing number of beneficiaries were offered training focusing on 'urban skills', including computer, IT, electronic/electric wiring and mechanics, suggesting an interesting shift towards marketable skills.

<sup>29</sup> Based on key informant interview with NSDP staff in Herat.

**Figure 4.3 - Type of Training Provided During CS. 0229 (2010)**



### Insufficient Complementary Training

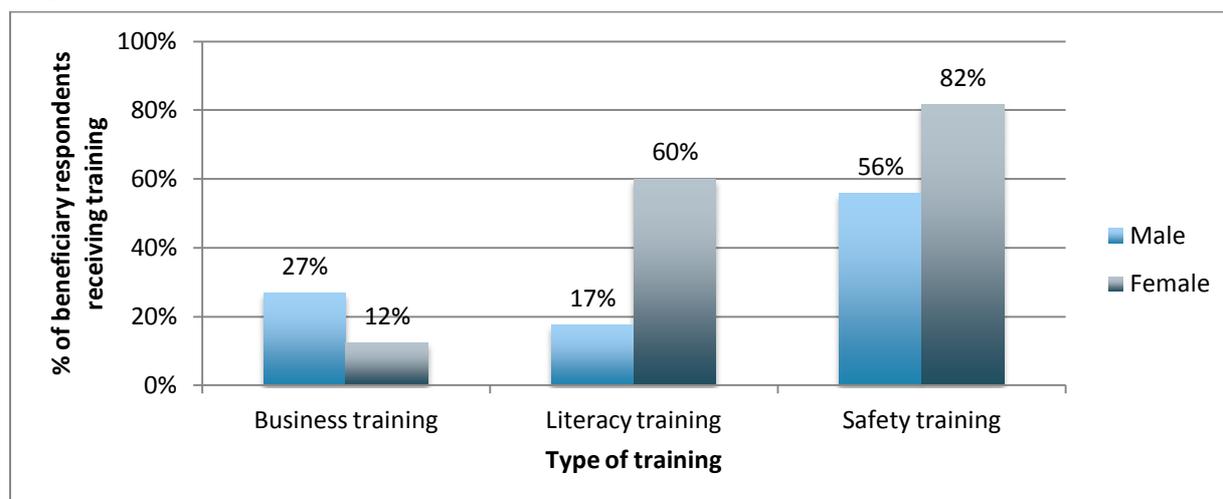
Although IOM staff reported that up to 50% of vocational training beneficiaries were also eligible for business training, only 31 of the 133 (~23%) beneficiaries of vocational training reported doing so. The final report on CS. 0229 reported even lower numbers: 1,396 trainees received vocational training, of whom 257, or 18%, subsequently followed the business development support (BDS) course. There is a clear intent for a lot of business training in the project’s guidelines that does not appear to have materialized in implementation. Whether the disconnect is on the staff side or the implementation side is not clear as the project proposals did not give specific targets for the proportion of vocational training beneficiaries to follow BDS. However, limiting the numbers of people who follow this training has a negative impact on overall success of livelihood assistance. The proposals themselves call out the fact that this training is necessary especially for those who wish to start small business as they frequently have little-to-no background in running a business.<sup>30</sup>

Literacy training and safety in workplace training, both incorporated into vocational training rather than as a subsequent programme, were far more common. 46 of the 133 beneficiaries of vocational training received literacy training, and 87 of them received safety in workplace training. All three of these types of training were linked to gender, with women more likely to report receiving literacy and safety training, and men twice as likely to report receiving business training.

<sup>30</sup> It is also possible that those beneficiaries surveyed happened to not include as many beneficiaries of business training because sample was not representative. Also, those with the entrepreneurial spirit to get business training may have been more likely to move away and begin business elsewhere – and thus not have been captured by our survey.

**Figure 4.4 - % of Vocational Training Beneficiaries Receiving Additional Training**

N=133



Respondents in Herat were twice as likely to have followed literacy training (55%, versus 28% in Kabul and 24% in Nimroz).

### Optimal duration of training?

**Duration** - The average reported length of the training was of 4.1 months for vocational training and 2 weeks for respondents who had only received business training.<sup>31</sup> Programme guidelines did not give specific time lengths for training although the overall time assigned to vocational and business training in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NSDP was of 6 months. Training duration lasted between 16 and 24 weeks, which is relatively short for an in-depth training. The livestock-related training provided in Nimroz was particularly short and lasted only for 2 weeks, a point that may require further internal investigation. Overall, 74% of beneficiaries said that training should last longer.

### Choosing the trainer

The Memorandum of Understanding between IOM and the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP), IOM's partner in the three projects studied with activities in the provinces evaluated stated that NSDP would "recommend selection of training providers" and that the procedure for selection of trainers would be done "in accordance with the NSDP procurement guidelines", with IOM having the right of approval on the training provider.<sup>32</sup>

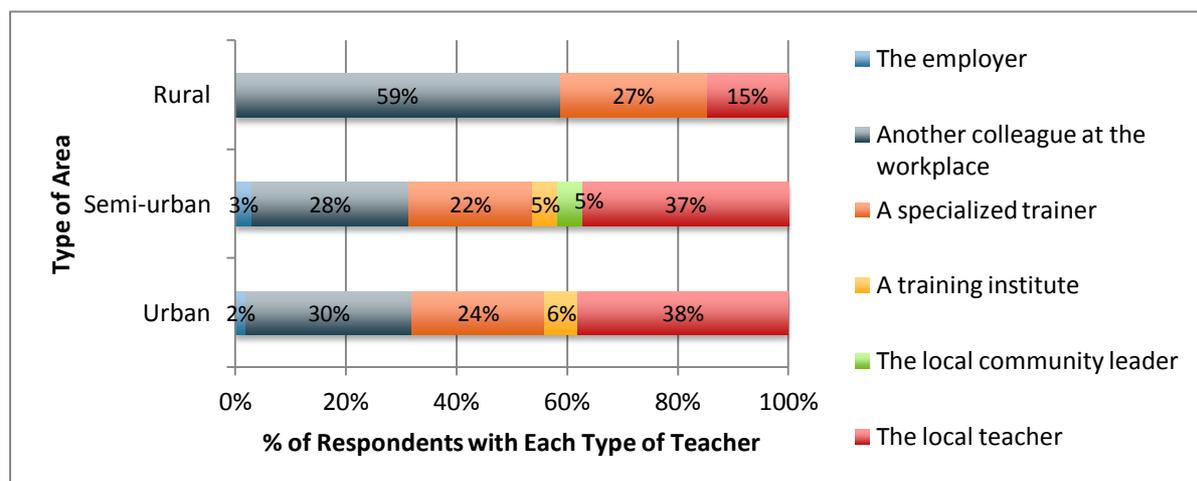
The training providers, or implementing partners, are themselves responsible for choosing the trainers for their vocational and business training activities. The requirements to hire trainers are less clear and not detailed in the projects' guidelines. According to IOM and IP staff, a pragmatic approach has been taken to this: the training providers take into account both trainer experience and educational background as well as ability to reach locations where trainings will be taking place safely and teach there without further problems. Priority is given to local candidates. As a result, **trainers in urban areas are somewhat more likely to be well-qualified teachers**, as beneficiaries in

<sup>31</sup> n=133 and 18, respectively

<sup>32</sup> IOM/MoLSAMD (2010), MoU regarding CS. 0229, p. 2.

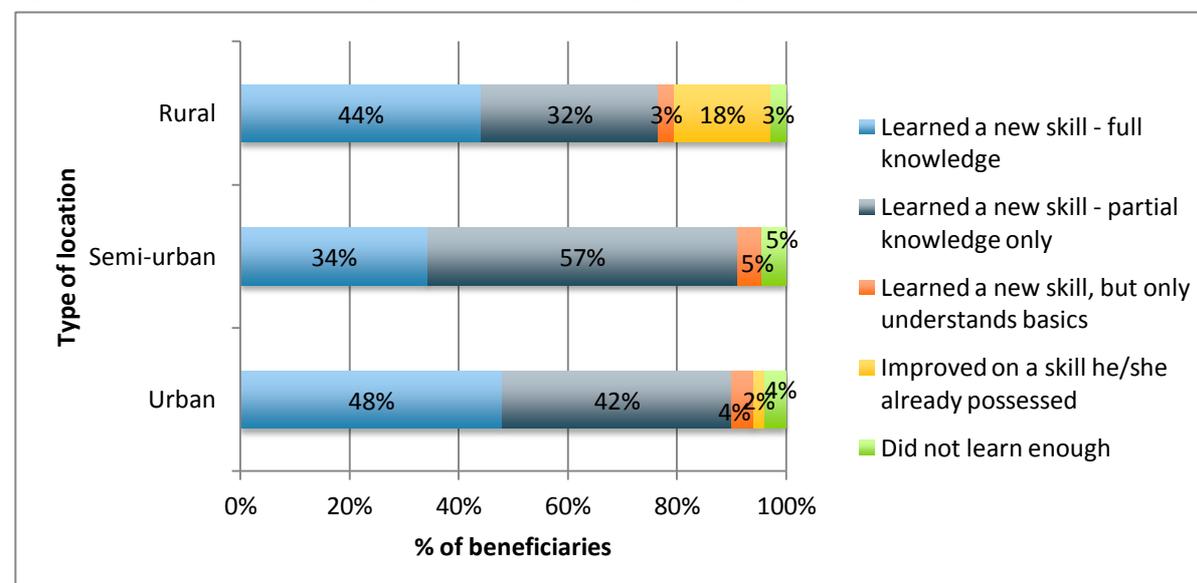
rural areas were twice as likely to have been trained by ‘another colleague at the workplace’, that is someone who is neither a specialised trainer nor a teacher.

**Figure 4.5 - Who was the trainer for your course?**



In more rural areas, IPs more frequently relied on locals who had the skills being taught to conduct trainings. In practice it can be hard to find officially qualified teachers as the programme prioritises trainers from the local area for security and accessibility reasons. **As a result, depending on the area, standards of teaching varied.<sup>33</sup> This is reflected in the quantitative survey, as beneficiaries from rural areas were slightly less likely to have learned a new skill fully or partially: 76% as against 90% in both urban and semi-urban areas.** To ensure some standards, IPs have developed ad hoc methods to determine qualification: in Karoch (Herat Province), for example, the IP conducted a practical test with teaching candidates to see if they are qualified, a good practice to encourage.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 4.6 – Extent of learning by Beneficiary during Training**



<sup>33</sup> Based on key informant interview with NSDP staff in Herat.

<sup>34</sup> Based on key informant interview with NSDP staff in Herat.

To nonetheless ensure some continuity between different IPs and programmes, the NSDP provides curricula to the implementing partners. During the first month of training, NSDP and IOM both conduct inspections of training sessions to check that the curriculum is been followed.

### Toolkits

The vast majority of beneficiaries received a toolkit either at the start of the programme, for use during training, or upon its conclusion, to allow them to use their new skills: only 5 of the 133 respondents benefitting from IOM's vocational assistance programmes did not receive a toolkit.

**Toolkit distribution is thus very successful from an efficiency perspective.**

**From an effectiveness perspective, however, it is slightly less so.** Supplying necessary tools to beneficiaries is crucial for the durability of these vocational training as a method to improve beneficiaries' lives. Too little investment at this point may lead to the financial benefits of the training disappearing completely. For example, field site observations in Azim Abad, in Injeel District, Herat Province, highlighted the plight of beneficiaries of a poultry-raising programme. Few criticisms were made to the programme overall, but one stood out: beneficiaries did not receive the amount of food promised to them for their chickens. This meant that they were unable to raise their chickens long enough for the enterprise to become self-sustainable.<sup>35</sup> While respondents reported an improvement to their lifestyle for the first year of the programme, this was due to money earned from eating and selling the chickens once they could no longer feed them rather than from the primary purpose of the training – and this improvement stopped thereafter.

The toolkits are not poorly designed – only two of the respondents unhappy with them said that they did not correspond to needs. Rather, the problem is one of both **quality** and **quantity: 69% reported the quality of items as being poor, and 90% that the items were given in a quantity too small to be useful.** Anecdotally, one interviewee, graduate of a tailoring class, told the tale of scissors that could not cut paper – how, he asked rhetorically, was he supposed to use them to cut clothes?

**Satisfaction with the quality and usefulness of toolkits provided varied** even within the same type of training; 50% of male beneficiaries of tailoring, for example, stated that the toolkit with which they were provided was not useful (only 29% of women said the same). Overall, only 63% of respondents receiving toolkits agreed that the toolkits contained what the beneficiaries needed to use their new skills. A significant minority of beneficiaries are thus unable to practice their new skills unless they have the means to purchase necessary tools elsewhere.

**These problems with quality have been acknowledged by some of the stakeholders – the NSDP staff in Herat, in doing so, attributed them not to a desire by implementing partners to make more money by reducing the amount spent on toolkits but rather to poor budget planning.** The budgets presented by IPs, according to them, frequently did not include enough for a toolkit of sufficiently good quality and quantity to enable beneficiaries to practice their newly acquired skills. One solution to this problem would be attributing an IOM-fixed amount in the proposal to toolkits, to avoid IPs attempting to undercut each other by saving costs on this budget line.<sup>36</sup> Previous attempts to do so

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<sup>35</sup> Based on Azim Abad (Herat Province) field site observation, 27.01.14.

<sup>36</sup> Based on key informant interview with NSDP staff in Herat. Recommends planning for about \$100/toolkit.

have been themselves far below the optimal \$100 suggested by NSDP – the detailed budget to the first project (CS 0101) as presented in the Annex of the proposal allocated \$50 / toolkit.<sup>37</sup>

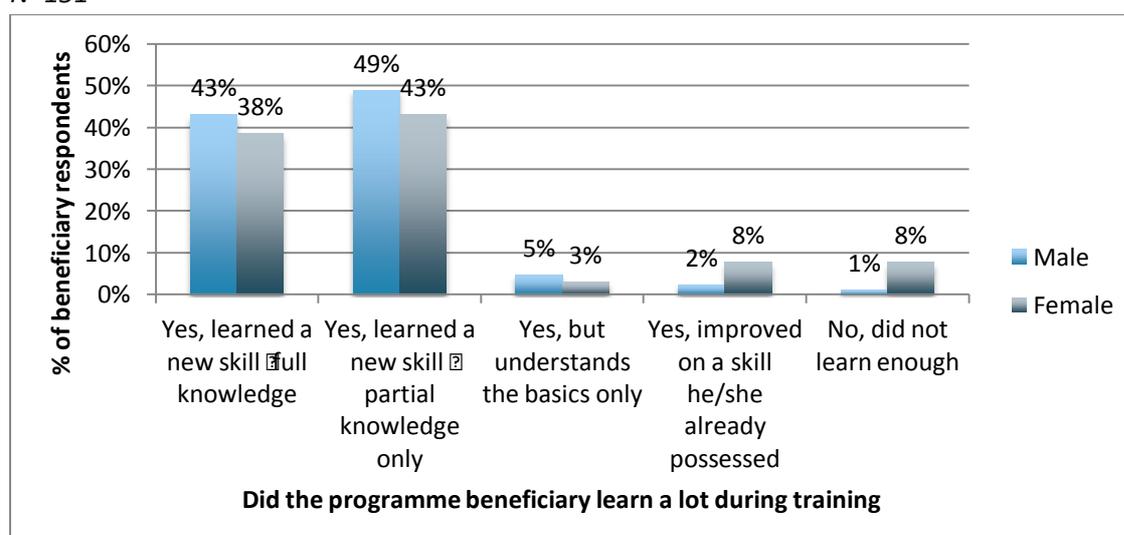
Finally, one last potential improvement to the toolkits to note: in most cases, respondents were given toolkits upon completion of the programme. This led to some selling them for short-term financial gain, a problem other organizations have highlighted. To avoid this, toolkits could be given at the start of the project to be used during the training, ensuring a minimal wear and tear that would make re-selling them less appealing. One successful technique used by WHH in similar programmes was to give toolkits in trust to several families who would share them, the social pressure serving to reduce the likelihood that they would be resold.<sup>38</sup>

### 4.3. Impact of Livelihood activities

Overall, **most beneficiaries said that they gained either a full or partial knowledge of a new skill.** Beneficiaries of livestock related trainings were least likely to agree at 80%, confirming that the 2-week training may be a relative waste of resources. As the table below illustrates, female beneficiaries were overall slightly less positive about the amounts they learned, suggesting that the quality of their instructors was not as strong, but overall returns on this front were quite positive. One community leader did note complaints from female beneficiaries of a tailoring course of the poor quality of their instruction, because of the instructor’s fears that her students might become competition. This underlines the importance of both trainer and activity selection – if the concern about the labour market is so strong from the instructor, this may not have been the best choice of activity. As illustrated by Figure 4.6, the livelihood training is often not in-depth enough to provide beneficiaries with a ‘full knowledge’ of their skills, as respectively 49 and 43% of men and women said that they got a partial knowledge of their skill, an additional 8% of women respondents reported that they did not learn anything, suggesting a poorer level of training provided to women. This suggests that the outcome remains relatively superficial and potentially insufficient for trainees to be competitive in the labour market.

**Figure 4.7 - Amount Learnt by Beneficiaries During Training**

N=151



<sup>37</sup> IOM, “CS. 0101 Proposal,” p. 7.

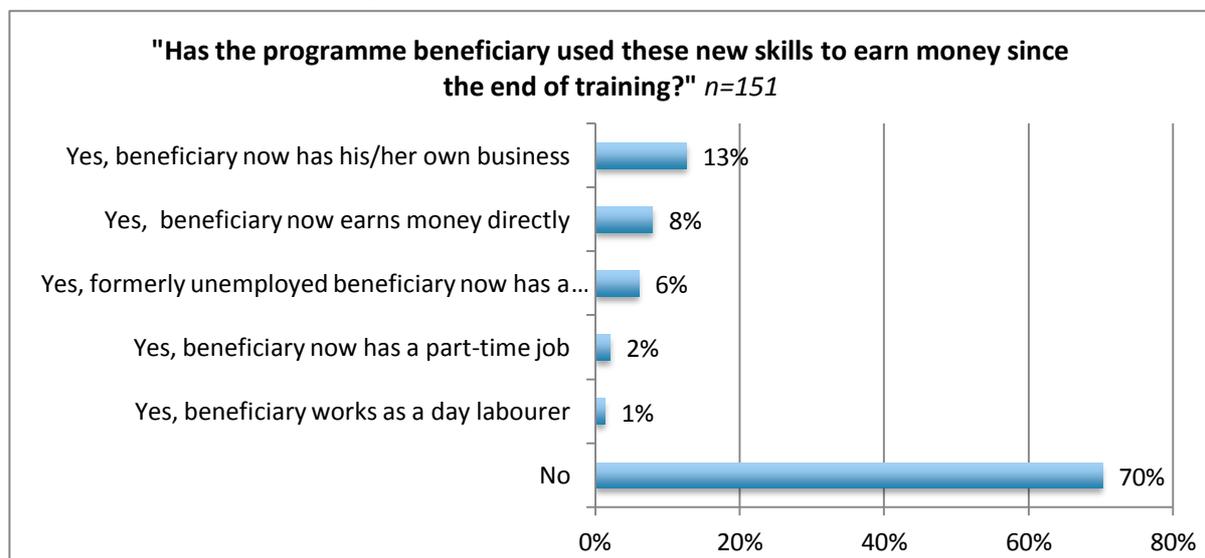
<sup>38</sup> Based on key informant interview with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) staff, Kabul.

Finally, beneficiaries were given the opportunity to choose between various elements in highlighting the three weakest elements of the programme, from selection process to staff assistance, service delivery or follow-up. "Follow-up" was the most frequently selected first response, and only 25% and 28% selected "delivery of services" and "content of the programme" as one of the top three weakness suggesting a relatively high satisfaction with programme. This follow-up issue, however, is important as it has a visible impact on the effectiveness of activities.

### Household level

**Of the 151 beneficiaries of livelihood assistance from IOM, only 6% stated that they now have a full-time job using their new skills and 74.4% of the beneficiaries report that they do not earn any money as a result of the training. 60 of the 65 women interviewed stated that they have not used their new skills to earn money, highlighting a key failure of the programme at impact women's livelihood.** Perhaps a bit more encouraging, 13% of beneficiaries now have their own business. All this shows without ambiguity that the current respondent employment rates due to new skills are far below the 75% goal set, and according to NSDP tracer surveys met. It is therefore surprising to see that the tracer survey for CS 0229, conducted 3 months after completion of the training found a 74.2% employment rate. This strong difference can be explained by a large definition of employment including self-employment and under-employment and by the fact that there may have been a spike in self-employment in the months following the training. It shows a) that the impact of the training is short-term and not sustainable; b) that the monitoring system based on data collected by the NSDP is not robust enough to measure the impact. Overall, **our survey found a very limited impact of the programme on livelihood and access to income-generating activities, limiting the overall impact of the programme on reintegration.**

**Figure 4.8 - Beneficiaries Using New Skills to Earn Money**

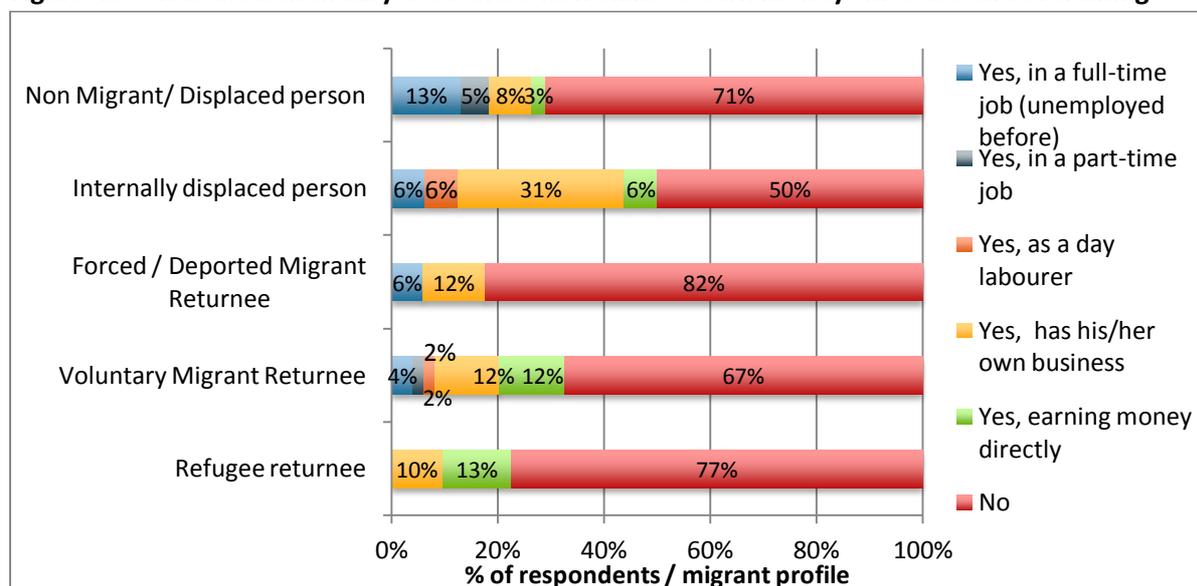


Cutting the results by migrant profile suggests, indicatively, fairly drastic differences between beneficiaries with differing migrant histories.<sup>39</sup> IDPs appear much more likely to use their skills to earn money and to start their own business. Non-migrants are most likely to use skills in a full time job. Host community members may have more connections in local area to find employment once

<sup>39</sup> Indicatively only as n= 151

they have skills. **If indeed these activities are far more successful with IDPs than other types of beneficiaries, to increase overall impact IOM should consider either a) focusing more resources on IDPs or b) helping IDPs improve their business.** Previous research on IDPs has found that they frequently find it difficult to integrate the local labour market so self-employment may be the best option to ensuring a steady livelihood for them.<sup>40</sup>

**Figure 4.9 – Has the beneficiary used these new skills to earn money since the end of training?**



The survey found various impact of the training on livelihood based on the type of skills that were taught to the beneficiaries:

**Table 4.2 – Access to employment post-training (breakdown per type of training)<sup>41</sup>**

SKILL TRAINED	% of trainees who <b>use the skills</b> in a job, business or <b>earn money</b> through the skills	% of trainees who do <b>not use the skills nor earn money</b> through the skills
Livestock-related (n=15)	0%	100%
Repairing of vehicles (n=5)	60%	40%
Carpentry (n=8)	0%	100%
Tailoring (n=65)	22%	78%
Computer (n=11)	18%	82%
Mobile repairing (n=8)	50%	50%

Table 4.2 confirms the low level of post-training employment across the board. Despite the small sampling size of some activities, it does suggest that tailoring and carpentry should no longer be the focus of livelihood training as less traditional activities, such as auto-mechanic or mobile repairing have a greater impact on employment.

However, the impact of the livelihood training is not so bleak as the above figure suggests: one must also take in account a more indirect impact. 57% of respondents stated that the assistance did improve their own and/or their family’s situation, although the main way the training improved the

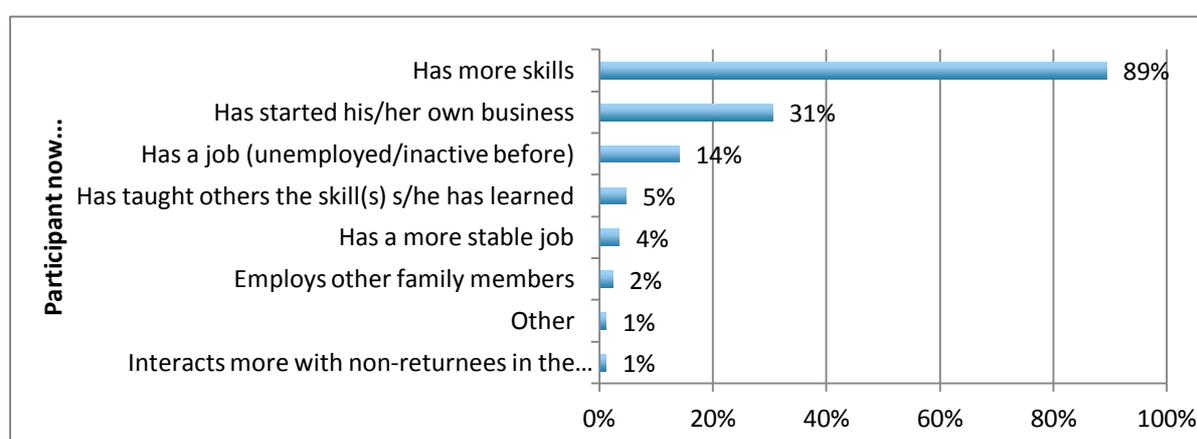
<sup>40</sup> Samuel Hall Consulting (2014), “Displacement dynamics – IDP movement tracking, needs and vulnerability analysis,” for IOM, forthcoming publication, p. 79.

<sup>41</sup> The table is only indicative given the small sample size

family’s situation was through one of its members having gained skills (figure 4.9), whilst the training’s impact on livelihood for beneficiary households remain limited.

On a more concerning front is the fact that compared to the 2009 RARIP evaluation, respondents are less likely to state that the assistance improved their family’s situation. In 2009, 48% of respondents had said that it had greatly improved their family’s situation and additional 44% denoted “average” improvement and only 12% indicated that it brought little or no improvement to the family situation. The present survey on the other hand found that 43.7% of livelihood beneficiaries noted no improvement in their family situation following the training. This may be in part due to the deteriorating economic situation since then making finding employment more challenging across the board in the country. This deteriorating economic context should be taken into account for further livelihood programming, as it means that access to IGAs will become even more difficult, calling for more robust post-training mechanisms.

**Figure 4.10 – Ways in Which Livelihood Training Improved Respondents’ Family’s Situation**



N=85

Additionally, training has non-financial impacts at the individual level, particularly for women. From a quantifiable perspective, 82% of women learned a new skill either fully or partially. The **social** impact of training on women are also non-negligible: these trainings bring together groups of usually 10-15 women who might not otherwise have the chance to leave their houses and speak with other women. The literacy training provided also opens up new possibilities to women.

### Impact at the Community level

Survey respondents living in communities where livelihood assistance had been offered were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about it, 96% stating that they believed its impact had been either “positive” or “very positive” on the community.

5 out of the 7 community leaders in communities where livelihood assistance had been offered believe that it increased participants’ income at least somewhat. Only one stated that he believed that participants did not use their new skills, and only one believed that it created tensions within the community.

## 5. SHELTER ASSISTANCE

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IOM provided shelter assistance to beneficiaries in Nangarhar in 2008 and Herat and Nimroz in 2010. Through these self-help programmes, beneficiary households were provided with the necessary materials to construct shelters, as well as the training to do so and the help of IP staff monitoring the construction.

Building on the findings of this study, the research team provides particular insight to strengthen future programming. The research recommends to:

*First*, develop stronger selection mechanisms to integrate vulnerable IDP households in the shelter assistance programme. This gap – i.e. the insufficient integration of IDPs in shelter programming – is not specific to IOM as the 2013 *Evaluation of UNHCR's Shelter Assistance Programme* by Samuel Hall has shown. Building on the lessons learned from both evaluations, IOM has a unique opportunity, in a context of increasing internal displacement and conflict in Afghanistan, to address this gap.

- A notable exception is that of Nimroz province where IOM was more successful in integration of IDPs. This points to the need to build local lessons learned that can benefit the overall programming of IOM in Afghanistan.

*Second*, specific elements in the project design prevent IOM from successfully targeting the most vulnerable demographic groups. Female-headed households are of particular concern, yet a slim minority among the beneficiaries surveyed. The necessity for beneficiaries to own land or have access to land limited the ability of IPs to select vulnerable households. As a result, programme design and requirements need to be better adapted to provide for the basic needs of the most vulnerable. Given that studies have shown that shelter assistance improves the chances of reintegration, the next step should therefore be to increasingly offer this opportunity to the most vulnerable demographic groups in future programming cycles.

*Third*, improve community-based monitoring in shelter assistance provision as IPs fare less positively in this type of activity. As a result, two objectives can be met in a trickle-down effect of a stronger community-based monitoring system reaching IOM: IPs will be better monitored by beneficiaries and IOM alike, and IPs' monitoring of shelter assistance impact will be improved. At this stage, the study reveals different levels of IP performance across provinces, and accusations of graft from beneficiaries. Whether these are true or just rumours, they negatively affect the perception of the assistance provided and ultimately affect its impact. A community-based monitoring system based on a direct link between beneficiaries and IOM will ensure a stronger and organic evaluation of IPs to strengthen future programming performance.

## RELEVANCE

### How relevant is shelter assistance for returnees and IDPs?

- ✓ Shelter and housing are one of the main needs of populations on the move, both upon return and after a forced displacement.<sup>42</sup>

### How relevant are the targets of shelter assistance?

- ✓ The relevance of targets of shelter assistance in terms of migratory profile varies across provinces. Whilst the projects in Nimroz and Nangarhar included deportees, spontaneous returnees and IDPs (for Nimroz) based on the profile of the province, it was less true in Herat where IOM only targeted refugee returnees from Iran.
- ✓ The integration of IDPs in the shelter project remained quite low, as IDPs appeared as beneficiaries only in Nimroz. Given the evolution of the migratory context and the increasingly acute question of internal displacement, an adjustment is needed to increase the relevance of the project.

### How relevant to the context is the shelter design and implementation?

- ✓ The evaluation team found a good flexibility of the project to the local contexts, in terms of design with the adoption of dome-shaped roof in Nimroz and in terms of implementation modalities with the use of cash to replace in-kind material when appropriate.
- ✓ The design of the shelter is usually deemed too small and not adapted to Afghan culture, especially in Nangarhar. The absence of surrounding wall is also a problem for beneficiaries.

## EFFICIENCY

### Have the projects inputs been used and converted into desired results in an efficient manner?

- ✓ The evaluation found that the project had been successfully implemented in terms of distribution of materials and monitoring of shelter construction. The only negative result was the lack of latrines in a quarter of shelters amongst respondents in Nimroz and Herat.
- ✓ The project did not succeed in selecting vulnerable returnees and IDPs, especially female-headed households and widows, as the proportion of the latter amongst beneficiaries is very low. In general, **the necessity for beneficiaries to own land or have access to land limited the ability of IPs to select vulnerable households.**
- ✓ The project did not provide quality materials to beneficiaries, especially for steel beams.

## IMPACT

### Did the shelter assistance have a sustainable impact on beneficiaries?

- ✓ Shelter has a positive impact on the socio-economic situation of beneficiary households,
- ✓ The impact of the shelter project depends heavily on the local economic conditions and the availability of basic services. When those are lacking, secondary displacement occurrence can be high, as it was the case in the land allocation sites (LAS) in Herat province.
- ✓ At the community level, the impact of the project is considered to be very positive.

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<sup>42</sup> Samuel Hall's "Challenges of IDP Protection in Afghanistan," for example, found that housing was one of the top three protection priorities for IDPs regardless of location, gender and length of displacement. p. 6.

## 5.1. Relevance of Shelter assistance for returnees and IDPs

Both qualitative and quantitative components of the study confirm the utter relevance of shelter assistance for populations returning to Afghanistan. Upon arrival, returnees of various categories reported shelter and housing as one of their top three needs in very large proportions:

**Table 5.1 - % of post-arrival assistance reporting shelter as one of their 3 main needs**

	<b>Herat</b>	<b>Nimroz</b>	<b>Nangarhar</b>
<b>Shelter / Housing</b>	84%	72%	92%

Qualitative interviews confirm that the shelter filled in a major gap for returnees when arriving in their communities:

When we first arrived to this area, we have several needs, including land and shelter. We bought the land and they helped us build the shelter. This assistance helped me and my household a lot because it is impossible to live without a shelter.

- Case Study Nimroz

For IDPs as well, shelter represents an acute need. The 2012 Samuel Hall/NRC *Challenges of IDP Protection* study identified shelter and housing as one of the three most acute protection needs of displaced population in the provinces under study<sup>43</sup>.

## 5.2. Relevance and efficiency of beneficiary selection

### Targeting villages and beneficiaries

**While the proposal for the original shelter assistance project (CS. 0101) was vague on selection criteria, the next relevant project detailed out the selection procedure explicitly and gave general indications around beneficiary selection.** These last have been refined by the different IPs involved.

The projects targeted villages with high proportions of returnees for these projects. As of 2010 IOM relied on a Provincial Steering Committee with partner NGOs, DoRR, UNHCR and other relevant actors to ensure coordination in these areas of high return.

Once villages were identified, local communities identified eligible beneficiaries for a Beneficiary Selection Committee (BSC) made up of local authorities (CDC or shura), and representatives from DoRR, IOM, UNHCR and the IP. The BSC would then select beneficiaries among those proposed by the local communities. In practice, in some districts VRF cards seem to have been used as shorthand for selecting beneficiaries, fraud on the beneficiary part by applying for shelters for the benefit someone else and there were several allegations of beneficiaries receiving houses because of their relationship to government officials.

Proposals simply called for giving priority to vulnerable returnee families and IDPs. These must either a) own land or b) have land that they are allowed to use, and not have the funds and resources to build a shelter. While the extremely vulnerable individuals criteria was not used as for

<sup>43</sup> NRC/SH/IDMC/JIPS (2012), "Challenges of IDP protection in Afghanistan," p. 6.

the shelter beneficiaries, IOM staff underlined a preference for female heads of household, disabled people, and widows, among these vulnerable families.

The relatively vague selection criteria gave lieu to a selection process that was not always organized. The IP in Herat described the DoRR as presenting potential beneficiaries, while in Nimroz it was stated that VRF cards were used as the primary means of identifying potential beneficiaries. Several beneficiaries gave VRF cards as the reason for their selection into the programme.

They selected the people who had migrant cards and land to build shelters on. *Abdul Hakim Khan, Shelter assistance beneficiary, Nangarhar province*

“The organization staff selected the people who had refugee cards, were poor and had their own lands. They wouldn’t select the poor or the migrants who didn’t have migrant cards and their own land.” *Khairuddin, Shelter assistance beneficiary, Nimroz province*

According to IOM, in Herat province all the beneficiaries held VRF cards.<sup>44</sup> The reliance on VRF for selection raises a question of relevance, given UNHCR’s focus on refugee returnees and the very large shelter programme that UNHCR is already implementing. Even if the division of populations of concern between UNHCR and IOM is not in place for reintegration activities, one could wonder why IOM specific vulnerable groups do not remain the primary concern of IOM. This goes back to the poor integration between IOM’s activities and the missed opportunity to have a robust continuum between return and reintegration activities.

### Profile of Beneficiaries Interviewed

Researchers interviewed **117 beneficiaries** of shelter assistance in Herat, Nimroz and Nangarhar. The Herat beneficiaries were all interviewed in Taqi Naqi Township, where all shelters built in the scope of this project are located. In both Nimroz and Nangarhar multiple villages were visited. In Nimroz these centred around Zaranj; in Nangarhar, villages in Kama, Behsood and Sukhrod districts were visited. Rodat and Baktikot were inaccessible for security reasons.

Beneficiary households from Nangarhar province present a different profile from those in Herat and Nimroz province; households were larger, had been abroad longer and returned more recently.

**Table 5.2 – Overview of Shelter Assistance Beneficiaries Interviewed**

	Herat	Nimroz	Nangarhar
<b>Primary country of Displacement</b>	Iran	Iran	Pakistan
<b>Average HH Size</b>	7.7	8.8	10.2
<b>Average time abroad, when applicable</b>	14 years	13 years	25 years
<b>Average Time Since Return, When Applicable</b>	9.2 years	8.2 years	6.6 years

<sup>44</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that they had received land on a LAS.

### Migratory profile

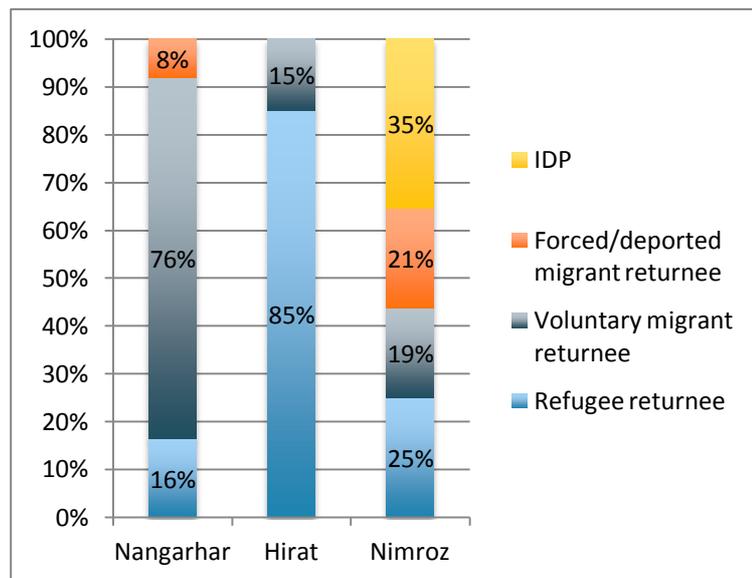
Figure 5.1 shows clear provincial patterns in the profile of shelter beneficiaries. It shows in particular that:

- IDPs are poorly integrated in the IOM shelter activities, **except for Nimroz where far more IDPs were found amongst respondents;**
- Refugee returnees constitute an important share of beneficiaries, especially in Herat, where 85% of beneficiaries interviewed were refugee returnees. KIIs with IOM confirmed that almost all beneficiaries there were VRF holders, a fact also explained by the implementation of the shelter assistance in Taqi Naqi township.
- The migrant profile of beneficiaries in Nangarhar is fairly consistent with that of the families being helped at Torkham (see post-arrival assistance section): mostly voluntary returns of undocumented Afghans, a relevant target group for IOM in the province.

The lack of IDP beneficiaries reflects the use of “easy” methods to determine beneficiaries such as having a VRF card and community suggestions, but also underscores a deeper issue: beneficiaries must

either a) own land or b) have someone willing to let them build on their own land and then use the shelter. These preliminary requirements eliminate most IDPs from the list of potential beneficiaries; if IOM wishes to continue to target them in shelter assistance programmes than this fact must be addressed for IOM’s efforts to be effective.

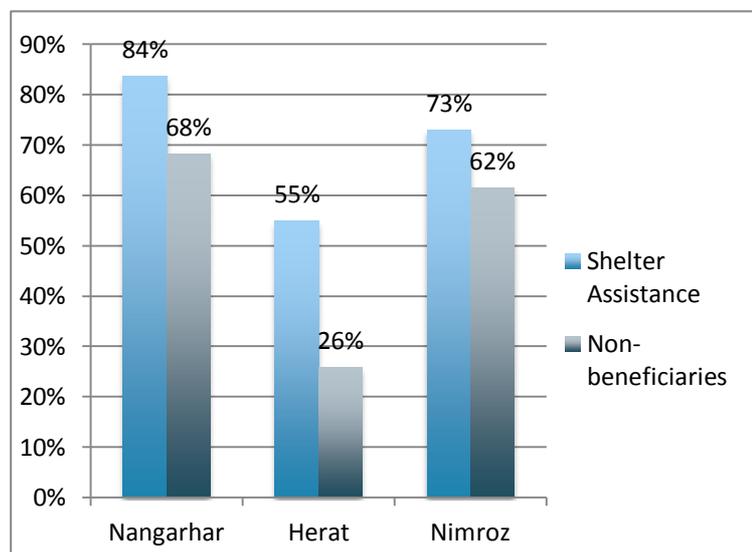
**Figure 5.1 Migratory Profile – Shelter Beneficiaries**



**Figure 5.2 - Households with No Specific Vulnerabilities**

### Did IOM Shelter assistance target the most vulnerable?

As noted above, field observations showed that the selection procedures were relatively loose. The survey allows us to assess whether IOM is successful at targeting the most vulnerable. The survey shows that the loose selection criteria and the necessity of owning land limits the integration of vulnerable in the shelter project.



As shown on figure 5.2, the survey found that the level of vulnerability of shelter beneficiaries was comparatively lower than non-beneficiaries. In all three provinces, the proportion of households showing no particular vulnerability is higher amongst shelter beneficiaries than amongst the rest of the community, indicating that vulnerability was not particularly taken into account in the selection procedures. The difference is stark in Herat province, where IOM acknowledged that the VRF was a prime criterion of selection. In particular, the survey does not support the idea that IOM is targeting in priority female-headed households, disabled or widows, as they do not appear to be particularly important caseloads amongst beneficiaries.

The relative inefficiency of the shelter project at selecting the most vulnerable is linked to the necessity for beneficiaries to have access to land, a strong barrier of entry to the project and a challenge that other programmes of shelter assistance also face. Yet, given the relative small scope of IOM project and some of its population of concern, finding mechanisms to allow returnees and IDPs to access land could be more feasible than for a programme of the size of the SAP.

The overview of the beneficiary profile shows that the selection does not allow for an efficient selection of the most vulnerable nor does it prioritize equally IOM's target populations across provinces. Whilst IOM's target populations are fairly well represented in Nimroz and Nangahrar, the selection in Herat only allowed refugee returnees to be selected. If individual deportees are not a relevant group for shelter assistance, the huge presence of IDPs in Herat province, and their important needs in terms of shelter, could be better taken into account by IOM's activities.

### 5.3. Assessing the construction process

#### Shelter Design

**Shelter design followed basic UNHCR shelter design:** two rooms, a hallway and a latrine. IOM does allow for modification to this plan based on beneficiary feedback and region; 97% of shelters constructed consisted of two rooms. Nimroz showed the most variety with 6% of shelters having only one room. In Nimroz the roofs of the shelters have rounded tops as is traditional in the area, and respondents had requested and were given smaller windows to let in less heat.<sup>45</sup> IOM has also added stronger foundation stones to the basic UNHCR model. Feedback from the two rounds of shelter assistance described here has been taken into account in the most recent construction in Kunar. Beneficiaries frequently used their own funds to expand the shelters and add an exterior wall.

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<sup>45</sup> Based on key informant interview with IOM staff in Kabul.

### Exterior of IOM Shelters in Taqi Naqi Township, Herat Province



#### Materials Given

**Materials for the shelter were to be given in several instalments, beneficiaries receiving each one upon the completion of the previous round of construction.** For example, in Nimroz Province IOM staff reported procedure as follows:

1. Basic construction materials
2. Bricks, doors, windows, steel beams
3. \$235 cash, signboard with IOM/ Japan logos

Indeed, all respondents in Nimroz province reported receiving doors and windows, and most (88%) building materials. The planned beams were only received by 2% of respondents: this illustrates the **flexibility**, which IOM built into the shelter project, **allowing for some adaptations based on local needs**. Respondents in Nimroz wanted rounded roofs, and so did not require the iron beams given in other provinces. Instead, they were supplied with further cash to build their roofs.

Of more concern are some of the items reported as missing by beneficiaries, as shown by Table 5.1. The latrines in particular should have been received by all beneficiaries and were missing for about a quarter of households in both Herat and Nangarhar provinces. Latrines were successfully provided in Nimroz, on the other hand. Tools, while perhaps not on all materials lists, are crucial for construction, and lack thereof could have a very negative impact on ability to construct shelters in a timely fashion. Other missing items reflect adaptation to local areas: for example, Nimroz is not located in an area with extensive woods – hence the lack of wooden beams. Finally, some beneficiaries complained of having been promised items they never received. The following example shows an expectation gap, whereby beneficiaries are not clear on the exact modalities of the

assistance that they are meant to receive and are disappointed even if they were not supposed to receive steel beams in Nimroz.

“The quality of the doors is good but the organization staff didn’t give us steel beams.”

- *Khairuddin, Shelter assistance beneficiary, Nimroz province*

**Table 5.3 – % of Respondents Receiving Each Shelter Material, Self-reported**

	Nangarhar	Herat	Nimroz
<b>Windows</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Door</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Wood</b>	96%	50%	0%
<b>Iron beams</b>	98%	100%	2%
<b>Wooden beams</b>	61%	30%	0%
<b>Lintels</b>	94%	100%	2%
<b>Latrine</b>	76%	70%	98%
<b>Bathroom</b>	0%	5%	100%
<b>Cleaning supplies</b>	10%	0%	13%
<b>Building Materials</b>	0%	5%	88%
<b>Tools</b>	20%	0%	0%

### Challenges with the construction of shelters

Beneficiaries were responsible for building their own shelters with the guidance and supervision of IP staff. Materials were to be provided by the implementing partner. Several difficulties presented themselves during this process:

- **Discrepancies in material distribution across provinces suggest different levels of efficiency among IPs:** While 96% of respondents in Nangarhar said that they had received all the necessary materials to build the shelter, only 75% of those in Herat said the same and 19% of those in Nimroz. The low proportion in Nimroz can be explained by the fact that beneficiaries were sometimes given money instead of materials to build their shelters.
- **There were quality control issues with some of the materials, which led to an accusation of graft on the part of the IPs. Here as well, beneficiaries’ perception varies across provinces.** While 96% of respondents in Nimroz stated that the materials received were of good quality, only 76% of those in Nangarhar and 65% of those in Herat said the same. The discrepancy between Nimroz and the other provinces can be explained by the fact that in Nimroz,

beneficiaries did not receive iron beams because of the rounded roof shape. The iron beams received elsewhere were frequently criticized as being of poor quality.<sup>46</sup> One interviewee in Herat described the steel doors and windows of being of such low quality that “one can fold its steel with one’s hands.”

“To be clearer, the shelters they have built are only stalls not real houses for human beings to live. You can see that the steel doors are of so low quality that one can fold its steel with hands and the same with windows. The organizations receive funds and fill their own pockets with most of it.”

- *Zemarak, Shelter beneficiary, Nangarhar province*

- **There were quality control issues with some of the shelters.** In Taqi Naqi Township, Herat, researchers were shown several shelters in ruins, supposedly due to high winds. Poor construction may also have played a role.
- **Delays in the process led to construction of shelters during the wrong season.** On average, construction of the shelters took about the amount of time intended, despite IP complaints that some beneficiaries did not support the building process appropriately as they did not come to work on their shelter every day: overall, it took on average 2.3 months to complete the shelters. Respondents did take slightly longer in Herat, 2.6 months, where they were less likely to hire external labour, and complaints originated.<sup>47</sup> The procurement and beneficiary selection processes, frequently pushed back the start of construction until after the summer, with the risk of having to complete the shelter at the beginning of the winter.
- **Respondents were unable to build their shelters without external labour.** 94% of household had to hire someone external to their household to finish building their shelter, including 100% of respondents from Nangarhar. There was confusion as to whether or not the implementing partners were to pay for this extra labour. In Nimroz and Nangarhar, the IPs did not do so, but interviewed beneficiary stated that “They had promised us that they will pay us for the day labourers wage and the money to buy stones but they didn’t pay us.”<sup>48</sup> Several of the beneficiaries in Herat reported that the IP had paid extra money to build the shelter. **This shows that there is an expectation gap between what beneficiaries receive and what they think they will receive. It is problematic as it leads to poor financial planning amongst beneficiary households, who do not always realise that the shelter may require a financial investment** and may see their financial situation put at risk by the construction of their shelter. Figure 5.3 confirms that the low capacity of beneficiaries to build a shelter and sustain the financial effort that it represents throughout the whole process, as 57% of beneficiaries reported that they ran out of money during the construction.

<sup>46</sup> When asked about this, a representative from INTERSOS, the implementing partner in Herat, explained that originally, beneficiaries were to receive iron beams from Iran of a higher quality, but that because the beneficiaries wished for longer iron beams to be able to build bigger houses, they had to settle for iron beams from Pakistan, of lesser quality but longer for the same amount of money.

<sup>47</sup> Based on key informant interview with IOM staff in Herat.

<sup>48</sup> Based on case study from Nangarhar province.

**Figure 5.3 - Problems Faced by Respondents Benefitting from Shelter Assistance**



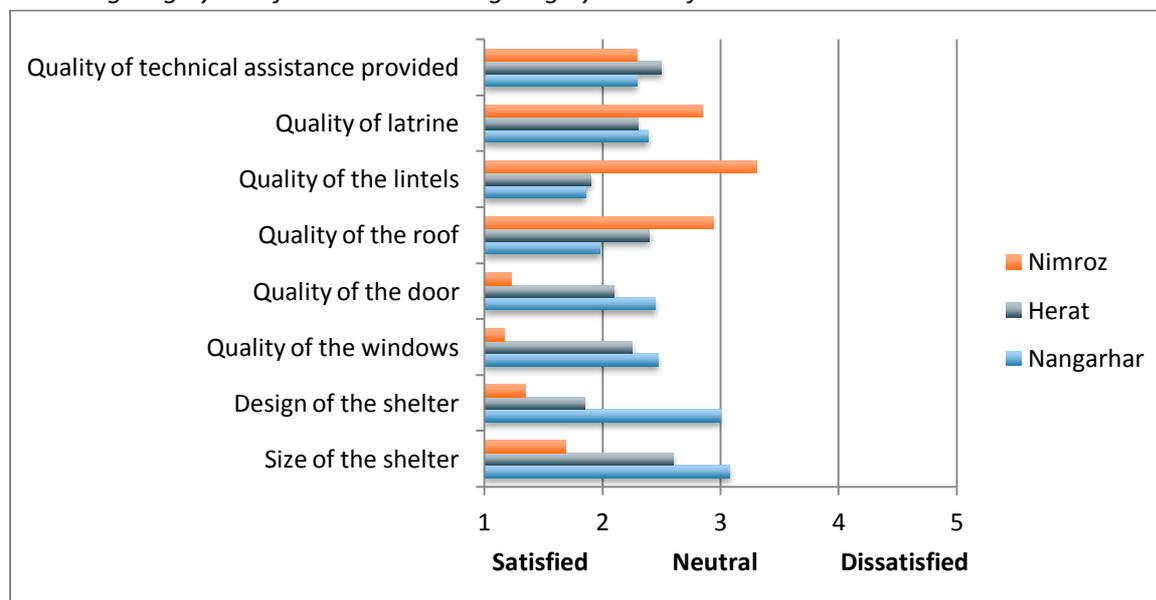
Feedback considering IP help and monitoring during the construction process was generally positive. Only 14% of respondents were dissatisfied with the quality of the technical assistance provided, and only 4 of the 117 interviewed respondents reported that their shelter had never been monitored. IOM staff also conducted frequent monitoring of the shelter construction process.

#### 5.4. Beneficiary Satisfaction

The chart below underlines the differences in beneficiary satisfaction by element and province.

**Figure 5.4 - Respondent Satisfaction with Elements of Shelter Assistance**

*“1” being “highly satisfied” and “5” being “highly dissatisfied”*



Of particular note are regional differences in terms of satisfaction with the design and size of the shelter; they reflect the differing needs and expectations of beneficiaries: beneficiaries in Nangarhar were less satisfied with the design and size of the shelters than in the 2 other provinces. This is not surprising as the difference in terms of average size of households between the provinces is striking (cf.

**Table 5.2):** 10.2 members in Nangarhar as against 7.7 in Herat and 8.8 in Nimroz. Approximately 90% of respondents specifically mentioned the shelter size as a way to improve programmes. This result can also be linked to the fact that the Nangarhar project was the first implemented, and some of the criticisms were then taken into account for further projects.

As found in surveys of similar programmes, the quality of the latrines and the roof was a slightly greater issue in the South (Nimroz).<sup>49</sup> This may suggest cultural inadequacies of toilet facilities. The problems with roof quality may be due to the fact that as they have a modified, rounded shape they lack the strength of iron beams and offer a less durable structure.

The two-room shelter design was criticized as being too small for the average Afghan household, so was the absence of provision for a boundary wall, a cultural necessity for Afghan homes.

“The shelters we currently live in are not for permanent use. [...] The design of these shelters is for the refugee camps in Pakistan and they can’t be used for permanent purposes [...] These shelters are only temporary and good for those who are really in need and poor [...] I would like to suggest the organizations not to waste their money on building such useless shelters where we can only shelter the livestock.” *Zemarak, Shelter beneficiary, Nangarhar province*

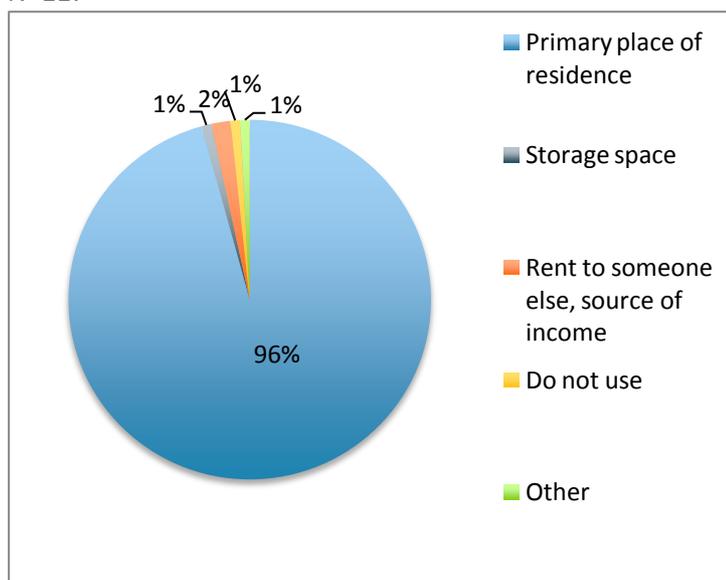
## 5.5. A positive Impact at the household and community levels

### Household level

#### Shelter: a first step in the reintegration process

Other evaluations of shelter assistance programme have noted many cases of respondents using shelters for purpose other than as a primary residence – to earn money as a rental property, for example, or for storage purposes.<sup>50</sup> The vast majority of beneficiaries interviewed, when compared to other programmes such as UNHCR shelter assistance, were more likely to be using their shelter for its intended purpose – as a primary place of residence. Clearly, for the beneficiaries interviewed this was addressing a real need; however, this excludes those beneficiaries who have since left their shelter. Yet, qualitative fieldwork allows us to refine the analysis on that point. First, it suggests that beneficiaries

**Figure 5.5 - Respondent Use of Shelter**  
N=117



<sup>49</sup> Samuel Hall Consulting / MGSOG, (2012) “Evaluation of the UNHCR shelter assistance programme,” p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

over-reported the use of shelter as primary place of residence, as field observations and qualitative discussions showed that some shelters were used as barns or storage, particularly in Nangarhar.

“Some people just use those shelters as stalls for their livestock and place to keep their junks. You saw for yourselves that most of the people have kept their livestock in those shelters because the size and design of those shelters are only for the refugee camps in Pakistan”

- Case Study, Nangarhar province

Qualitative fieldwork did show that the shelter had an important impact for household upon return, as most of them simply do not have a house in the community they come back to. Respondents reported that the shelter was first used as a place of residence by households who came back, until they were able to afford a better accommodation. At that stage, household would destroy their shelter and use the material to build a better-suited accommodation. This shows the role played by shelters in the immediate reintegration of returnees to the communities. Getting a permanent shelter is a first step into reintegration at a stage where a lot of vulnerable households simply cannot afford to build their own house.

A sign that reintegration is not always complete was that **approximately half of shelters in Taqi Naqi township are no longer occupied by their original beneficiaries, who have primarily left for Herat city. Care should be taken to ensure that those factors frequently leading to secondary displacement – lack of economic opportunity, insecurity – are either not present or being addressed via other projects, to ensure sustainability of the shelters as a reintegration activity.** Elements external to the programme itself can also contribute to beneficiary dissatisfaction and secondary displacement – in Herat, for example, some shelters lacked running water and electricity – not because of IOM or its IP but because the electricity / water connections were not functioning where they ought to have been. This confirms that assessing the areas where the shelter project – in particular in terms of delivery of basic services and access to markets – is implemented is critical for the sustainability of the project.

Yet, **secondary displacement is not in and of itself a sign of failure of the project, as the shelter were still occupied and not left abandoned.** Some of the shelters have been rented out; others simply occupied by IDPs or other returnees. The shelters are therefore entering a normal economic cycle once their first beneficiaries decided to use it as a financial resource and to move further. While few shelter beneficiaries interviewed stated that they planned a future displacement (only 2% of those in Nangarhar, and elsewhere none), the potential for secondary displacement needs to be taken into account when constructing shelters.

#### **Financial Impact of the Shelter project on household**

The financial burden of shelters and the risk it may represent for beneficiary households is an ongoing debate that also pertained to UNHCR huge Shelter Assistance Programme (SAP). IOM’s activity faces the same dilemma when implementing shelter activity. It is true that the need to hire external labour is an added cost that was not easily afforded by all concerned families: of the **117 beneficiary households interviewed, 86 reported having debt, and of these, 26 said that it was for the purpose of building a shelter.** Qualitative fieldwork confirmed that the debt incurred to build shelters could be very important.

“We couldn’t afford hiring day labourers for building the shelter so we build the shelter by ourselves. The organization had only paid us 270 USD and we took around 120,000 AFN loans from people for building this shelter. [...] When building the shelter, we were faced with lack of money. The organization had given us a small amount of money and some constructions materials including two doors and two windows. We had to take loans and pay for all the other materials we needed for building the house.”- *Khairuddin, Shelter beneficiary, Nimroz province*

However, this should be nuanced as:

- Those respondents from Nangarhar who listed “to build a shelter” as a primary reason for debt owed tended to owe less money than those who listed it as a reason for debt owed from Nimroz and Herat. Indebtedness should be understood in the socio-economic context of Afghanistan, where it is a very common livelihood strategy.<sup>51</sup>
- The other options than shelter assistance are themselves costly, either socially or economically: building a shelter oneself, renting out an accommodation, sharing an overcrowded house with relatives, or living in a tent or temporary shelter to list the most common ones.
- Economically, the shelter programme correlates to a positive impact on beneficiaries: 76% rate the economic situation of their household as “better” and 2% as “far better” since receiving shelter assistance. Beneficiaries in Nangarhar were much more likely to say that they were worse off (20.4%) than in either other province.

### Community Level

Only 1 community leader reported the shelter programme causing tensions between community members, in particular around land ownership. Overall, however, the impact of the shelter programmes was considered to be either positive or very positive.

Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in communities where shelter assistance was given generally rated its effects as positive. Nangarhar was the only place where some rated it as having a negative (6% of Nangarhar respondents who received assistance and 7% of those who did not) or very negative (4% of Nangarhar respondents who received shelter assistance).

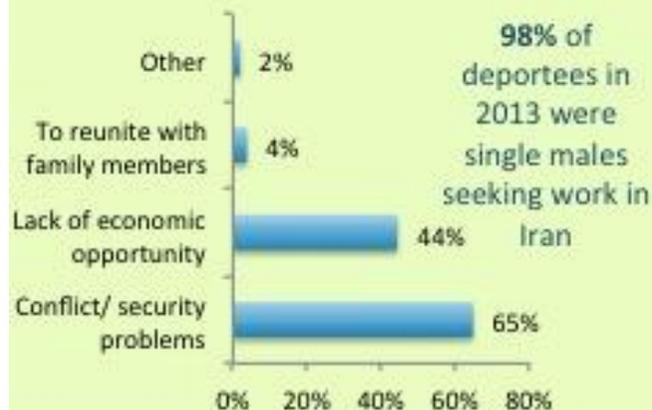
The general positive impact of shelter assistance can be understood in the light of past studies on the topic. Return can sometimes raise tensions within communities because of the increased pressure it imposes on resources and infrastructure. In the case of dwelling in particular, returnee households tend to rely on relatives for shelter, imposing shared housing in a context where it is culturally sensitive. Shelter assistance reduces that risk. Finally, shelter assistance programmes provided short-term employment opportunities in concerned communities as 110 of 117 shelter assistance beneficiaries hired someone outside of their household to help in the construction of the shelter.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 96.

# HERAT BENEFICIARY PROFILE

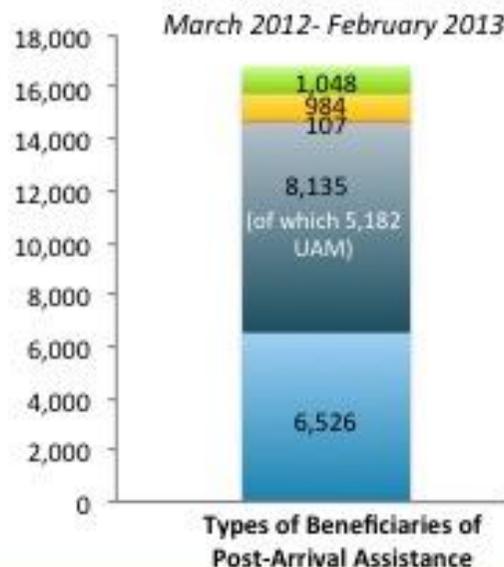
## RETURNEE PROFILING



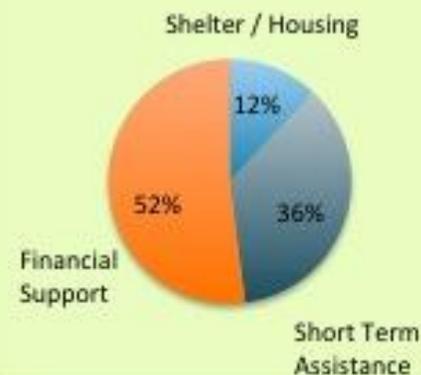
Herat respondents went abroad because of **conflict / security problems**

- EP holders (~20 Aug 2012)
- Spontaneous returnees
- DEPORTED - As Document Claimants
- DEPORTED - as individuals (EVIs)
- DEPORTED - In family groups

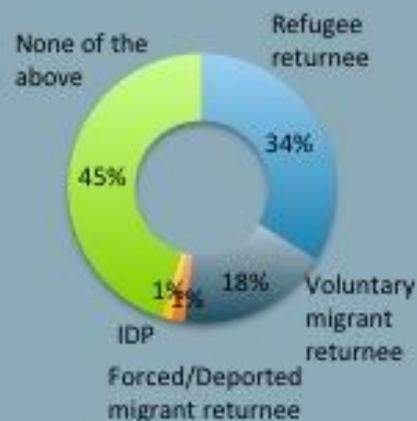
## NEEDS UPON RETURN AND HELP PROVIDED



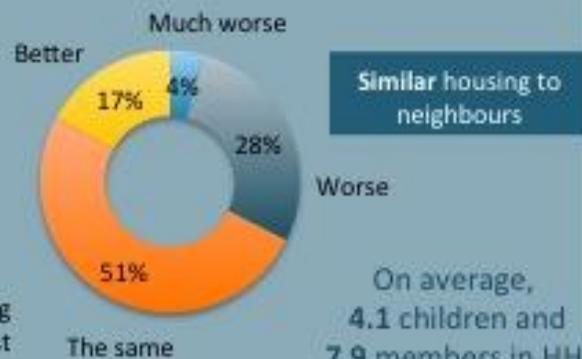
**Financial support is the greatest need upon return for post-arrival assistance beneficiaries**



## HOW VULNERABLE ARE BENEFICIARIES OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE NOW?



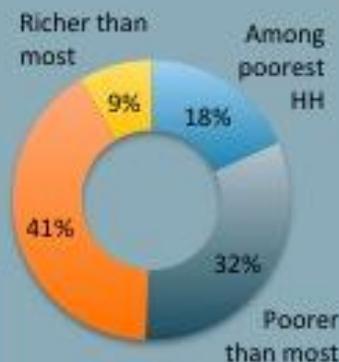
82% have good access to safe drinking water, 63% to electricity, and 23% to medical care



**Similar housing to neighbours**

Worse

On average, 4.1 children and 7.9 members in HH

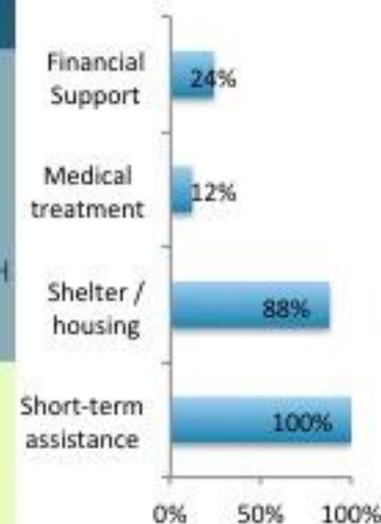


**Slightly worse off financially than neighbours**

79% are indebted

**44 Shelters built 2,107 livelihood assistance beneficiaries**

## Post-arrival Assistance Received



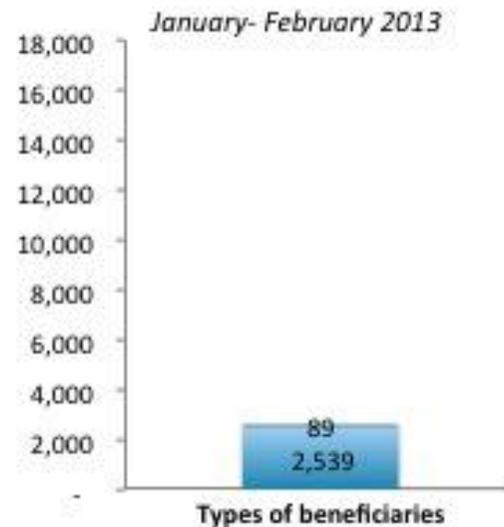
# NANGARHAR BENEFICIARY PROFILE

## RETURNEE PROFILING



Nangarhar respondents went abroad because of **conflict / security problems**

## NEEDS UPON RETURN AND HELP PROVIDED

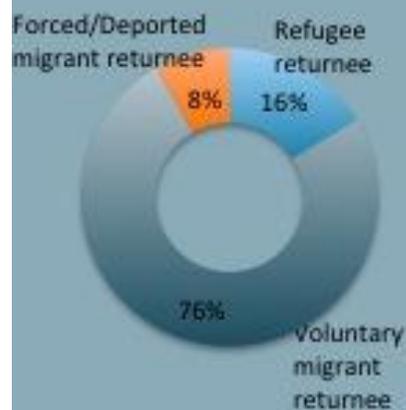


Shelter / housing is the greatest need upon return for post-arrival assistance beneficiaries



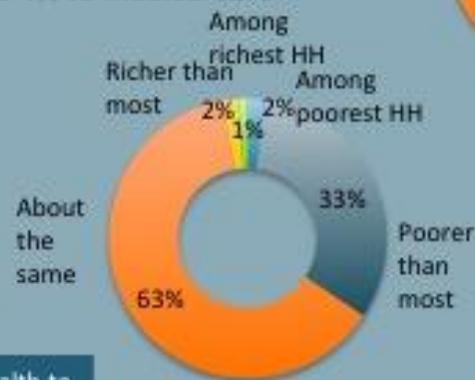
Shelter / Housing

## HOW VULNERABLE ARE BENEFICIARIES OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE NOW?

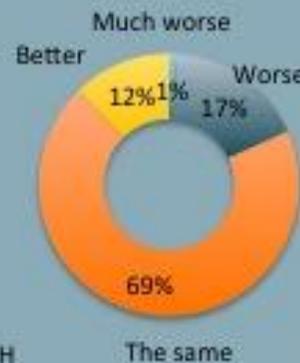


62% are indebted

49% have good access to safe drinking water, 4% to electricity, and 4% to medical care



Similar wealth to neighbours

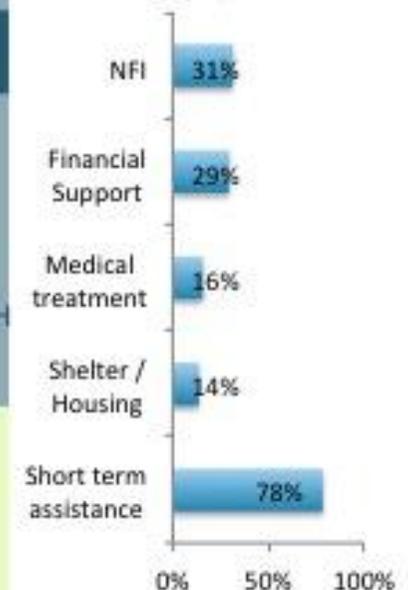


Similar housing to neighbours

On average, 5.6 children and 10.2 members in HH

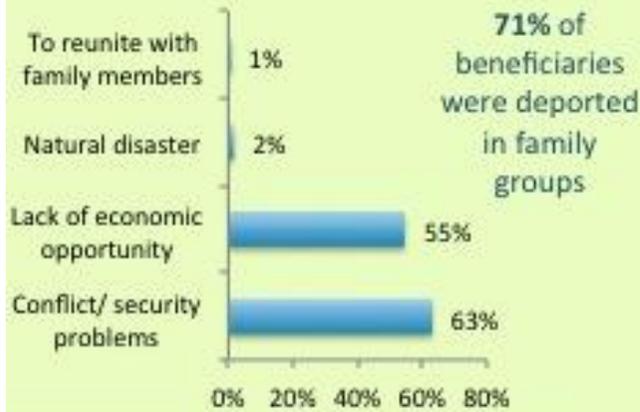
879 Shelters built in Rodat, Baktikot, Kama, Surkhrod and Behsud

## Post-arrival Assistance Received



# NIMROZ BENEFICIARY PROFILE

## RETURNEE PROFILING

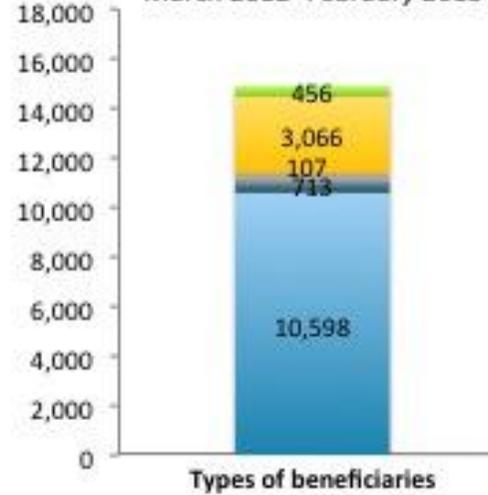


Nimroz respondents went abroad because of **conflict / security problems**

- EP holders (~20 Aug 2012)
- Spontaneous returnees
- DEPORTED - As Document Claimants
- DEPORTED - as individuals (EVIs)
- DEPORTED - In family groups

## NEEDS UPON RETURN AND HELP PROVIDED

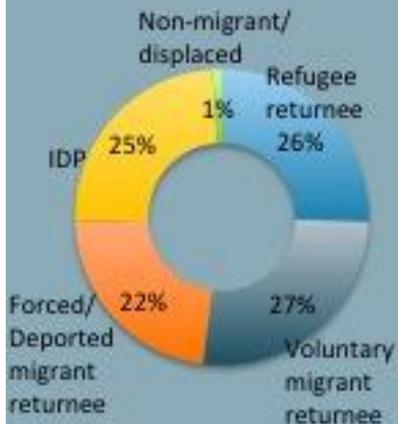
March 2012- February 2013



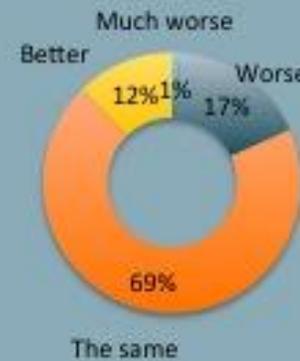
Financial support is the greatest need upon return for post-arrival assistance beneficiaries



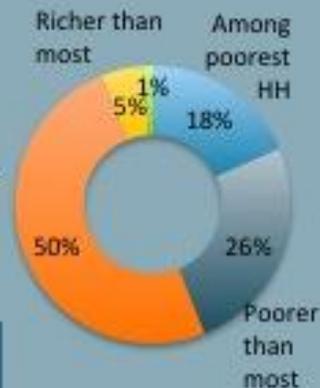
## HOW VULNERABLE ARE BENEFICIARIES OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE NOW?



82% have good access to safe drinking water, 63% to electricity, and 23% to medical care



Similar housing to neighbours

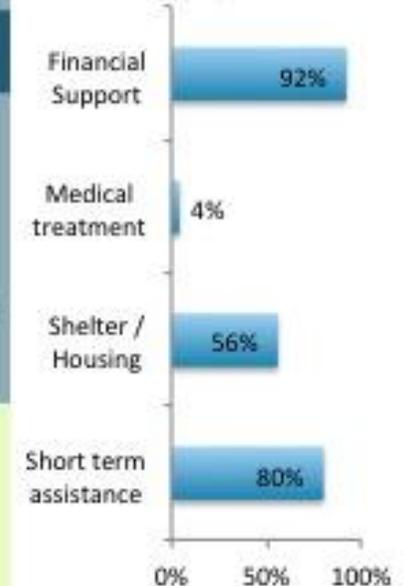


Similar wealth to neighbours

On average, 5.3 children and 9.4 members in HH

130 Shelters built  
979 livelihood assistance beneficiaries

## Post-arrival Assistance Received



## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

### 6.1. Targeting: Relevance and Efficiency

#### Categories of Beneficiaries Included

Through its return and reintegration efforts, IOM assisted beneficiaries with several types of migratory backgrounds:

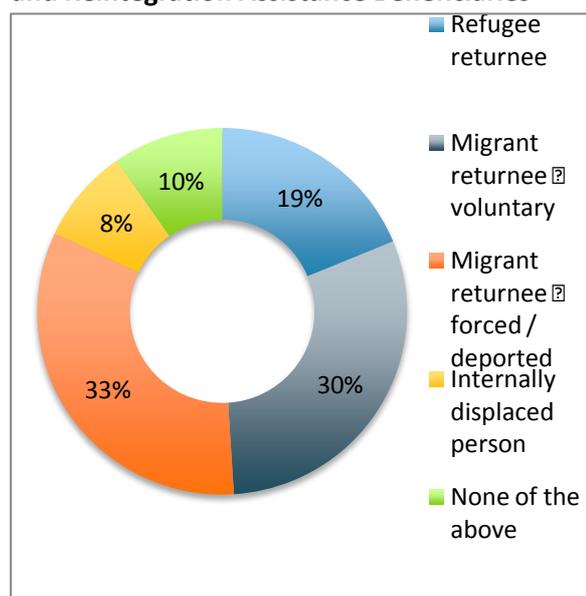
- Refugee returnees
- Voluntary undocumented returnees
- Forced undocumented returnees
- IDPs
- Non-migrant host community members

**The current range of beneficiary targets for these activities makes it more difficult to focus on the extremely vulnerable.** Previous studies on shelter assistance had noted that “the wide variety of migratory profiles in the province has a strong impact on beneficiary selection, complicating identification of eligible people”.<sup>52</sup>

The most vulnerable individuals do not necessarily become the ones who are most likely to be helped; rather, those who are easily identified receive aid. 64% of refugee returnees reported that their household did not fulfil EVI criteria, and 73% of voluntary migrant returnees said the same, versus 52% of deportee respondents and 53% of IDP respondents. However, this last group made up only a small portion of beneficiaries, suggesting that some rethinking of beneficiary selection criteria may be in order. Currently, vulnerability criteria are not well operationalized in the field. This was observed for example in Kabul province: while the primary targets for the livelihood assistance programmes there were given as IDPs and vulnerable undocumented returnees, with only very special cases of vulnerable documented returnees being helped, among interviewed respondents 11/50 were refugee returnees, of whom only about half reported vulnerabilities in the EVI categories.

**Forced migrant returnees and IDPs were more likely to be EVIs. More general shifts in migrant flows suggest that focusing on these latter two groups is logical from a needs-based perspective.** The number of VRF returns has been decreasing sharply with current uncertainty in Afghanistan; deportations however have increased over the past years, as has internal displacement.

**Figure 6.1 - Migratory Profiles of IOM Return and Reintegration Assistance Beneficiaries**



<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 256

## Selection Process Challenges

The selection process for beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance is constant across provinces and generally runs smoothly. Reintegration activities on the other hand present several challenges to a problem-free implementation of the beneficiary selection criteria.

- The **lack of specificity** in programme documents over who is eligible for assistance promotes confusion at the beneficiary selection committee and beneficiary level. This is troubling as potential beneficiaries may not apply to take part in the projects if they believe that they do not fulfil the criteria. In particular, concepts like vulnerability or even returnees are of no use in the Afghan context if they are not precisely defined and if the procedures to guarantee a robust selection are not clearly detailed.

The idea that **VRF cards were a selection criterion** recurred across regions and projects, even when that was not officially the case in the guidelines of the project.

- “They selected people who had migrant cards and land to build shelters on” (Abdul Hakim Khan, 61, Nangarhar province, shelter assistance beneficiary)
  - “The criteria was having a migrant card or 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation document” (Ali Reza, Kabul province, livelihood assistance beneficiary)
  - “The selection criteria was having a migration document which we didn’t have but we were migrants for around 14 years.” (Mahmood, Nimroz province, livelihood assistance beneficiary)
  - “They were selecting the people who had VRF, without considering vulnerability of the people.” (Meya Ghulam Haidar, Shura member in Nangarhar Province, where shelter assistance was offered)
- **Nepotism and corruption** in the selection process are present; whether from people being accepted into programmes because they know someone implementing it or someone on the selection committee<sup>53</sup>. In the case of shelter assistance programmes, this was particularly concerning as there were reports of people receiving shelters who already had some – defeating the purpose of the programme. Government officials were also reported as putting pressure on BSCs to select families or friends. More concerning is the low awareness amongst implementing staff about the fact that governmental interventions in the selection process were detrimental: when asked how to improve projects, more than one staff member simply stated that “More relatives of government officials should be selected”.
  - As with post-arrival activities when beneficiaries split familial groups and adopted other techniques to receive more aid, **care must be taken to ensure that potential beneficiaries are not trying to game the system**. In Nangarhar province, researchers saw cases of families with more than one shelter to their name, built by different organizations, as well as cases where the actual users of the shelter were relatives of the “official” beneficiaries, who had used their own names to apply because they had a profile more likely to be chosen for assistance.

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<sup>53</sup> Based on community leader survey with a shura member in Kama District, Nangarhar Province, who stated “the selection committee selected their relatives and friends for the assistances” regarding beneficiaries of shelter assistance.

- **The opportunity cost of training on beneficiaries has a negative impact on the potential pools of beneficiaries.** Livelihood assistance programmes were set up so that beneficiaries would receive little, if any, financial compensation for beneficiaries. Although this makes sense so as to attract the most motivated candidates, it also prevents those already working part time (as selection criteria favor the unemployed/partially employed) who need the income to support families from applying, notwithstanding the fact that they may be equally qualified and in need. It also encourages the selection of very (overly) young candidates as these are less likely to be supporting a family on their salary.

### Appropriateness of Selected Locations and Efficiency of Activities There

**The relevance of locations should be considered at two levels:**

- Provincial
- Community

While all the impact of assistance has been visible in all communities visited, research nonetheless underlined two main questions to keep in mind in choosing specific locations for reintegration activities to ensure maximal relevance of location:

- **Are there other organisations involved in this town? If so, does it make sense to attribute limited resources to it too?**
  - Both IOM and other organisations involved in helping returnees described selection of villages where they carried out activities as being conducted through the choice of districts and then villages with high proportions of returnees.<sup>54</sup> The Provincial Steering Committees are supposed to avoid overlap in assistance, but Samuel Hall researchers found several instances of villages with shelters constructed by more than one actor (IOM, UNHCR, NRC, etc.). While conceivably actors may wish to concentrate resources where the most needs are, researchers saw several instances of families with more than one shelter, having received some from different actors.
  - This question is especially valid in the context of Kabul. There, IOM conducted just one round of individual livelihood assistance, in 2008. Many international and national organizations are involved in training of vulnerable and displaced peoples there (e.g. Solidarités, WHH, DRC, etc.). Lacking location-specific expertise and given the multitude of actors present, future activities may wish to continue to focus on other activities.
- **Looking beyond the vulnerabilities of inhabitants, does the location make sense as a long-term place for settlement?**
  - Durability and sustainability should both be taken into consideration when selecting locations. If the proposed activity will not be enough to enable proposed beneficiaries to stay where they are (excluding security and other unpredictable problems), the location selected may not be a good one. For example, the shelters constructed in Herat province as part of CS.0229 were built in Taqi Naqi Township, a land allocation settlement. This settlement is located approximately one hour from

<sup>54</sup> Based on key informant interview with UNHCR staff in Nangarhar.

Herat city, and lacks many employment opportunities. As a result, approximately half of beneficiaries no longer live in Taqi Naqi Township, having, according to their former neighbours, since migrated to Herat city.

## 6.2. Coordination with IPs and Other Stakeholders

### Successful Coordination

**UNHCR/IOM coordination for post-arrival assistance stands out as particularly effective.** A clear system is in place at each relevant location to separate populations into the target groups for each organization. Currently referral systems exist for certain types of vulnerable individuals – for example, single women have been helped via shelters. Beneficiary interviews make it clear that in many cases, they need further help. Expanding current referral structures to make beneficiaries aware of more long-term aid available from other organizations (shelter, livelihood training, cash-for-work) upon arrival would increase the proportion of returnees able to make a permanent, settled return.

### Disconnects in Coordination

- **Between IOM and its IPs: Difficulties arose from the administrative side of things:** in both Herat and Nimroz province, there were delays in payments to implementing partners. As a result, projects were implemented two months after the planned start date. Given the year-long time frame of these projects this was quite a significant delay. It is particularly concerning with regards to shelter assistance as pushing back the start of construction can pose practical problems once winter starts (both from a construction perspective and more generally for beneficiaries' living situations).
- **Within IOM:** Coordination within IOM is also limited. Each type of activity is conducted separately from the others, and staff have limited information on the activities having occurred in other provinces or on lessons learned from past activities. **Given the time lapse since the implementation of certain projects, the evaluation team could measure the weak institutional memory and post-activity monitoring mechanisms in place to draw lessons from past activities.**

Linkages between the activities could have a synergistic effect, with each individual activity becoming more successful as a result of the other. In particular, the continuum between return and reintegration activities is very weak. The passage through post-arrival transit centres represents a good opportunity to identify rigorously specifically vulnerable profiles and to liaise with further reintegration activities to facilitate the reintegration of the most vulnerable. This link is not made for the moment.
- **Coordination between IOM and governmental actors:** Certain government agencies were less than helpful in the implementing process. While overall neither IOM staff nor IPs faced problems completely preventing projects from occurring, difficulties occurred on two fronts:

- **Attempts to influence beneficiary selection** – reports were given of government officials asking to include unqualified people on beneficiary lists. This occurred both in livelihood assistance and in shelter assistance.<sup>55</sup>
- **Interventions with the projects themselves** – the example was given of Herat province where the DoRR attempted to block a project from continuing because it did not agree with the choice of NGO to implement it. Government officials may easily interfere with the smooth continuation of projects simply by withholding signatures.
- **Coordination amongst assistance providers: generally, the main coordination mechanisms in place do not focus specifically on the issues of permanent shelter and livelihoods.** They may come up peripherally – for example, the need for permanent shelters in an IDP taskforce meeting – but information sharing on these fronts remains on an ad hoc basis. Outside of UNHCR, few international- and national- actors were well informed about IOM’s activities, particularly in the reintegration sector.  
Further coordination to avoid duplication of efforts would be advisable, on both the livelihood and permanent shelter front. If two organizations decide to conduct training in the same area on a similar target, initial market demand for the skill may find itself far exceeded by job applicants. This was observed in Nangarhar, which is not surprising given the concentration of assistance programmes implemented in this province. The scope of UNHCR’s shelter assistance programme, which far dwarves that of any other organization, renders it necessary to ensure coordination prior to implementation given the overlap in targeted beneficiaries.<sup>56</sup>

### 6.3. Evaluation of Assistance Impact on Reintegration

Reintegration as a goal leads to a fundamental question: **how does one determine when a returnee has been reincorporated into society?** Which types of reintegration – economic, social, or cultural – are then most salient? A comparative group is necessary to ascertain on all these metrics to evaluate this, but even the choice of control group lacks an obvious answer. Should returnees be compared to a nationwide benchmark, or local standards? Should they be disaggregated by their original levels of wealth and societal capital in considering their local “equivalents”?

Further complicating the notions of return and reintegration is that of **sustainability**. This introduces a longitudinal element into consideration: are the activities sufficient to enable returnees’ “reintegrated” status to continue? Richard Beck and Saskia Gent, in *Sustainable Return in Post-Conflict Contexts*, identify two levels of indicators for this:

- Indicators at the household level, namely, do returnees re-migrate?
- Indicators at the aggregate level, namely, the broader impact of return on the communities and countries at large. For example, do returnees and the aid that comes with them destabilize local economies and change social mores? On the contrary, do they strengthen existing structures and lead to institution development?

<sup>55</sup> Several shelter assistance beneficiary respondents in Herat province noted the case of one shelter, no longer occupied by the original beneficiary, which supposedly belonged to a government employee.

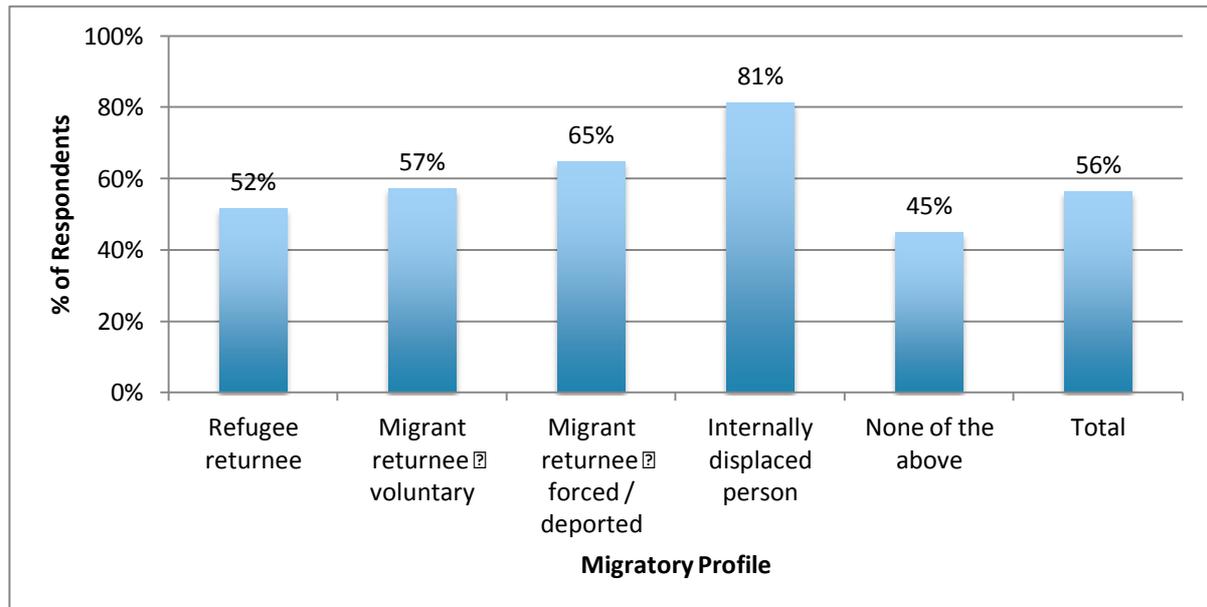
<sup>56</sup> Samuel Hall Consulting / MGSOG, (2012) “Evaluation of the UNHCR shelter assistance programme,” p. 116.

An assessment of the appropriateness of return and reintegration projects and recommendations for future activities should thus take into consideration not just the impact on returnees but also outcomes relating to the communities as a whole. Programmes aimed at reintegration generally follow a more long-term model than pure humanitarian assistance. **However, current IOM reintegration programming follows a more short-term model ill-suited to making reintegration efforts sustainable.**

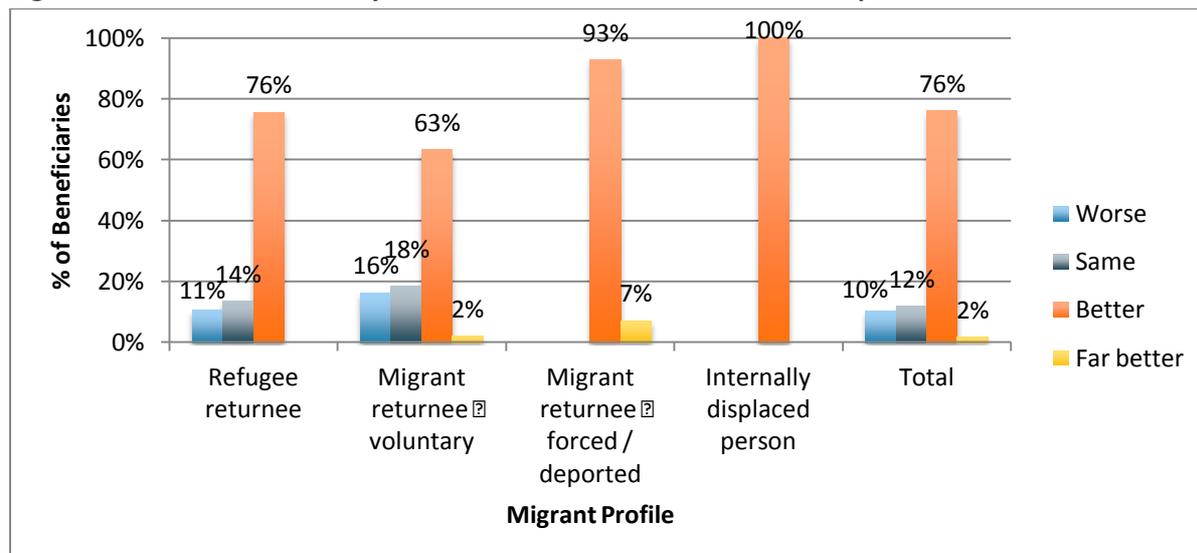
### Self-assessed Impact of Reintegration Activities

Generally, forced undocumented returnees and IDPs were the most likely to note a positive impact of reintegration activities - both shelter and livelihood assistance - on their households (see Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3). **Anecdotally, this held true even when split by province.** Given the nature of forced undocumented returnees' return and the frequently unplanned nature of internal displacement, this is unsurprising: it is more difficult for them to plan an economically secure return / movement.

**Figure 6.2 - Livelihood Assistance Beneficiaries Noting Improvement in Own / Family's Situation as Result of Assistance**

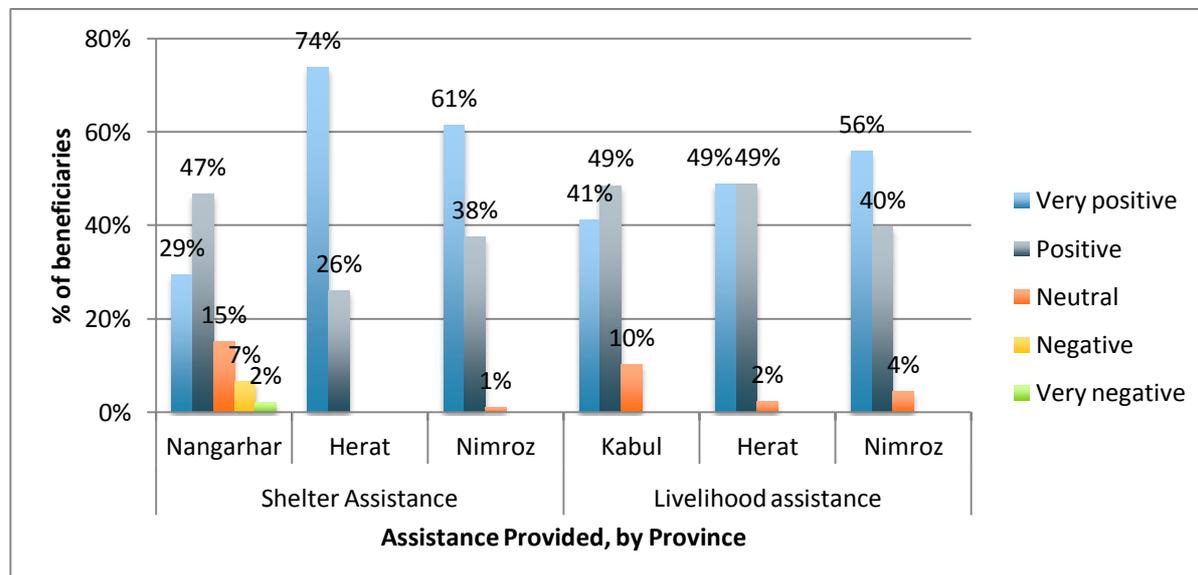


**Figure 6.3 - Shelter Beneficiary Evaluation of Economic Situation Compared to Before Assistance**



Generally, both beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents were quite positive about programme impact on their community: 48% considered it “very positive” and 43% “positive”. Breaking these figures up by activity and province shows that the perceived relative impact of assistance programmes does vary.

**Figure 6.4 - Respondent Evaluation of Programme Impact**



- At the provincial level, Nimroz thus stands out for having no reports of the assistance having a negative impact on the local communities and generally very positive evaluations.<sup>57</sup> When compared to the 2009 RARIP evaluation, Nangarhar beneficiaries are far less positive than

<sup>57</sup> While the percentage of respondents “very positive” about shelter assistance is even higher in Herat province, one cannot truly compare it as these residents all lived in a land allocation settlement where all shelter was the result of shelter assistance programmes.

they used to be. This suggests that positive perception of activities' impact is highest immediately after completion; as time goes by problems with them become more evident. Overall, this suggests the relatively short-term impact of IOM's reintegration activities. Livelihood assistance is a case in point, where the current assessment found a much lower employment rate and use of the skills than the evaluation conducted by the NSDP 3 months after completion of the programme.

- **At the community level**, none stood out as considering the activities to have had a negative impact. Only two community leaders reported tensions stemming from assistance programmes, and of these one explained them by saying "This program had a problem because the elders of the area were not involved in the program from the beginning"; the tension seems not some much intra-communal as between the community leader interviewed and the implementing partner.

### Quantifiable Socio-economic Impact of Reintegration Activities

The quantitative portion of the research for this evaluation contained questions designed to evaluate beneficiaries' reintegration, by comparing them to a control group made up of community members who did **not** receive assistance and presented similar vulnerabilities (both returnee and not; in some places as everyone living there had migrated at some point it was impossible to find "true" host community members). The following were chosen as indicators of beneficiaries' reintegration:

**Table 6.1 - Reintegration Indicators Measured**

Indicator	
<b>Involvement in Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % HH members involved in community organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Participation in electoral process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether or not HH members are registered to vote (men and women)</li> <li>• # of households where people have registered to vote in past 5 years</li> </ul>
<b>Permanence of living situation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether or not HH owns land</li> <li>• Current HH housing arrangements</li> <li>• Whether or not HH plans to stay in current location</li> <li>• Whether or not HH has relatives living in the community</li> </ul>
<b>Living conditions compared to other community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to safe drinking water, electricity, medical care, food</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship to other community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether or not it is safe for women in the community to go out on the street on their own</li> <li>• Whether or not can trust neighbours to look after their house</li> </ul>

These indicators suggest that beneficiaries in Nimroz province have reintegrated into local communities better than beneficiaries in Herat and Nangarhar.

**In Nimroz province, unlike in others,**

- Both male and female beneficiaries of livelihood and shelter assistance are more likely to be registered to vote than non-beneficiaries.
- Families benefitting from livelihood assistance are more likely to own a single family house than rent one when compared to non-beneficiaries (86%/ 10% vs. 31% / 52%)
- Beneficiaries of livelihood assistance are more likely to have access to safe drinking water and electricity than non-beneficiaries.

**Across the four provinces surveyed,**

- Beneficiaries of both shelter and livelihood assistance are more likely to rate their standard of housing as “The same” or “Better” than non-beneficiaries.
- Shelter beneficiaries in Herat Province do not benefit from the same family support as others across the board: only 55% of respondents report family members in the town, versus 90% overall.
- Across all three types of assistance, beneficiaries in Nimroz province more frequently state that they would trust their neighbours to watch their house when away; beneficiaries in Nangarhar are least likely to do so.
- Beneficiaries of livelihood assistance are most likely to completely agree with the statement “my household is well-integrated in the community we live in” (82%, as compared to 59% of beneficiaries of shelter assistance and 69% of non-beneficiaries)

**Self-evaluation Based Impact of Reintegration Activities**

Beneficiaries were also asked to evaluate their own living situation when compared to the community to see if they have arrived at an “average” level. See table below for metrics evaluated.

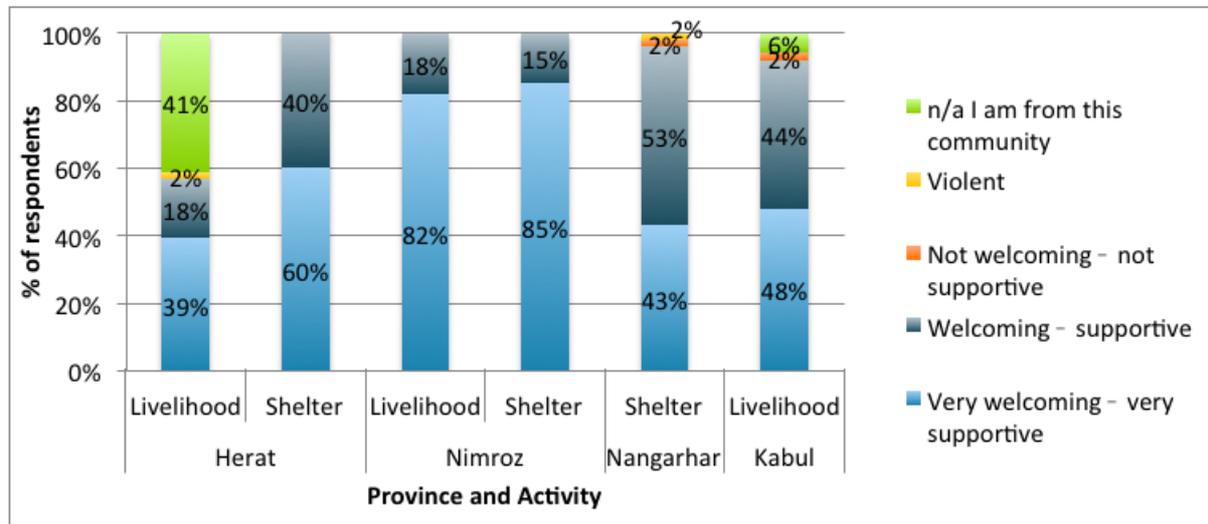
**Table 6.2 - Reintegration Metrics Self-Evaluated**

Metrics self-evaluated
• Standard of housing
• HH wealth
• Likelihood of children to attend school compared to other children in the community
• Behaviour of community members towards beneficiaries and their families
• Household integration into community

- Except in Kabul province, beneficiaries of both livelihood and shelter assistance tend to say that they are **better off** compared to households surrounding them than non-beneficiaries.
- In Nimroz, beneficiaries of livelihood assistance are significantly more likely to rate their standard of housing as the “same” or “better” than non-beneficiaries are.

- Also in Nimroz, beneficiaries are more likely to state that the local community has been “very welcoming” than non-beneficiaries. This holds true for both beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance as well as beneficiaries of livelihood assistance. The difference is less-striking with regards to post-arrival assistance, where only 60% qualify the host community as “very welcoming – very supportive”.

**Figure 6.5 - Beneficiaries' Perception of Community Behaviour Towards Them**



Overall, reintegration activities have supported the reintegration process of returnee and IDP households, as those judge their socio-economic situation similar or better than the non-beneficiary community. Quantitative indicators also shows a relatively good reintegration of IOM beneficiaries in their community but show geographic variations:

- Nimroz stands out as a province where reintegration went more smoothly than in Nangarhar, Kabul or Herat. This may be linked to the lesser pressure exerted in Nimroz by returns and internal displacements than in the 3 other provinces, all characterised by high returns and high internal displacement. In terms of access to land or income generating activities, Nimroz seems to represent a more favourable environment of return and displacement than provinces like Herat, Kabul and Nangarhar where access to land for example is a major issue upon return and displacement. Qualitative observations also noted that Nimroz offers a more favourable environment for reintegration as the cross-border networks and relations are stronger than in Herat.
- In Nangarhar, a high return area, reintegration is perhaps a less relevant concept, given that in a lot of communities, the majority of households are returnees. As a result returnees do not form a minority apart from the rest and most households have experienced exile and return.
- Finally, Herat presented more difficult conditions of reintegration linked to the location of IOM’s activities and the poor conditions offered by the LAS. This led to higher rate of secondary displacement and a significant turn over within the shelters built by IOM.

## 6.4. Sustainability

### Activity Follow-up

The lack of financial and technical follow-up assistance by IOM was frequently cited as a problem by beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and other actors. The project cycle of IOM does not help getting a proper monitoring post-activities.

From a financial point of view, while the first livelihood assistance programme had allowed for some cash grants from IOM to start businesses, later iterations did not. From a technical point of view, there were no follow-up evaluations by IOM reported by either beneficiaries of livelihood assistance or beneficiaries of shelter assistance, nor was further technical assistance provided. The NSDP does a follow-up with 30% of livelihood assistance beneficiaries after three months. Follow-up for beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance is limited to verifying that they return home safely.

This lack of follow-up limits sustainability of actions as well as their effectiveness:

- **The lack of start-up funds for livelihood assistance beneficiaries means that they cannot always use their new skills to earn money; the toolkits do not suffice.** 49% of beneficiaries highlighted it as a weak element in the programme, 37% saying it was the weakest. One beneficiary described it saying “I was selected for this program because I was a returnee, unemployed and poor too. Unfortunately I couldn’t prolong that profession because as I told you before I didn’t have money to invest.”<sup>58</sup>
- **In some cases, difficulties affecting the sustainability of assistance appear after the actual assistance period is over.** For example, beneficiaries of livelihood assistance in Herat province who were taught how to raise poultry were not able to continue the activity for more than a year: they had not been given enough feed for the poultry to reach a point where they could produce eggs to be sold. As a result, beneficiaries had either eaten or sold off the poultry, and the benefits of the training were limited to that year. Other beneficiaries of poultry raising courses lost part of their flocks to chicken disease.

**The inexistent monitoring of beneficiaries post-activities, except for the NSDP tracer survey, means that IOM and IPs are not necessarily aware of the success of activities and more long-term challenges.** This prevents the use of lessons learned in future projects, and as such, decreases their effectiveness. The beneficiaries themselves noted this problem. “We could improve the program by giving our opinions about it. What the program was missing was the follow up which should have been done by the organization” commented a beneficiary of vocational training in Herat province.<sup>59</sup>

### Reintegration conclusions

While IOM contributed to a safe return and reintegration process, and clear improvements to beneficiaries’ lives are evident, gaps remain: lack of continuity between return and reintegration activities, confusion around beneficiary targeting, weak monitoring and follow-up. By treating returnees and IDPs similarly, and focusing more on the former, IOM has lessened its potential impact in reintegration activities. The independent nature of activities and limited follow-through poses serious questions about their sustainability.

<sup>58</sup> Based on case study from Kabul Province

<sup>59</sup> Based on focus group discussion in Herat province

## SWOT Analysis of Return and Reintegration Activities

### Strengths

#### *Targeting of vulnerable sub-groups under post-arrival assistance*

- Broadening of qualified beneficiary types to help more vulnerable people
- Robust Initiatives underway such as unaccompanied minor programme to help particularly vulnerable groups
- Strong collaboration with relevant ministry officials and UNHCR on division of assistance and beneficiary identification

#### *Presence in Nimroz*

- Uniquely positioned to aid at-risk vulnerable individuals in Nimroz with both post-arrival and reintegration assistance programmes and few other actors around

#### *Positive impact shown by:*

- Lack of tensions resulting from activities
- Perceived impact on improved household's well-being

### Opportunities

- *Recently launched National IDP Policy providing legal framework for interventions towards IDPs.*
- *Development of IDP Movement Tracking mechanisms*

### Weaknesses

#### *Beneficiary selection*

- Persistent confusion around exact beneficiary selection criteria leading to irregular selections
- Use of governmental/other connections to influence selection of unqualified beneficiaries

#### *Implementation delays*

- Slow procurement and payment processes pushed back the start of activities

#### *Visibility on activities ending after one year*

- Little information about programme impact
- Diminished coherence between the objectives of the sequence of projects funded by the Government of Japan
- Missing M&E processes and absence of lessons learned

#### *Lack of overall coherence and integration of activities, reducing impact*

### Threats

#### *2014 political & security transition*

- The surrounding political instability will likely provoke an increase in internal displacement and vulnerability of at-risk individuals
- Medium-term, will provoke implementation difficulties given potential security risks and political instability
- The evolving immigration policies of host countries such as Pakistan and Iran may lead to increased deportations of vulnerable individuals

#### *Potential decrease of funding*

# 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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In this report, analysis focused on four questions:

1. Did IOM's projects contribute to a safe return and reintegration process?
2. Did IOM target returnees and IDPs appropriately?
3. Which lessons can be taken away or future IOM programming?
4. Is IOM's programming adapted to its strengths and the current migration situation in Afghanistan?

The post-arrival, shelter and livelihood assistance programmes were reviewed according to technical aspects, socio-economic impact, and stakeholder perceptions. Research found a clear short-term impact across provinces and types of assistance, with a greater strength on the part of IOM in emergency assistance, but limited long-lasting effects calling into question the sustainability of the programming and of its reintegration objectives.

## 7.1. Overall Conclusion: Identifying IOM's added value

### Activity Effectiveness

**Should IOM keep performing both post-arrival and reintegration activities?** IOM currently finds itself fulfilling both humanitarian and development actor roles. Both the post-arrival and shelter assistance programmes have a clear short-term palliative effect on beneficiaries; however, without other long-term assistance, they are not enough to allow migrants to be reintegrated into communities. Livelihood assistance programmes, when they lead to employment, can have a more fundamental impact, but research shows that in most cases here they did not. In this case, **synergies between activities, integrating beneficiaries in a cycle of immediate assistance, livelihood assistance and shelter assistance are needed. However, this should not be the responsibility of IOM alone – to the contrary, partnerships and coordination are required to create such synergies.**

**The impact of IOM is currently greatest with regards to its post-arrival activities.** Given the preponderance of other actors in the reintegration, livelihood and development sector, some of whom have greater knowledge on how to carry out these activities effectively, it is recommended that IOM concentrates its resources on post-arrival activities and builds an effective referral and coordination system to direct beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance towards reintegration assistance when necessary.

**Should IOM wish to continue with reintegration efforts, these should be modified for greater effect.** Actual livelihood and shelter assistance programme lack long-term planning; further efforts should not be devoted to, for example, constructing shelters where there are no jobs. Regardless of the quality of the shelter, beneficiaries will not be able to stay there without income.

**Better evaluations of labour markets prior to selection vocational training subjects.** Current methodology calls for two labour market evaluations prior to start of vocational training subjects; given the relatively low proportion of beneficiaries employed using their new skills several years later, these could be more effective. In particular, they may be giving too much weight to desires of potential beneficiaries rather than needs of the labour markets.

**Establishing a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme.** The qualification of trainers is key to the quality of the entire livelihood activity, not only to guarantee a proper skill transfer, but also because of the role they can play in supporting beneficiaries accessing the labour market. A robust training of trainers is necessary to overcome some of the difficulties highlighted by this evaluation, especially in rural areas. A training of trainers would also help maximise the impact of IOM's activity on the community as a whole, through the reinforcement of the capacities of some of its non-beneficiary members.

**Improving linkage between vocational trainings and labour market.** Project documents and IOM and IP staff discussed helping beneficiaries find jobs however few beneficiaries reported receiving much help in finding employment. Beyond helping beneficiaries find employment, IOM could consider further development activities with regards to vocational training as have proven quite effective on the community development / agricultural side of things.<sup>60</sup>

### Geographic Scope

**Activities in Nimroz province overall seemed to have a greater impact than in other provinces.** Given the numbers of vulnerable returnees from Iran and the more limited numbers of other actors in the province, Nimroz stands out as an appropriate place to continue and enhance activities. **Of the areas considered by this evaluation, Kabul stands out as an outlier:** only one type of activity was conducted there, five years ago, and nothing since then. As there is a preponderance of organisations performing similar activities in Kabul and in IDP camps in other vulnerable areas, further work in the provincial capitals should be a lesser priority.

The Humanitarian Country Team (OCHA) 2013 Strategic Response Plan identifies Hilmand, Kunar, Badghis, Nangarhar and Ghor as the provinces with the highest humanitarian needs currently. However, there are few provinces in Afghanistan where IOM could not continue helping current numbers of beneficiaries if not many more. Again the issue of **coordination** rears its head: in planning future activities, rather than simply relying on the areas with the highest humanitarian needs, IOM should sit with other stakeholders to make sure that other areas that may still have great needs are not forgotten.

### Population of Concern

**IOM should strengthen the definition of its population of concern**

**At a strategic level** - The evaluation found inconsistencies in the definition of IOM's population of concern due to the weaknesses of the selection process. In particular, no continuum is in place between IOM's population of concern immediately upon return (at the transit centre point) and then further on in the reintegration phase. In addition to this, IOM's populations of concern are a lot less clear in the reintegration phase where delineation of roles with UNHCR are not as clear-cut. The result is a relatively incoherent and patchy intervention for reintegration. This discrepancy between return and reintegration also reduces IOM's opportunities to follow-up its assistance to the vulnerable segments of the returnee populations it identifies and helps upon return. Unaccompanied minors, for example, could benefit from a follow up of IOM's activities in the

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<sup>60</sup> For example, the creation of dairy cooperatives in Herat province with the guidance of CRS, which are still functional five years after original project.

reintegration phase to prevent risky migration abroad. Rather than stretching its resources over large and vaguely defined beneficiary population, sometimes shared with other actors like UNHCR, a more strategic approach focusing IOM's interventions on a few key vulnerable groups through a robust articulation between post-arrival and reintegration activities seems more coherent. It would also allow IOM to build up its expertise on key target groups, such as unaccompanied minors.

In the current context of migration, three trends are important for IOM: a) the increase in the number of IDPs throughout the country; b) the steady number of deportees from Iran crossing the border with Nimroz and Herat, and c) the presence of unaccompanied minors, drug-affected households and female-headed households. All of these target populations come with their specific vulnerability and protection challenges. On the other hand, the decrease in voluntary refugee return makes this target population all the less relevant for IOM, especially given the scope of UNHCR's programmes and its mandate over voluntary returns. As exposed above, the integration of IDPs in IOM's activities remain weak. IOM should therefore strengthen the definition of its target population to include a specific focus on these subgroups: this should be done through stand-alone programmes for IDPs, unaccompanied minors, drug-affected households and female-headed households.

**At the project level** - BSC and IPs should be provided not just with clear definition of target beneficiaries but also with methods for identifying them to avoid resorting to proxies such as VRF card as primary selection criterion.

### **Integrating activities: continuum between post-arrival and reintegration activities**

#### **Geographically integrated approach to assistance**

In most cases, IOM had conducted both return and reintegration activities in the provinces concerned. However, these activities were completely distinct and de-linked from one another. Other organizations have taken integrated approaches towards their activities in one geographic area, i.e. UNHCR linking WASH and cash-for-work programmes, and Swedish Committee of Afghanistan with some health and education initiatives. Increasing integration of programmes would go a long way towards improving sustainability of activities as extremely vulnerable people qualified for one type of assistance may also be very much in need of another.

This geographically integrated approach to assistance should take into account IOM's broader community development-based activities. The latter have been cited by several key informant interviews as promoting longer term reintegration while also allowing for immediate help for beneficiaries (tying for example cash-for-work to building roads and wells).

#### **Enhanced referral system to other development programmes**

It is very important to ensure the sustainability of created assets – if IOM itself cannot ensure this follow-up, liaising with other organisations to do so would have a very positive impact on reintegration. Beyond follow-up on created assets, such as the geographically integrated approach, IOM could liaise with other organisations involved in different reintegration programmes to solidify beneficiaries' socio-economic situation via additional assistance.

### **Built-in project monitoring and evaluation methods: longitudinal integration**

Each project should have clear indicators built in from the start to evaluate effectiveness and success of operations. Data should be collected on these over the course of the project as well as afterwards to examine success and sustainability of activity, rather than rely on ex post-facto evaluations that may be severely limited in data collection ability due to challenges in finding beneficiaries and security concerns. Project CS. 0396 has taken a solid approach to this with a list of indicators desired outcomes and targets built into the proposal; these remain centred around the immediate help provided and lack provision for follow-up evaluation.

A proper monitoring mechanism should in particular be established to assess regularly the level of attendance of trainers and trainees, the technical content of the trainings provided as well as the pedagogical ability of the trainers. Several systems can be envisaged to strengthen the monitoring of the project, including random in-site visits to the training sites, video recording of training sessions and regular short survey collecting data on the satisfaction of beneficiaries during the training.

Building up M&E would help IOM building stronger institutional memory and more efficient integration of lessons learned. At the moment, the projects lack integration and coherence. Whilst this may be linked to IOM's project-based approach, a stronger mechanism of data collection and analysis on the modalities, strengths, weaknesses and impact of project would help building the overall coherence and strategy of the organisation.

### **Organisational Structure**

#### **Streamlined procurement and IP payment processes**

The fact that several projects reported delays in start due to internal IOM processes is cause for concern. Beyond potential weather problems (building shelters in winter is sub-optimal) given the one-year time frame on these projects and the smaller nature of some IPs this could severely hinder impact of projects.

#### **Devolved responsibility to provincial offices**

Allowing provincial offices to have more input on project structure can help preclude problems the main office might not think of by adapting projects to local conditions. Additionally, this would reduce the amount of back and forth necessary between provincial and main offices and so allow for a more effective process.

### **7.2. Recommendations: A 3-Step Approach to Strengthening Programming**

Overall, the evaluation shows that IOM's project-based approach is both a strength and a weakness when it comes to addressing the needs of uprooted populations through return and reintegration activities.

On the one hand, it gives IOM the flexibility to adapt rapidly its activities to a changing context – a precious capacity in conflict and post-conflict settings, where movements of population fluctuate rapidly. In the Afghan context, IOM proved able to re-define its target groups and increasingly include sub-groups with specific needs.

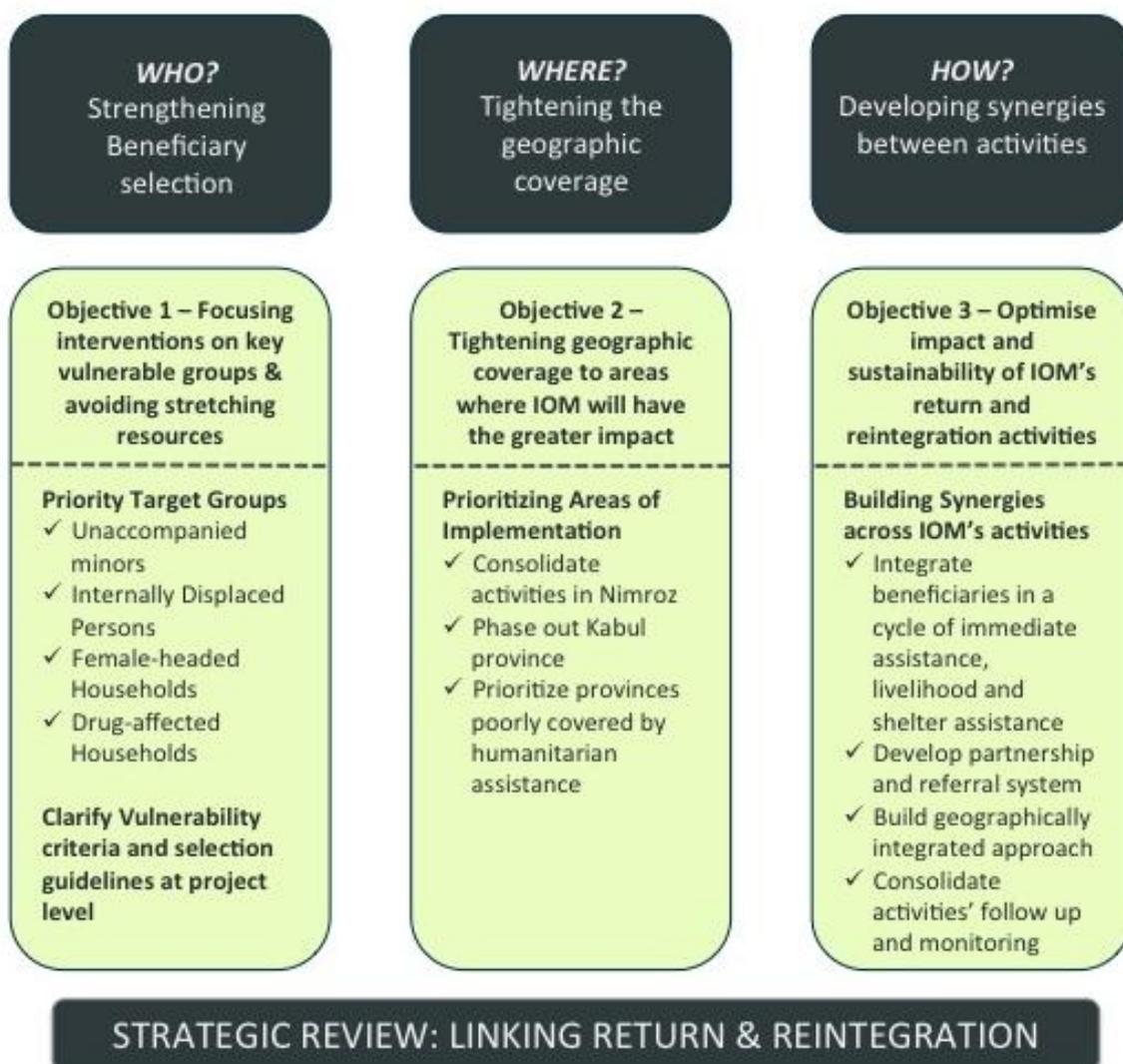
On the other hand, the challenges IOM faces with the implementation of its activities are also linked with its project-based approach, which reduces IOM's capacities to implement sufficient pre-implementation and post-implementation mechanisms to guarantee the relevance, efficiency and

sustainability of its activities. It also limits the overall logic of IOM’s intervention on return and reintegration as the organization does not respond to a larger framework that would articulate the projects to optimize IOM’s impact. Reintegration is the component that suffers the most from this delinking.

Recommendations in this report propose ways to go beyond the shortcomings linked to IOM’s project-based approach, while making the most of its advantages. For an optimal use of resources, this evaluation recommends to reduce IOM’s geographic scope and target groups to a few of the most vulnerable sub-groups, such as unaccompanied minors, female-headed households, drug-addicted households and IDPs. On the other hand, the evaluation recommends to integrate these beneficiaries in a cycle of assistance that would link IOM’s return and reintegration activities, creating synergies between each of its projects. This would allow IOM to increase the relevance of its intervention in a field where numerous actors are active, while increasing the long-term impact of its activities for groups who face the greatest challenges to reintegrate in the Afghan society.

A key point is that IOM is not to do all this alone. But It should be at the forefront of efforts to build a robust partnership referral system to include beneficiaries from the vulnerable groups identified above in a proper cycle of assistance, starting with the safe return and finishing with a sustainable reintegration.

The following graph outlines the strategic approach recommended by this evaluation:



Based on these conclusions of this study, a three-step action plan is recommended to strengthen future IOM programming.

STEPS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY
<p><b>Strengthen post-arrival assistance and linkages to development assistance</b></p>	<p>IOM's post-arrival and humanitarian assistance showcased the strongest results. Some of its weaknesses should be addressed in the next round of programming:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen vulnerability criteria to ease community tensions and potential negative impact of programming</li> <li>2. Streamline IP's interventions to implement guidelines equally across provinces and households</li> <li>3. Increase cooperation with UNHCR to avoid duplication and improve responsiveness</li> <li>4. Create synergies with livelihood assistance</li> <li>5. Create synergies with shelter assistance</li> </ol>	<p>Frame post-arrival assistance as the first step in a <b>cycle of return and reintegration activities</b>. Linkages should be made with both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migration and Displacement partners on protection and livelihoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o UNHCR</li> <li>o NRC</li> <li>o DRC</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Development partners: to link emergency assistance with early recovery and development assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o National programmes</li> <li>o World Bank</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop four stand-alone programmes to target specific vulnerable groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IDPs</li> <li>- UAMs</li> <li>- Women's resilience in displacement</li> <li>- Drug-affected households</li> </ul>	<p>IOM has proven its capacity to adapt to the needs of different target groups. This should be further enhanced to focus specifically on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. IOM Programme to facilitate the return of IDPs:</b> Although IDPs predominantly wish for local integration, IOM should assess the needs of those who want to return, but are unable to, return to their homes. The return and reintegration of IDPs is a separate programme that focuses on immediate and shelter needs of IDPs.</li> <li><b>2. IOM support to Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs):</b> this programme should focus on an extended period of immediate and post arrival assistance with greater shelter and transportation assistance, and child protection activities tailored to integrating UAMs in schools, clinics and supporting livelihoods training for their families.</li> </ol>	<p>Each of the programmes developed will require a separate partnership strategy. A robust identification system – to identify IDPs, UAMs, vulnerable women and female-headed households, and drug-affected households – will require the input of specialists from the following entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child protection partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o CPAN members</li> <li>o UNICEF</li> <li>o Child protection NGOs</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Medical partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Médecins du Monde</li> <li>o WHO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p><b>3. IOM support to women’s resilience in displacement:</b> Women’s resilience in displacement is often compromised and their economic contribution limited in their new environments. A new programme by IOM to strengthen women’s resilience will focus on i) a skills assessments, ii) a curriculum of training best tailored to women and local labor market needs and iii) community support to women’s economic empowerment through information campaigns</p> <p><b>4. IOM support to drug-affected households:</b> In Herat and Nimroz, programmes targeting drug-affected households returning from Iran should focus on a two-phased approach: i) identification of cases and ii) integration of cases in medical treatment followed by a social and economic integration programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health Cluster members</li> <li>- Research partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build a monitoring framework based on geographic specificities and causal chain mechanisms</b></p>	<p>Provincial findings highlight different strengths and weaknesses depending on the local context, IPs’ performance, IOM’s monitoring and partners’ activities. This points to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Build a provincial evaluation mechanism and lessons learned to strengthen national programming:</b> IDPs are better integrated in Nimroz’s shelter assistance programme than in other provinces; IPs show different levels of efficiency depending on the local context. Why do certain provinces fare better than others?</li> <li>2. <b>Identify IOM’s added value through a geographic lens:</b> The study shows positive results in Nimroz, a left-out province in terms of the assistance delivered and of the number of stakeholders present. IOM’s added value in a province left out by other stakeholders, a province at the border of both Iran and Pakistan and home to mixed migration trends (cross-border irregular movements, trafficking in persons, voluntary and forced returns, as well as increasing internal displacement trends) should be strengthened.</li> </ol>	<p>IOM will need to improve its information base to build a monitoring framework. This framework will require the cooperation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community members through a community-based monitoring system. This can be done through CDCs or focal points that will report incidents and complaints directly to IOM</li> <li>- Implementing partners will have to strengthen their reporting mechanism in line with new guidelines built to highlight local specificities (both successes and weaknesses to be addressed). IPs will be required to provide solutions.</li> <li>- Third party evaluators who will track objectives using a longitudinal and comparative perspective</li> </ul>

## 8. FURTHER RESEARCH

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This evaluation provides an assessment of IOM's strengths and weaknesses in return and reintegration programming, and highlights information gaps to be filled. These research studies listed below are vital to supporting IOM's mission in Afghanistan.

1. **ASSISTANCE TO UNACCOMPANIED MINORS (UAMS)**

Child protection is at the top of the assistance framework in Afghanistan – a cross-cutting priority for many actors. Yet, few are assisting displaced children or unaccompanied minors. IOM has a proven track record of assisting UAMs. Recent studies have shown that sending children abroad is a coping strategy used by Afghan families – sending children to Iran for work or further to Europe; or children as victims of trafficking in persons, victims of forced and bonded labor. These experiences increase the vulnerability of children. What programming responses and partnerships can be developed, under the leadership of IOM, to target Unaccompanied Minors in Afghanistan?

2. **ASSESSING SECONDARY EFFECTS OF ASSISTANCE: THE CAUSAL CHAIN MECHANISM**

A key principle of humanitarian assistance is *Do No Harm*. What is the primary and secondary impact of external assistance to returnees and IDPs? This study focuses on the primary impact yet there are positive secondary effects – and a cycle of effects – that have to be considered to consider a holistic approach to programming. Building women's resilience will increase their sociability, decrease dependency ratios, decrease domestic violence etc. What can be the secondary effects of other programmes recommended here? How can IOM integrate these as targets in its programming and partnership strategies?

3. **ASSISTING IDPS AND RETURNEES IN NIMROZ**

Nimroz is an important case study for migration and displacement actors – home to mixed migration trends, bordering both Iran and Pakistan, and recording increasing numbers of IDPs, Nimroz shows high needs yet a low presence of stakeholders. IOM has intervened in Nimroz for years – the lessons learned from IOM programming can not only benefit IOM but donors and other stakeholders alike. A study on assistance to IDPs and returnees in Nimroz will show that assistance in this province *is* feasible, and can be successful given the initial positive findings highlighted in this evaluation.

4. **FROM URBAN TO RURAL PROGRAMMING: STRENGTHENING LOCAL PROGRAMMING**

One of the findings of this study highlights the greater achievements of IOM in urban vs. rural areas. Given the urbanisation trends recorded among IDPs and returnees, this is a positive assessment of IOM's achievements in Afghanistan. These achievements should be used to gear lessons learned towards improving rural programming, to cover both populations of vulnerable individuals. What lessons can be adapted to rural areas and how?

5. **PARTNERSHIP STUDY & MAPPING OF SERVICES**

In a context of decreasing access but increasing needs, coordination and partnership are more than ever necessary. Adding to that the need to create stronger synergies between humanitarian and development actors, building a partnership strategy becomes a priority. IOM needs a thorough partnership study to assess the partnership opportunities available to support its programme objectives in Afghanistan – at the central / government level (looking at viable government partners at a time of transition), as well as at the local level (looking at

UN, NGO and other civil society partners to ensure access and sustainability at a time of transition). Mapping of available services will be a key component for IOM and its partners.

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