



**AFGHAN REFUGEES / RETURNEES :
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

THE REGION'S FIRST COORDINATION WORKSHOP

21 AUGUST 2014

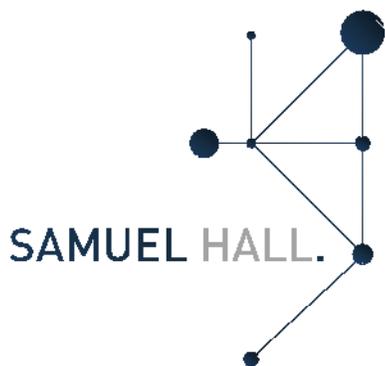
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On August 21 2014, the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) hosted the first regional workshop on Afghan refugees – inviting key United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs to speak of the challenges and opportunities facing Afghan refugees and returnees. This workshop is a first step towards coordinated response to the world's largest protracted refugee situation.

The ACBAR team thanks Nassim Majidi, Samuel Hall Director, for consolidating this workshop report. For more information on Samuel Hall, please visit <http://www.samuelhall.org> .



DO NOT FORGET AFGHANISTAN
THE WORLD IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING

Afghan Refugees / Returnees: challenges and opportunities

Agenda

8:30-9:00	Registration and breakfast
9:00- 9:10	Opening of the meeting, ACBAR Director and Chairman
9:10-9:40	UNHCR presentation
09:40-10:00	Feedbacks from regional workshops, ACBAR, NRC and DRC
10:00-10:20	Tea / Coffee break
10:20-11:00	ICRI (International Consortium for Refugees in Iran) presentation,
11:00-11:40	PHF (Pakistan Humanitarian Forum) presentation,
11:40-12:30	Questions and answers
12:30-13:30	Lunch and prayer
13:30-13:40	Organization working group, presentation of the afternoon
13:40-14:40	Working Group 1: Enhancing regional NGO coordination and information sharing on Afghan refugees Working Group 2: Regional experiences of NGO engagement in SSAR Working Group 3: Regional common advocacy messages Working Group 4: Cross-border programming opportunities and challenges
14:40-15:00	Tea / Coffee break
15:00-15:30	Feedback from working group and recommendations
15:30-16:00	Presentation NRC – Migration presentation
16:00	End of the workshop

“Afghan refugees must not be forgotten”

Opening remarks by UNHCR Country Representative, Mr. Bo Schack

“We are here today to look at one of the major regional issues: the situation of Afghan refugees, which continues in very large numbers, together with a significant number of Afghans who are in neighboring countries under different statuses, or without any status.

It is important that this be not forgotten. It is important to continue to look at the situation of repatriation. At the same time, it is equally important to keep the regional focus with strong linkages between the continuing stay options, refugee status, and the possibility of return and continued repatriation.

We are at a very difficult juncture. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched in 2012 the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), which aimed at reviving a number of situations, options for operation, and seeing the engagement and ownership by all three governments as well as the United Nations system and all the partners, not the least the civil society.

However, what we are seeing today, despite many initiatives, including regional discussions and an important patience shown by neighboring countries, are low return numbers. We are faced with a situation that this could again change – we need to focus in our discussions not just on the negative aspects, but firmly at the opportunities there are in continuing the message, looking at options for return.

2014 has seen the lowest number of returnees – not surprisingly – with 11,000 returnees. We also now have a refugee movement from Pakistan – about 100,000 incoming refugees.

The Solutions Strategy led to an important discussion among all the respected partners to look at broader ideas, new challenges that we need to focus on, to make sure there is an ownership of the understanding that unless the issue is dealt with in an appropriate manner, it might be a destabilizing factor.

What we will discuss today and how we look at the plan in overall terms is one that involves a number of different programs among different partners. When it comes to Afghanistan, we have looked at the question of Afghan refugees coming back. This is an issue of Afghan returnees becoming Afghans: there has to be a close linkage between development, national programs and what is happening on the ground. (...)

In the end, it is about recognizing existing uncertainties in the security situation, as well as at the political level. The priority is to look at opportunities to support refugees and returnees alike – in order for this to be a positive, confidence building mission that shows that the region and the countries involved have not been forgotten, that the stability of further development very much depends on the situation for refugees and returnees. This is a huge challenge presented to all of us. This discussion between civil society, NGOs, government, donors and UN, is an important opportunity to move forward on this.”

World's largest protracted refugee situation



Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

In 2014, Afghanistan counts 5.8 million returnees

Returning refugees represent 20% of Afghanistan's population

Sharp decline in returns from 1,824,887 in 2002 to 39,224 returnees in 2014

In 2014, UNHCR has recorded 2728 returns (July 2014 figures)

A fraction of refugees – 691 – have been resettled to third countries

KEY PRIORITIES

Addressing HUMANITARIAN DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES

Close linkages between development, national programs and field plans are lacking. Community-based interventions are the future for Afghan returnees – how can community programs under National Priority Programs (NPPs) feed into supporting Afghan returnees? In this respect, and in the context of this first regional coordination meeting with NGOs and civil society, it is important to remind stakeholders that committees do not always reflect the issue of returnees in a way that we would like to see happening. More mainstreaming of returnee issues are needed in efforts to link up humanitarian and development activities.

Addressing URBAN MIGRATION

In line with global trends, urban movement, the search for basic services, for access to livelihoods, and for improved security mark today's Afghan reality.

“One of the big challenges for all of us is the urban situation and the time bomb of unemployed youth in Afghanistan.”

UNHCR

Bo Schack

“These are areas where very often we, in the humanitarian community, are less observant, looking less at issues that are sometimes just at our doorstep” (UNHCR Bo Schack). Urban programs are often contested and excessively costly. They are closely linked to urban slum issues – the Kabul informal settlements as an example – with people internally displaced due to natural disasters, others migrating due to economic reasons and lastly, refugees returning after a prolonged absence.

Addressing LAND ALLOCATION

Thirdly, a key issue in reintegration is access to land, whether through land allocation or attempts to retrieve family land. The land allocation procedure in Afghanistan has been government-led, crippled with financial considerations, and corruption allegations. What can be done to break the deadlock on land allocation? Where can we find new lands around high return areas? The issue of finding land in an urban setting is the most difficult one.

A RESEARCH STUDY ON URBAN DISPLACED YOUTH IN KABUL

How does displacement impact the wellbeing of youth in urban settings?

Most of Afghanistan’s migration is youth-based: yet, they are a left-out category in the assistance received. There are increasing pressures for Afghan youth to return home. Pressure to return, but to return to what? Every year, about 400,000 youth enter the labour market, mostly in urban centres, with limited skills. The current demand for labour, and shortage of employment opportunities form a strong pull factor, which means many are opting to leave if they can, while those who stay behind can potentially act as a destabilizing force – instead of contributing to a positive development process. Migration is a social time bomb in a country where a mixture of forced and voluntary internal and international migration, as well as return, is testing the absorption capacities of urban hubs.

This research is the first comprehensive survey of Urban Displaced Youth (15-24 years) in Kabul – conducted with a representative sample of 2,000 youth, including returning refugees, returning migrants, internally displaced persons, rural-urban migrants and non migrants.

The research is led and funded by Samuel Hall. It will be launched in October 2014 with the participation of ACBAR, UNHCR, IOM, ILO, UNFPA and UNHABITAT, in Kabul.

October 28, 2014



AFGHAN REGIONAL EXPERIENCES: Challenges, gaps and solutions

Between May and August 2014, ACBAR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) organized a joint series of regional workshops in East, West, North and Southwest Afghanistan. In total, 98 participants attended including staff members of NGOs, United Nations agencies, Civil Society Organizations, and the Department of Refugee and Repatriation (DoRR). The focus remained on 4 major sectors in need of humanitarian response and coordination: protection, shelter, NFI/FI, livelihood and food/nutrition.

COMMON GAPS AND CHALLENGES: Impact on the wellbeing of returnees

Insecurity, disputes, intimidation and extortions, mines and unexploded ordinances (UXOs) are among the key factors affecting the physical safety and wellbeing of returnees. Uncertainty about the future and limbo in the political situation is a structural gap. Criminality, the weak rule of law and a justice system rife with corruption, inefficiency, lack of capacity and lastly the lack of confidence on law enforcement widen the gap between civilians and local authorities. Recognition of their identity is a challenge for returnees who are faced with obstacles and the inability to obtain proper legal documentation – in part due to the difficulty in going back to area of origin to obtain identity cards. The lack of identification leads to an impaired access to basic services for children, political representation for adults and social inclusion for all.

COMMON GAPS AND CHALLENGES: Constraints for NGOs in Afghanistan

The lack of accurate data assessment coupled with an overlap of information creates an information imbalance: either information is entirely missing, or information is duplicated. The operational reality in Afghanistan is characterized by NGOs coming together with different data and figures that often do not match, creating obstacles to proper interventions and coordination. The lack of access to impacted communities contributes to the lack of data: how to identify persons in need, and how to reach persons in need (PSNs)?

Lastly, the short duration of projects results in a lack of sustainability in the planning. With little achievements to show over short project cycles, organizations are pulling out of areas – highlighting the responsibility of NGOs and donors in supporting Afghan returnees. Further support is needed to continue successful projects and best practices, to give sustainability a chance, without which effective durable solutions will lead the way to political solutions.

REGIONAL CHALLENGES: The tripling effect in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

Security impedes access to refugees and returnees in Afghanistan and Pakistan. More can be done to prepare them for return and to inform a more effective planning, decision and preparation process: identifying returnees who are interested to return, extending their opportunities to make an informed decision – with more time and increased go and see visits, to ensure that return is supported – and that it is a result of refugees' own volition. The indirect pressures on refugees to flee from Iran and Pakistan need to be curbed – the lack of education for children or worsening security conditions should not push them to return. The lack of information on the risks of internal displacement in Afghanistan also limits an effective return process.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS: Focusing on key recommendations

- **A proper information system** should be the backbone of repatriation and reintegration – information by sector, by province, accessible to all. Returnees particularly women should be made aware, early on of the living conditions in Afghanistan. Go & See Visits (GSVs) should be facilitated and multiplied.
- **Documentation** in particular females' access to obtaining IDs, to register for legal documents, to vote and to participate in communities and share their inputs. Establishing a comprehensive referral system how to assist undocumented people claiming their rights in Iran and Pakistan. Women's community participation should be strengthened with GBV program support and giving women a voice.
- **Improving implementation, monitoring and evaluations.** Distribution of non-food item kits (NFI kits) needs more coordination among NGOs, UN and implementing partners. The "missing links" of child education, disability and psychosocial assistance should be added to sectorial agendas and particularly to DRR.

Cash assistance programs particularly need more monitoring and evaluation to avoid selling of aid items, and to allow beneficiaries to purchase foods and items, build shelters, with financial support and freedom.

- **Establishing regional coordination on the following:**
 - * **Livelihood requires its own coordination system** at national and regional levels, through increased labor market information, building capital and highlighting livelihood opportunities,
 - * **Advocacy** messages and initiatives
 - * **Capacity building** of and between ministries for cumulative benefits
 - * **Funding – additional**, regional and multi-year funding is required to address gaps. The current one-year cycle does not allow addressing reintegration challenges.

RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN'S SOUTH

Focusing on solutions to existing problems

Southern Afghanistan is second place in terms of the highest number of returnees. Kandahar is host to 176,769 returnees. Data from the South also includes: Hilmand (81,511), Nimroz (30,376), Zabul (16,968) and Uruzgan (13,701).

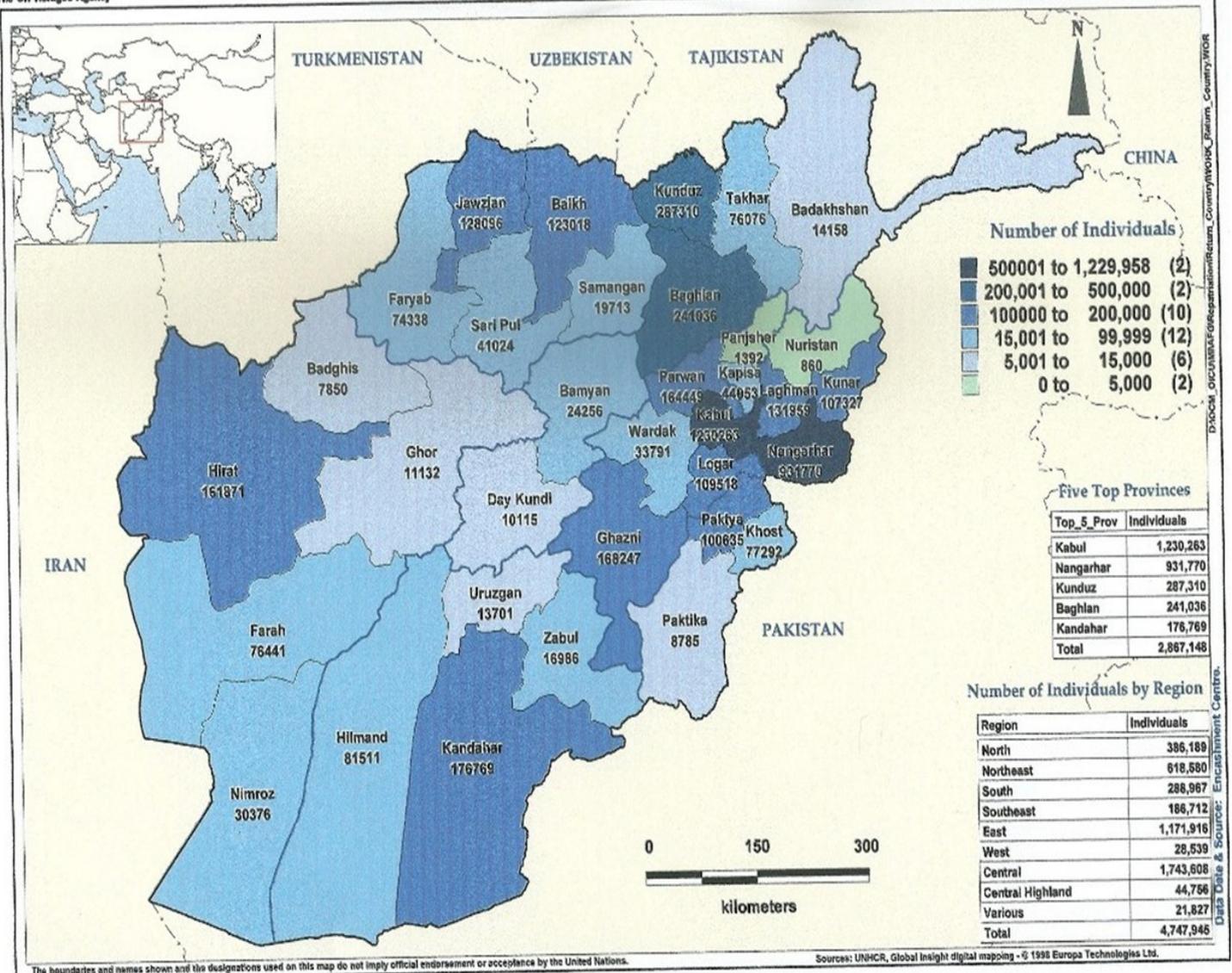
At a provincial level, Kandahar features in the top 5 provinces of highest return for Afghan refugees – Kabul alone counts more than 1 million returnees (1,230,164), Nangarhar (931,770), Kunduz (287,310), Baghlan (241,038), and Kandahar (176, 769). The 5 province total equals half of all returns to Afghanistan (2,867,148).

What has gone wrong in the return process and impact of interventions? Increasing programs can be possible in the South, but how can quality be ensured?

The problem of access is the main limitation highlighted in the South, coupled with a lack of M&E. Taking the example of one of the pilot SSAR sites in Arghandab, Kandahar, the regional workshop revealed beneficiary dissatisfaction, ultimately: although projects were perceived as well planned, the lack of any follow-up and the lack of coordination among actors to understand what went wrong, but also what went right, meant that positive programming outcomes were short-lived.

The problem of regional coordination is also felt in the South on the validation of skills. Some returnees have been educated in *Madrassas* in Pakistan – yet their education is not be certified by the Afghan Ministry of Education. This limits their prospects for training and livelihoods, and opens doors instead to joining AOGs. The solution rests on advocacy and follow-through with certification of education so that returnees can find a job, work with local NGOs and contribute to their communities' development.

Assisted Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan
Return by Province of Destination - 02 March 2002 - 31 July 2014



IRAN'S REFUGEE CONTEXT

AFGHANS IN IRAN

A population between 4 to 5 million persons

Iran hosts 840,000 Afghan refugees who hold Amayesh cards – ‘the closest document to a refugee card’ – giving access to primary and higher education (with a fee), allowing work without work permits.

An urban protracted caseload: 97% live in cities – only 3% live inside camps. There are presently 15 settlements that are not closed camps as refugees are free to move in and out of camps. Minimum primary education is offered, along with health posts. Refugees can be taken out of camps for medical care within the municipalities’ medical system. Among best practices, UNHCR created a supplemental insurance in 2012 covering 220,000 vulnerable persons.

Iran counts about 1 million Afghan visa holders a result of a policy enacted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2009 putting a call for undocumented refugees to register with the government. Due to a lack of consultation with UN agencies and NGOs, information and misinformation both spread. As a result, some never registered out of fear of being deported. Others registered only themselves, while others registered entire families. The result of the census: those who are registered are now eligible to have a work visa – for the primary caretaker – the closest thing to becoming a migrant worker. Under this scheme, visa holders are required to leave Iran every few months, report to one of five consulates in Afghanistan to retrieve a visa. The process is marred by difficulties: fees, duration of wait, insecurity as to if the visa will be obtained or not.

Iran is home to a fluctuating number of undocumented refugees – 1 to 2 million, who have been in Iran from 24 hours to 30 years.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN IRAN include increased literacy rates, access to education and provision of social, medical assistance as well as complementary health insurance for vulnerable refugees. There is an over 90% literacy rate within the afghan community in Iran – compared to 42% when they arrived in Iran. Over 11,000 refugees have received higher education or doctorates in Iran. Access to quality education, and higher education, has been a key achievement for Afghan refugees, which sets them apart from their counterparts in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Such gains might be threatened by increasing school fees – too high for refugee families – and refugees’ own fears that result in them not allowing children access to school.

ISSUES FACING ALL IN IRAN – pressures on Iranians and undoubtedly on Afghan refugees – include the negative social and financial impact of sanctions, resulting in fluctuating remittances sent by Afghans home, crippling banking issues and removal of subsidies on fuel and grain.

PRESENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS LIMITED to UN Agencies and only 10 International NGOs operating in Iran (NRC, DRC, RI, Operation Mercy, Iraqi refugee, Aid Council, NIKO, ICRI). Iran does not fall under development funding nor emergency funding. The access to beneficiaries is constrained in Iran: Security is uncompromised but access to the field has to go through layers of government approval, with shadowed visits. International organizations need to be aware of the idea and the situation – as much as we talk about information provided to refugees, we also have to make sure the international donor, humanitarian and development community is well informed. Working conditions are difficult for aid workers with heightened government control – yet, there are vast areas of gap that the Iranian Government will gladly open access to, for humanitarians to fill. Goals can be achieved, but not on the international community’s timeframe.

THE SSAR IS THE MAIN REFERENCE as it has been given permit for operation: the challenge is now getting funding from SSAR: less than 30% of the SSAR projects in Iran have been funded. Most of the money has gone to government activities. Donors should know that they can “pick and choose”, if they do not want to contribute to the global pot, they can choose specific activities under SSAR.

THE OPERATIONAL REALITY FOR INGOS in a context where the link with SSAR is not direct: approval for SSAR does not necessarily mean approval of INGOS to work under SSAR. An activity can be approved without necessarily obtaining a license to operate. Two different levels of permit are needed: one is the equivalent of the MOU, an annual permit to operate. The latter means NGOs are simply legal to exist with an office and staff. The second is approval for projects – as every field visit requires a permit. Even if the approval under SSAR exists, this second approval is needed to go into the field for needs assessments and implementation. This has resulted in one of the key problems for SSAR: INGOS have been approved two years ago, with a steering committee, yet permits have been lost for some based on an annual review. The permit process overshadows SSAR implementation.

THE VOID OF INFORMATION ON AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN is working against everybody. Information is needed to allow refugees to make an informed decision while in Iran, to prepare them for a more fruitful and sustainable return.

NGO PLATFORM FOR INFORMATION SHARING, a mechanism for reporting of the baseline facts in all 3 countries – of the baseline information – all the needs assessments of the NGOs have done, to be coalesced. To make sure that the information has been shared and can be published. Some of the countries have difficulties sharing information, others have a difficulty publishing information.

ACCESS TO AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN: NO GO AREAS were used as a push factor

Out of 27 provinces in Iran, mostly around the borders of the country, have been declared as no go areas: Afghan refugees have been asked to choose between relocation to other provinces within the center of Iran or return to Afghanistan. Even the central provinces have started becoming partial No go areas. Due to difficulties in controlling borders, the No Go Area policy was developed: without creating camp sites, it provided a mechanism to consolidate people into a more congested area where control would be easier. There is now a distinct possibility that the circle will become tighter. If it becomes too tight, then the congestion itself will be an issue. It would mean more social and economic problems in the field if the circle becomes tighter.

ICRI – International Consortium for Refugees in Iran

ICRI was created 21 years ago, during Iran’s first conference on refugees post-revolution. To respond to the lack of NGO-specific information, participants created this institution to become a consortium of international NGOs on refugee issues in Iran. ICRI is a non-implementing, coordination agency, that disseminates information on the plight of refugees, as well as funding and opportunities for action. ICRI facilitates entry of international NGOs in Iran. Current members include NRC, DRC, Relief International, OXFAM, BAAG and Christian Aid.

AFGHANS IN PAKISTAN

Changing refugee profile: demographic and urban shifts

Pakistan hosts approximately **1.6 million Afghan refugees** but their status is uncertain as it is dependent on the annual renewal of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards. The predominance of an Afghan youth in Pakistan points to a changing refugee profile: young and increasingly urbanized.

Pakistan is also home to a similar number of **unregistered and undocumented Afghans**. The GOP has expressed its willingness to register this population – what would be the implications of a large-scale registration exercise?

Demographic shift. 51% of Afghan refugees are youth, under the age of 24.

Urban shift. Over 70% live in off-camp locations predominantly urban areas.

Durable solutions. Return to Afghanistan and the place of origin has become an increasingly a “redundant prospect”. The challenge today for practitioners is to move the conversation away from return, not through the language of local integration but to talk more positively in support of host communities, working with development partners, facilitating longer term responses – while trying to make sure that chronic needs are met. **Needs are largely chronic and the response is predominantly “band aid”, providing the same response year in and year out.**

Afghan refugees across the region share remarkably similar needs and displacement-related vulnerabilities. Protection challenges include income, livelihoods, shelter, access to services and harassment by local authorities and police. Access figures are:

- Income and livelihood: 22%
- Shelter: 20%
- Access to healthcare: 15%
- Adequate water and sanitation: 13%
- Access to formal education: only 5% of Afghan refugee children complete primary school compared to 67% of Pakistani children. The tendency is to attend madrassas or informal Afghan- schools rather than formal schools.

KEY ISSUES with SSAR in Pakistan. SSAR has been an important means in dialoguing with the government of Pakistan in terms of providing programming with tangible dividends for the refugee population. It is an essential political tool to protect asylum space for refugees. It still faces significant challenges. The lack of clarity on NGO involvement and funding in Pakistan led to a missed opportunity for NGO engagement. Only 2 NGOs are currently registered with SSAR – NRC and DRC. Harassment against refugees, in movement and in accessing services, remains high. The Afghan refugee population faces practical challenges as simple as obtaining a SIM card for a mobile phone or renting a property. Moving forward, a key facet of refugee protection will be to ensure that information trickles down from the central government to law enforcement agencies and field authorities so that it is clear on what protection Proof of Registration (POR) entitles refugees to. Another key facet of refugee protection will rest on **regional NGO cooperation** and understanding the conditions of return in terms of how programs and advocacy are designed.

FUNDING GAP. Funding needs are very high. Only 25% of the total budget of the Pakistani Humanitarian Forum (PHF) members has been funded and most of the response in Pakistan is geared towards IDPs. The concern is that donor attention is shifting away from the region, hence forecasting an even more acute gap in the future.

GOVERNMENT POLICY. The 2013 National policy on management and repatriation of Afghan refugees 2013 is largely aligned on SSAR. It does not acknowledge local integration as a durable solution, but remains otherwise a positive policy as it enables the government the means to extend POR cards. Although the rhetoric around renewal of POR cards remains dogmatic, year after year, in reality the engagement with stakeholders is practical. The National Refugee Policy is currently still in draft form. The government of Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 convention. This draft Policy enshrines the body and spirit of the convention and is a step forward in providing refugees with a level of protection.

COUNTRY & REGIONAL CHALLENGES in Pakistan mirror issues faced in protecting returnees in Afghanistan. The **limited access** owing to a shrinking humanitarian space, most notably in Fatah and Baluchistan, and to government policy on permits being issued. **Protracted displacement and chronic needs** also need to be better understood in terms of how it differs from emergency response, how NGOs need to advocate with donors for longer term funding cycles, with partners in the development sector to mainstream refugee issues in development talks. The **on-going conflict and natural disaster-induced internal displacement trends** in both Pakistan and Afghanistan increase humanitarian concerns and confirm that emergency funding remains essential to enhance NGO mobility and readiness to respond to needs. As such, emergency, recovery and long term funding must be linked. This is a key concern in an environment where funding is due to shrink.

“We already see that the Afghan refugee issue is less important. We see the adverse effect of lack of sustained response.”

ADAPTING TO RESPONSE IN URBAN SETTINGS: BEST PRACTICES. Understanding and sharing best response practice in urban settings will be a key feature of assistance for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The setting is no longer about a camp-based response, as most of the refugees are off camp. Refugee villages are minimal now in number. What does that mean in terms of response in urban settings? Both coordination and programming goals will need to be adjusted to this urban reality.

PHF – Pakistan Humanitarian Forum

PHF includes under 60 international NGOs purely focused on a humanitarian mandate. PHF functions as a coordination body to support INGOs operating in Pakistan. It has established an Afghan Refugee Task Force, a sub-group of PHF with 10-12 members. The aim of the sub-group is to improve coordination and information sharing in the sector. The group was born out of the SSAR in 2011 with the realization that a proper and active mechanism was needed for NGOs to engage with UNHCR in Pakistan. Prior to SSAR and the creation of the sub-group, there was little dialogue between UNHCR and NGOs. Now the interaction has moved forward positively as the SSAR has acted as a catalyst bringing NGOs and UN to work together. Bi-monthly meetings with UNHCR ensure that a platform exists to initiate and plan discussions, such as the regional contingency planning for transition in Afghanistan – ensuring a preparedness level both in terms of mapping sectoral coverage, mapping levels of response and engaging with the Government. PHF’s priorities are now to formulate advocacy messages, improve program response to move beyond care and maintenance to longer term recovery assistance for refugees.

THE NECESSITY OF REGIONAL COOPERATION ON AFGHAN REFUGEES/RETURNEES

SSAR has established the added value of regional cooperation covering 3 countries, in 3 years. The need is now for **cross-border programming and regional plans for information sharing and advocacy**. Donors' agenda need to be sensitized not just in terms of funding, but also on resettlement.

Regional cooperation is needed at a time of rapidly changing refugee trends and numbers. Arrivals of refugees from Pakistan, and the need for emergency response in Afghanistan began in early May 2014, with an increased inflow in June 2014 with the announcement of the Waziristan security operation. A total of 100,000 Pakistanis have been displaced to Afghanistan with 12,000 families in Khost (of which 3,000 in camps) and 7,000 families in Paktika.

The majority live within host communities, bringing them protection but increasing access challenges for stakeholders.

The Pakistani refugee population requires a comprehensive humanitarian response in terms of healthcare, drinking water, latrine facilities. As the security operation continues, it is unlikely that refugees will be able to return before the winter. UNHCR and partners are now planning for winter assistance: presenting an appeal for the next 6 months, analyzing prospects for additional funding through Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and relying on local NGOs for invaluable and increased access.

“The fact that the population is so dispersed makes response more challenging.”

UNHCR

Angela Moore

The Government of Afghanistan is not facilitating implementation at the field level. Operationally, on top of regular access challenges at the field levels, the repeated occurrences and demands for bribes, MoUs, obstacles in renewing staff visas and work permits, inability to touch on issues of land, access, have meant that the daily working procedures for NGOs have been blocked. Strategically, the point of view of the government has linked the inflow with security concerns, perceiving the inflow of Pakistanis as a Taliban threat. Heightened sensitivities to security have cascaded down to interventions.



CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

FOR CONCERTED AND COORDINATED RESPONSE

WORKING GROUP 1 ENHANCING REGIONAL NGO COORDINATION AND INFORMATION SHARING ON AFGHAN REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

The main theme during the workshop remains the recognized lack of coordination and information sharing across actors, within and between agencies operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Challenges are three-fold and characterized by a lack of regional:

- Information gathering mechanisms
 - How to include beneficiaries' voices when access is limited or impossible?
- Information sharing on return
 - How to share information on return with refugees, especially youth, who are voicing a willingness to return to a homeland that they are not familiar with?
- Mechanisms for information management
 - How to coordinate and plan programs regionally?
 - How to go beyond constraints on funding cycles?

Participants agreed on key recommendations to fix gradually the gap in information gathering, sharing and management. Recommendations call for the creation of:

- **A Regional Information Management System**
 - Under the leadership of ACBAR, ICRI and PHF
- **An Online Resource – Web Portal**
 - An information set-up administered outside of the region
 - Located within a university or academic institution
 - Accessible to all stakeholders, from governments to beneficiaries
 - User-friendly and transparent source of information
 - To be updated monthly or bi-monthly
- **A Regional and Layered Information Content**
 - General information on the basics of every country, operational realities (3Ws), provincial statistics (with up-to-date information on provincial realities)
 - Sectoral information with fact sheets on key humanitarian and development needs to inform both return intentions and programming strategies
 - Beneficiary information with reports collected from refugee/returnee surveys

2014 Regional Workshop on Afghan Refugees/Returnees' Recommendations

- 1. Enhancing regional NGO coordination through a Regional Information Management System, Online resource, and Tiered Content**
- 2. Closer integration of NGOs within SSAR formulation and implementation process, as well as advocacy and fund-raising**
- 3. Regional advocacy messages to strengthen inter-governmental cooperation on regional reciprocity, regional programming and engaging with the media for positive messaging**
- 4. Launching cross-border programs, strategies and information sharing, with facilitated visits across borders and annual regional meetings to align strategies.**

WORKING GROUP 2 REGIONAL EXPERIENCES OF NGO ENGAGEMENT IN SSAR

NGOs' voices in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran require mainstreaming in SSAR to ensure NGO representation in operational and institutional plans (National Steering Committees).

In Afghanistan, NGOs are to be counted upon as real partners in the operationalization of SSAR (formulation of the portfolio, joint advocacy, and fundraising). NGOs voiced their willingness to see a greater role taken by the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation in Afghanistan. In Iran and Pakistan, SSAR is more integrated into government policies. Yet, in Pakistan, NGOs have no input on the portfolio. In Iran, all NGOs are included in the portfolio, yet what about national NGOs, or NGOs that are not issued permits for implementation?

Given the challenges faced in all three countries, the regional workshop participants called for **strategic cross-border interaction amongst NGOs, closely with UNHCR, to ensure their input as key partners in the process.**



WORKING GROUP 3 REGIONAL COMMON ADVOCACY MESSAGES

Advocacy is hampered by the lack of regional coordination and low information sharing. Different sources of information, umbrella organizations, advocacy capacity and different country settings require a careful crafting and tailoring of messages.

Recommendations made by participants focus on a much-needed consensus and focus of messages on **human rights and international humanitarian law and the need for engagement between all three governments to ensure, at a political level, that the following values and commitments are upheld:**

- **Regional reciprocity**
Allowing Ministries of Education to talk amongst each other to recognize education certificates for an improved access to livelihood opportunities.
- **Regional programming**
Facilitating the meeting of organizations in all three countries – through facilitated visas and authorizations to meet in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan annually for planning purposes.
- **Regional engagement with the media**
Revising negative message and promote a better image of Afghans abroad.



WORKING GROUP 4 CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Projects have been designed but are not always appropriate for those willing to come back. The process has to be improved at three levels (list below), in order to ensure the integrity of a dignified and voluntary return, as well as the sustainability of return. Acknowledging that poor preparation of refugees to return has hampered the reintegration process, participants agreed on the need to focus programming in countries of asylum to allow for:

- Identifying refugees in countries of asylum
 - Needs assessment
 - Skills assessment
 - To improve the design of return programs and ensure sustainability
- Coordinating between stakeholders
 - Government authorization to access refugee populations
 - UN responsibility to coordinate needs and skills assessments
 - NGOs feeding information from the field level upwards
- Strengthen partnership between humanitarian and development actors
 - Cross-border initiatives
 - Go and see visits
 - Labor market assessments, skills assessments and linkages
 - Financial services for returnees
 - Flexible funding opportunities for cross-border programming

ANNEXES

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Annex 1: List of Acronyms

Acronyms	Full Name
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AB	Advisory Board
ABP	Afghan Border Police
ADF	Afghanistan Development forum
ACTA	Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability
AGE	Anti-Government Element
AHF	Afghanistan Humanitarian forum
AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
ALNAP	Active Learning Network For Accountability and Performance in humanitarian Action
ALP	Afghan Local Police
AMP	Aid Management Policy
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AOG	Armed Opposition group
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force
APC	Afghanistan Protection Cluster
APPRO	National Action Plan For The Women Of Afghanistan
ARCS	Afghan Red Crescent Society
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
AVRR	Afghan Volunteer Return and Reintegration
AWG	Advocacy working Group
AXO	Abandoned Explosive Ordnance
BAAG	British And Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group
BCPR	Bureau For Crisis Prevention recovery
BA	Bachelor Of Arts
BCS	Border Crossing Station
BEMOC	Basic Emergency Obstetric Care
BMI	Body Mass Index
BPHS	Basic packages of health services
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
BTS	Blood Transfusion service
BVW	Basic Veterinary Worker
CAS	Close Air Support (Air Strike)
CBE	Community Based Education
CBO	Community-based organization
CBRR	Cross Border Return and Reintegration
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CCW	Certain Conventional Weapons
CCA	Close Combat Attack

CDC	Community Development Council
CE-DAT	Complex Emergency Database
CEDAW	Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women
CEMOC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFR	Case Fatality Rate
CFW	Cash For Work
CHAP	Common humanitarian Action Plan
CHF	Common humanitarian fund
CHW	Community Health Worker
CIHL	Customary International Humanitarian Law
CM	Capability Milestone
CMT	Core Management Team
CMR	Crude Mortality Rate
CPAN	Child Protection Action Network
CPIA	Country Policy and Institution Assessment
CRC	Convention On the Rights Of The Child
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CRISE	Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CRPD	Convention On The Rights Of Person With Disabilities
CSO	Civil society Organization
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan
CTC	Cholera Treatment Center
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DA	Department of Army
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDA	District Development Assembly
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DMC	Department of Mine Clearance
DOD	Department Of Defense
DORR	Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EE	Emergency Essential
EFA	Education For All
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EM	Environment markers
ENA	Emergency Nutrition Assessment
ENNA	European NGOs Network For Afghanistan
EOF	Escalation Of Force
EPHS	Essential Package of Health Services
EPI	Expanded Programme On Immunization
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator

ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ERF	Emergency response fund
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ETAT	Emergency Triage Assessment And Treatment
EU	European Union
EVIF	Extremely Vulnerable Individual
FANTA	Food And Nutrition Technical Assistance
FAO	Food And Agriculture Organization Of United Nations
FCN	Foreign Country National
FI	Food Items
FSM	Field Site Monitoring
FSN	Foreign Service National
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAD	Gender Age Diversity
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Global health initiative
GIROA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GOA	Government of Afghanistan
GSV	Go and See Visit
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership / or Humanitarian Assistance Program
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HE	Hygiene Education
HF	Health Facility
HFSN	Health and Fragile States Network
HFU	Humanitarian Financing Unit
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation plan
HIS	Health Information System
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
HLTF	High Level Task Force
HRA	High Return Areas
HRL	Human Rights Law
HRFM	Human Rights Field Monitoring
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSR	Human Security Report
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant On Civil And Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant On Economic Social And Cultural Rights
ICLA	Information Counselling and Legal Assistance
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council Of Voluntary Agencies
IDF	Indirect Fire (Rockets Mortars)

IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEA	Islamic Emirate Of Afghanistan
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IED	Improvised Explosive device
IFE	Infant Feeding In Emergency
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFRC	International Federation Of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies
IFAD	International Fund For Agriculture Development
IGC	International Grains Council
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
II	Implementation improvements
IM	International Military
IMAI	Integrated Management Of Adult illnesses
IMCI	Integrated Management Of Childhood illnesses
IMF	International Military Forces
IMPAC	Integrated Management Of Pregnancy And Childbirth
INEE	Inter-Agency Network For Education In Emergencies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Infection Prevention And Control
IRS	Indoor Residual Spraying
ISA	Independent Services Authority
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISPO	International Society For Prosthetics And Orthotics
IYCF	Infant And Young Child Feeding
JCMB	Joint Coordination Monitoring Body
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LAS	Land Allocation Sites/ Land Allocation Scheme
LBW	Low Birth Weight
LEGS	Livestock Emergency Guidelines And Standards
LICUS	Low-income countries under stress
LFEW	Livestock Female Extension Worker
LLIN	Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Net
LoLM	Law on Land Managment
M&R	Monitoring and Reporting

MA	Managing Agent
MACCA	Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MAPA	Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan
MBT	Mine Ban Treaty
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package
MOBTA	Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEC	Ministry of Economy
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
MOCY	Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs
MOIC	Ministry Of Information And Culture
MOHRA	Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs
MOYC	Ministry Of Youth And Culture
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MORR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MPA	Master Of Public Administration
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Conference
MUDA	Ministry of Urban Development Assistance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAPWA	National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan
NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
NCHS	National Center For Health Statistics
NDS	National Directorate of Security
NFI	Non Food Item
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NICS	Nutrition In Crisis Information System
NHLP	National Horticulture And Livestock Project
NPP	National Priority Program
NRVA	National Risk And Vulnerability Assessment
NSC	National Security Council
NSP	National Solidarity Program
NTAP	National Transparency Accountability Program
OAU	Organization Of African Unity
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization For Economic Cooperation And Development
OER	Office of Emergency Response
Off Budget	Budget From Donor Based On Bilateral Agreement
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
On Budget	Budget From Donor through GIROA

ORS	Oral Rehydration Salts
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PDMC	Provincial Disaster Management Committee
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PGM	Pro-Government Militia
PHC	Primary health care
PHT	Provincial Humanitarian Team
PLHIV	People Living With HIV
PLWHA	People Living With HIV And AIDS
POR	Proof of Registration
POUWT	Point Of Use Water Treatment
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSN	Person in Need
Q&A	Quality And Accountability
RAF	Rapid Assessment Form
RADP	Regional Agricultural Development Program
RH	Reproductive Health
RHT	Regional Humanitarian Team
RMU	Risk Management Unit
RMLSP	Rural Microfinance And Livestock Support Project
RNI	Reference Nutrient Intakes
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
RPA	Remotely Piloted Aircraft
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SAF	Small Arms Fire
SSAR	Solution strategy for Afghan refuge
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SEEP	Small Enterprise Education And Promotion
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SGP	Small Grant Program
SKAT	Swiss Center For Appropriate Technology
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Consortium
SMC	Sanitary Mandate Contract
SOPS	Standard Operating Procedures
SOM	Senior official meeting
SRC	Strategic Review Committees
SRP	Shelter Response Plan
SWG	Sub Working Group
TA	Technical assistance
THET	Tropical Health Education Trust
TMAF	Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework
TOT	The Terms of Trade
U5MR	Under Mortality Rate
UCT	Unconditional Transfer
UDHR	Universal Declaration Of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation

UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
UN-DDR	United Nation Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFCCC	United Nation Framework Convention On Climate Change
UN-HABITAT	United Nation Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nation International Strategy For Disaster Reduction
UNITAID	International Drug Purchasing Facility
UNODC	United Nation Office For Drug Control
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UORS	Urgent Operational Requirements
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USFOR-A	United States Forces-Afghanistan
USSOF	United States Special Operations Forces
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VCA	Vulnerability And Capacity Analysis
VDC	Village development committee
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit
VRF	Voluntary Repatriation Form
VT	Vocational Training
WASH	Water Supply sanitation And Hygiene Promotion
WB	World Bank
WBM	Web Based Monitoring
WEDC	Water Engineering And Development Center
WFH	Weight For Height
WFP	World Food Programme
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World health Organization
WIT	Water Inspection Team
WMC	Water Management Committee
WP	Water Point
WSP	Water Safety Plan

Annex 2: List of participants Kabul workshop

No	Name	Position	NGO/Agency
1	Hans van Oosten	Interim CD	ZOA
2	Nassim Majidi	CD	SAMUEL HALL
3	Dr Liza Schuster	Research and communication manager	ACKU
4	Charles Davy	CD	A-AID
	Kazee Rashid	Deputy Director Programme	A-AID
5	Mr. Shoaib	FSD Representative	FSD
6	Valerie Docher	Head of mission	MRCA
7	Inge Detlefsen	CD	RI
8	Eleanor Whyllie	Grant manager	RI
9	Dr Ghulam Haidar	Program manager	WHO
10	Muhammad Jelani	Program coordinator	IRC
11	Feroz Arian	Head of office	CRS
12	Zalmai Hameedi	Partner HR coordinator	NCA
13	Dr. Anees	CHRM coordinator	CWS
14	Ms. Rabia	Advocacy officer	CWS
15	Mohd. Ismail Qarizada	Senior Program coordinator	Swiss Cooperation
16	Ms. Mahsheed	HR manager	NPO
17	Zabihullah Kamran	Information officer	UNICEF
18	Danielle Moylan	Advocacy manager	NRC
	Sayed Ebad	Advocacy and protection coordinator	NRC
	Ariel Solari	Education program manager	NRC
	Nicholas Leftwich	Shelter program manager	NRC
	Eng. Mujadadi	DPM shelter	NRC
19	Zulaikha Rafiq	Executive Director	AWEC
20	Giorgio Trombatore	CD	IMC
	Rizwanallah	GBV coordinator	IMC
	Dr Shamail	Medical coordinator	IMC
21	Fazal Ahmad Renakhail	Country manager	MHI
22	Coline GRUNBLATT	Advocacy Liaison officer	HI
23	Fazel Rabi Haqbeen	Education Director	WADAN
24	Wendy Barron	National Director	CFA
	Maiwand Rohani	Program Director	CFA
25	Mohammad Rafiq Sharifi	Executive Director	SAB

26	Dr James A. Williams	CD	JUH
	Mr Andre Breitenstein	JUH representative	JUH
	Mr Deepesh Sinha	JUH representative	JUH
	Dr. Sediqullah Akbarzai	Program coordinator	JUH
27	David Blank	Regional Director ACPAK	DRC
	Frederick AD Mung'ong'o	Interim Country Director	DRC
	Taj Sultan	Protection and advocacy manager	DRC
	Abdul Qayyum Saiel	Deputy Protection manager	DRC
28	Ahmad Haroon Ahmadi	Project management specialist	OFDA/USAID
29	Mr. Meyer	UNDP Senior CD	UNDP
	Abdul Rouf Samoon	Program manager	UNDP
	Mohammad Salim	Program officer DRR/CCA	UNDP
	Geert Gompelman	Programme Analyst – Peace and Reintegration	UNDP
30	Moqim Qaumi	CoM RET in Afghanistan	RET
	Hussain Shah	FAM RET in Afghanistan	RET
31	Virginie Thiollet	Humanitarian correspondent	French Embassy
32	Marketa Hajkova	Deputy head of Embassy of the Czech Republic	Czech Embassy
33	Dr. Gulabiyar Wahidullah	Operation manager	WHH
	Franz Josef Berger	Project advisor	WHH
34	Mr. Bo Sehack	Head of Mission	UNHCR
	Malang Ibrahim	Associate Reintegration officer	UNHCR
	Mohammad Haroon	Assistant Repatriation officer	UNHCR
	Sweta Kannan	Reporting officer	UNHCR
	Angela Moore	Protection officer	UNHCR
35	Abdul Rahman Shahab	General Director	ACTD
36	Olivier Rousselle	Head of Mission	ECHO
37	Mario Straka	CD	PIPAA
38	Mr. Jawad Wafa	Deputy Executive Director	SO
39	Mr. Shoaib	FSD representative	FSD
40	Attaullah Khan	CD	HRRAC
41	Homaira Abdullah	HR representative	IRA
	Mirwais Fazil	Acting CD	IRA
42	Ahmad Tamim Khogyani	Research officer	CPAU

43	Mr. Omaid Sharifi	Regional Manager Kabul	Tawanmandi
44	Francesca Majorano Sarapo	EU Delegation	EU
	Rocco Busco	EU Delegation	EU
45	Franck Abeille	CD	ACF
46	Mohammad Zaman Rafiei	Humanitarian program manager	DIFID
47	Zia Urrahman	National program officer	FAO
48	Dr. Akmal Nasrat	Program coordinator	ACREOD's
49	Shabnam Sabah	Program officer	WCC
50	Vijay Raghavan	Assistant Country Director	Concern
51	Noor Agha Stanikzai	Admin/Finance officer	OHSS
52	Mr. Fazal Ahad	Program coordinator	HWW
	Mr. Nooruhuda	Project assistant	HWW
53	Mr. Bashir Hashimi	Program officer	HAFO
54	Ms. Katharina	Counselor legal affairs, human rights and role of law	German Embassy
55	Charlotte Ashley	HA officer	OCHA
	Shams Khalili Marwat	CM-Coord and liaison Officer	OCHA
56	Asif Daniel	Deputy Programme Director	TFA
	Augustine Savariyar	Area coordination	TFA
57	Thierry David	IDP program	GIZ
58	Sigmund Olav Bekken	Attaché (Migration Issues)	Royal Norwegian Embassy
	Bjørn Frode Skaaret	Attaché (Migration Issues)	Royal Norwegian Embassy
59	Khawani Rashed	Senior project coordinator	CARE
60	Eng. Behzad	National Program coordinator	NAC
61	M. Nazanin	ICRI representative	ICRI
62	Dan Tyler	PHF board member	PHF
63	Jawad Azimi	Planning and Governance officer	JICA
64	Mr. Shah Jahan Rahimi	Deputy project Development Manager	ACTED

Annex 3: Mazar workshop

Refugees Workshop Minutes Mazar-i-Sharif 20th May 2014

Discussion

ACBAR Deputy Director gave a general brief on regional refugee workshops and the ones scheduled in Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar.

UNHCR presented its activities in the region. UNHCR representative gave an update on the general structure and mandate of the office in Afghanistan among 15 other UN agencies. Based on its worldwide mandate, priority in Afghanistan is also protection of refugees and especially vulnerable ones. UNHCR works to provide durable solutions in terms of voluntary repatriation of refugees from neighboring countries, local integration and resettlement. As for its operation UNHCR works in compliance with humanitarian principles, humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

- **HUMANITY:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found; this implies the right to receive and to offer humanitarian assistance.
- **IMPARTIALITY:** Aid is delivered to all those who are suffering, based on their needs and rights. There is no discrimination based on sex, religion, age, ethnicity, identity.
- **NEUTRALITY:** UNHCR's work is entirely non-political. The staff is not taking sides in hostilities or engaging in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE: The work of UNHCR is autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

All UNHCR activities aimed at ensuring full respect to the rights of individual without consideration of race, national or ethnic origin. UNHCR is protecting access to displaced people as well as refugee and ensuring their rights according to Human Rights (rights of the individual towards the state) and Humanitarian (rights during armed conflict) and Refugee Laws. UNHCR strive to assure Human rights according to the 1951 convention of refugee law, clarifying the states of the refugees and their rights, and obligation of the states as well as the host country. The lead actor should be the state everywhere especially in Afghanistan, and in case of need Humanitarian agencies, International Committee of Red Cross, UNHCR, International Labor organization, UNICEF... can give their support.

As of their mandate, UNHCR cover persons of concerns, asylum seekers, refugees, returnees, IDPs and stateless entities. Refugees are persons whom they afraid of being prosecuted for the reasons of, race, religion, nationality and membership of a particular social group or of political opinion.

The difference between refugee and asylum seeker is that asylum seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee but his/her claim has not yet been definitely evaluated. UNHCR works based on classification and according to International Standards. The stateless is a person who is not considered as national by any state as per their enacting laws. Globally 10 million of people are stateless. For more details participants may review 1954 convention relating to the status of stateless persons and 1961 convention on the reduction of statelessness.

The Afghanistan national IDPs (internally displaced persons) policy has been endorsed and will get enacted soon. UNHCR currently has a heavy case load of IDPs fleeing their places of origin due to several causes such as natural disasters, insecurity, land occupation, or contamination by landmines... Looking at the fundamentals principles of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, it's not a volunteer displacement because they are somehow forced to flee within the country but are not recognized as refugees because they are not crossing any internationally recognized borders.

UNHCR has managed numerous large scale voluntary repatriation programs that brought millions of refugees to their home of origin since Taliban regime. However the return of refugees is dramatically decreased in recent times. UNHCR in Mazar is fully involved with returnees' and IDPs' caseloads in Northern region covering them under protection operations in terms of Human Rights Field Monitoring (HRFM) and rotary monitoring, legal cases in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and its Information Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) Program, EC and border monitoring plus needed assistance and Person In Need (PSN) project covering the neediest ones. On the integration side, they carry over program in water and sanitation, shelter materials, income generation, and communication/technically support to MoRR for land allocation and advocacy for the rights of the assisted groups.

They also support the National IDP Task Force (NIDP TF) in terms of coordination, protection monitoring, needs assessment, profiling mapping and durable solutions... Furthermore, UNHCR is providing both nonfood (NFI) and food items (FI) assistance in cooperation with other partners to the beneficiaries, especially to IDPs. The number of refugees and asylum seekers is not so high in the Northern region. Between January and May 2014, only 15 or 16 refugees or asylum seekers came from the neighboring countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and/or Syria. UNCHR-Kabul does their registration, through RSD (Refugee Status Determination), and work on durable solutions, detecting also Extremely Vulnerable individuals (EVI) and tracing. For more details, colleagues may refer to UN General Assembly Resolution 53/125 from 1998 defining UNHCR's engagement with IDPs.

Protection and monitoring as well as situation assessments is also included in the scope of UNHCR's activities. UNHCR has direct interventions in following fields:

- assisting persons of concern in life-threatening situations,
- negotiating safe passage for relief supplies,
- intervening with authorities to prevent forced return,
- facilitating freedom of movement (including access to asylum),
- advocating with parties to the conflict for access and safety of People of Communities,
- providing legal protection support to State (e.g assist in developing national protection mechanisms as well as support in terms of technical issues),
- supporting and facilitating the search for durable solutions.

Following to a global and collaborative review of international humanitarian response in 2004, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed to establish a "Cluster Leadership Approach". Central and regional protection clusters were established in Kabul and in regions in 2008 led by UNHCR to enable comprehensive protection of IDPs and other affected communities. The aims were and are to fill capacity and response gaps by designating global and country-level "Cluster Leads". UNHCR leads the Protection and Emergency Shelter Clusters. The main task of the Protection Cluster is to enable comprehensive protection co-ordination of IDPs and other affected communities. Regional Protection co-ordination mechanisms link up with the National Afghanistan Protection Cluster (APC) for a focus on protection in the field.

NIDP TF is a sub-group of APC at national level with regional Task Force reporting to it and that was established in early 2008 and jointly chaired by UNHCR and MoRR/ DoRRs. All issues related to IDPs – conflict induced and natural disasters induced come to the IDP TFs. IOM with OCHA leads co-ordination of natural disaster induced IDPs, while UNHCR leads co-ordination of conflict induced displacements.

Overall, the goal of IDP TF is to engage all relevant stakeholders in addressing causes of internal displacement and to secure protection, assistance and work on finding and offering durable solution.

A number of voluntary repatriation were possible with the support of UNHCR. 138 families/814 individuals were assisted and returned to the north and north eastern region during the first four months of 2014. Due to conflict in Afghanistan, 16159 families and 98020 individuals IDPs are located in the North East region at the 30th April, 2014.

UNHCR then discussed refugees / returnees short term needs, in terms of cash grant, shelter, food, NFIs and social services. However, it also depends on assessment findings from each group and the level of their needs. Regarding long term needs, it is important that all returnees caseloads are considered for development plans and projects.

IOM then provided details on post arrival and reintegration assistance to spontaneous returnees, vulnerable deportees, and documents claimants coming from neighboring countries particularly Iran and Pakistan. Since 2008 IOM assisted families and individuals as *per* its mandate. In 2007 IOM estimated nearly 200 000 to 300 000 undocumented people crossing the border both from Iran and Pakistan through Torkham, Spin Boldak and Islam Qala borders each year.

Regarding IOM's post-arrival assistance, IOM staff is doing initial screening (medical screening and other vulnerabilities identified) and referral in terms of food and short term accommodation at transit center, transport to final destination, vocational and business skills training and/or the provision of business start-up. They also provide support as livelihood assistance, community-based construction of permanent shelters and construction of small community infrastructures led by CDCs.

In Herat, Nimroz and Nangarhar borders, biggest immediate needs have been expressed upon arrival from the individual and families. IOM distribute urgent packages including financial support, shelter assistance and short term assistance. They also assess the needs in terms of reintegration, shelter assistance and targeted reintegration support for unaccompanied minors (UAm), drug-addicts and female returnees as long term needs.

IOM carries over as Deputy Cluster Coordinator of ES/NFI cluster and leading the National IDP Task Force for ND-induced IDPs Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP) since 2008. HAP delivers ES/NFI assistance to vulnerable person affected by Natural Disaster (ND) of displaced families country-wide.

IOM gives response to the affected communities of natural disasters, through RAF (rapid assessment form) in cooperation with Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), UN, I/NGOs, RRD, District authorities, Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), DoRR what can be used by all partners during the assessments.

Afghan Volunteer Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is line program for the deportees of European countries while Cross Border Return and Reintegration (CBRR) is the program for the deportees or returnees for neighboring countries. In AVRR, IOM provides to volunteers/deportees with business startup support but in CBRR returnees receive medical and cash assistance in borders.

Beside this, IOM also provide vocational trainings and implement DRR project (retention wall) since April 2013 in coordination with ANDMA, DRRD, and Agriculture Department.

NRC the developed that they are involved in IDPs protection in terms of information and legal advice to internally displaced persons, education, shelters, NFI, and camp management. NRC through its ICLA program registers all legal cases for IDPs of which majority is land occupation, the legal counselors following the cases with relevant line departments/courts in order to find the permanent legal solution to persons of concerns. NRC rep has raised the point of land occupation against ownership as a big challenge in general, particularly for IDPs and Returnees.

DACAAR also supports returnees, IDPs and vulnerable people in the rural areas of Afghanistan. Wash as DACAAR core activities covers affected communities, who now have access to safe drinking water. Based on geophysical assessment, they do provide IDPs with potable water. DACAAR plans to launch livelihood and income generation projects for the neediest people in northern region.

Furthermore, DACAAR looks after youth headed (disables) and women headed families. If host community is highly prioritized, DACAAR does include them as beneficiaries so that the IDPs in host communities are also covered.

SCI is a child center organization and beside other core activities, it carries over open ended projects for IDPs and returnees. The ongoing BPRM project (funded by USAID) for IDPs and returnees is under the implementation. The project allocates 50% of the budget for IDPs and 50% for returnees focusing on four areas: education, livelihood, wash and child protection in the North region. As main findings, there is urgent need for water, sanitation and shelter support while it was also pointed out that livelihood is a long term need in northern region. The big challenge is to obtain valid information regarding refugees and IDP, when they arrive in the country, number of family members... Access to needed communities in camps is not so difficult while access to vulnerable stratum is more challenging in host communities. And this is an obstacle to humanitarian support.

NPO is implementing IDP monitoring project (funded by UNHCR) started since 2011 and currently ongoing. It aims to identify and profile IDPs in the northern region for further follow up. Beside this, NPO assists UNHCR in terms of NFI and FI distribution in the region.

CHA is a national NGO and roll over as implementing partner with several donors. Currently, it implement UNHCR project for Person with Specific Needs (PSN) cases especially for conflict and disaster IDPs victims in the Northern provinces. They have a referral network which is derived from government departments as well as NGOs. Relevant cases are referred to UNHCR in coordination with DoRR.

ACTED is involved with IDPs in terms of trainings, such as carpet viewing, driving, mobile reparation courses, tailoring, handicraft, English, computer programs... ACTED is supporting its beneficiary groups (IDPs, returnees, Disables) for three year after which they will be prolonging their business of activities.

OCHA is in general supporting emergencies situation and strives to mitigate the scale of hazards and risks. It facilitates the process of long term humanitarian aids and advocating for the rights of affected communities around the country. OCHA as a humanitarian donor gives its fund under the guidelines of humanitarian reform to NGOs implementing partners (IPs) for an adequate and timely response. The Humanitarian Reform Agenda is about enhancing accountability, predictability and partnership in humanitarian response

OCHA representative updated further participants of the available clusters and cluster leads and their importance for the humanitarian needs and responses. OCHA briefed on role of NGOs in clusters, mainly to gain insight information for better programming and impact, to influence strategic debate and discussion, planning and policy in its cluster in inter cluster meeting, especially in the Afghanistan Humanitarian Forum and Humanitarian Country Team.

Challenges:

- No exact date for IDPs to flee from the areas predicted for possible risks (low early warning system).
- Access to vulnerable beneficiaries in host communities.
- Insecurity to reach and support the affected stratum of refugees and IDPs.
- No specific camp for IDPs, returnees in the north and north eastern region as most of them live in host communities.
- Access to durable solutions is very difficult and limited.

General Recommendations:

- Work and vocational training opportunities both for IDPs and returnees must be developed.
- Support in terms of NFI and FI, permanent shelter and infrastructure for both short term and long terms needs has to be provided to IDPs and refugees.
- New IDPs policy has to be implemented and monitor by the GiRoA and the International Community (IC).
- GiRoA as well as IC should provide opportunities for the repatriation to the place of origin.
- A standard early warning system should be created to register and inform the different actors with accurate data.
- Advocacy programs for integration and return must be conducted in Afghanistan and the neighboring countries.
- Disability aspect as a complementary vulnerability should be added to the agenda of DRR and the new Afghan government.

Annex 4: Jalalabad workshop

Refugees Workshop Minutes Jalalabad 2nd June 2014

Discussion

ACBAR gave a briefing on country wide regional refugee's workshops. UNHCR took the lead and presented its presentation based on given agenda.

UNHCR is involved in the field of refugees and returnees, undocumented returnees, people in refugee situation like internally displaced people IDPs (either induced by conflict, disaster...) as well as civilians affected by conflict.

UNHCR is an operational UN agency working in Eastern region. UNHCR staff supports the caseloads of repatriation and reintegration of returnees. They are also profiling IDPs. Beside this, its role is to lead the coordination and protection cluster in the East. In case of repatriation, UNHCR staff carries over Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), repatriation cash grants, Monitoring and evaluation Committee (MEC) protection monitoring and Returnee monitoring (both at individual and community levels). While in reintegration they provide shelter, livelihood, vocational training, small infrastructure projects in high return areas, and assistance to persons with specific needs for example women with Sexual and Gender Based Violence program (SGBV).

Based on UNHCR pie chart, Nangarhar has nearly 80% of both returnees and IDPs of the region while the ratio for Laghman and Kunar is respectively 13% and 8% which is low comparing to the first figure.

Challenges in the region:

Convincing local government authorities that refugees and IDPs are a key priority

- Need of coordination among actors
- Political pressure for certain sites to be prioritized
- Dynamics at the community level (pressure from Maliks)
- Last year campaign on development funds never came to the region
- Difficulties in gathering information on the interventions of other actors
- Limited development actors and budget to identify development projects in High Return Areas (HRAs)

Specific challenges regarding Land Allocation Scheme (LAS):

- Land allocation scheme stopped in April 2011
- Land dispute is a key challenge for LAS
- Political hindrances in the process
- Lack of Political will
- Corruption

Specific challenges for IDPs:

- Profiling of IDPs
- Persons with specific needs
- SGBV
- Coordination of the protection and NFI/ and emergency Shelter clusters

DRC is an organization which originally started its activities decades back for IDPs in Denmark and currently work for refugees and returnees. DRC representative addressed that they are working on sharing programmatic and response needs for the protracted Afghan refugees and determining joint advocacy approaches and messages especially considering the major challenges related to return, repatriation and reintegration process in 2014 and beyond. The current needs (urgent and long term) were discussed as beneath.

Protection and advocacy constraints, challenges:

- Return is not as successful and sustainable as hoped because of insecurity, likelihood of secondary replacement (following return is very high), lack of livelihood opportunities particularly youth empowerment, slow and inadequate policy response and gaps in services in terms of access to land and shelter, education, wash.
- Strong focus on repatriation and return to place of origin against local integration is needed.
- There are concerns whether or not there is sufficient reference to and preservation of the 'voluntary' nature of this repatriation.
- There is a great lack of sustainable support services and access to them.
- Urbanization and planning.
- Limited development and government engagement.
- Needs in high return areas, including through national development programs have to be addressed.
- Programs must effectively target returnees.
- The SSAR fails to acknowledge or tackle the huge IDP issue in Afghanistan that cannot in reality be separated from the refugee issue.

Coordination and planning has to be improved between all actors.

Update of integration sites and return conditions has to be a priority.

In terms of Advocacy messaging on protection and response needs, following points were addressed by DRC as an important step toward:

- Cross border research initiatives
- Land allocation schemes / tenure security
- Access to labour market / building capital based on livelihood opportunities
- Approaches that promotes self-reliance
- Return conditions in Afghanistan for returnees

Recommendations:

- Fund to support implementation of the IDP Policy, including IDP profiling activities to deepen understanding of displacement-specific needs and improve responses.\
- Ensure the UN Development Assistance Framework 2015-2019 adequately focuses on durable solutions for IDPs and refugee returnees, including realization of the right to adequate housing in urban areas through community-based programs.
- Encourage the joint participation of both international development and humanitarian actors in coordination mechanisms addressing internal displacement in order to ensure a comprehensive approach.
- Improve capacity of protection actors for preventative, monitoring and reporting.
- Ensure consistent funding for capacity-building and awareness-raising activities on forced evictions and applicable (international) legal standards for all stakeholders.
- There should be more government's involvement in addressing needs in high return areas, including through national development programs.

DRC as cross border initiative works in partnership with other stakeholders to strengthen the protective environment for refugees and to promote durable solution aiming to enable refugees to make a well –informed decision on the chosen durable solution.

Challenges related to Afghan and regional context:

- Ensuring women participation in a male dominated society
- Volatile security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Harassment of Refugee representatives
- Required ample time for planning and preparation

Recommendations and lessons learnt:

- Activate effective participation of all stakeholders from both sides of the border.
- Raise awareness among stakeholder from both sides of border on objectives and modalities of the cross border initiative.
- Regular information sharing and updates among key stakeholders, including information on potential areas for cross border activities.
- Lesson learnt shared of immediate after Go and See Visits (GSV) among stakeholder and action followed.
- More funds required for the initiative.

NRC/ICLA works with cases of legal affairs both for IDPs and returnees referred to them by cluster members. NRC representative added that denial of housing, land and property (HLP) rights as a big challenge to repatriation and reintegration. Most of the common HLP disputes in the Eastern region are related to inheritance, illegal squatting, illegal expropriation, usurpation, easement rights, ownership, user rights, preemption rights, Mahar documentation. HLP rights for displaced persons were discussed and explained as follow.

Refugees/Returnees:

- Family size increased when there are refugees, IDP or returnees and the land they had prior is no longer enough.
- Land is usually not registered and mostly it has been taken by neighbors (land occupation).
- Even when the land is registered there are often boundary disputes.
- Generally documents are lost or were burnt during war so that families cannot prove ownership.
- Some fake documents have been made by influential figures for land owned by refugees/returnees

IDPs in the place of displacement:

- Accessibility of housing
- Affordability of housing, leads to secondary displacement
- Lack of tenure security-especially protracted IDPs
- Discriminatory treatment of IDPs (freedom of movement)

IDPs mostly face similar problems as refugees or returnees in their places of origin and challenging HLP disputes are still huge in the eastern region. Mainly two types of cases are followed by NRC: 1) if defendant is government, 2) or when the defendant is a powerful individual.

In the LAS still IDPs/returnees are facing several problems in current sites such as the sites located far from urban areas where there are less employment opportunities, difficulty to be eligible as a beneficiary, nonfunctional commissions, lack of enough land, and often corruption in the process. The number of pending applications is very high and if the process started in Nangarhar there was no progress in Laghman and Kunar

For cross border referrals of HLP cases, NRC has signed MoU between the three bordering countries programs. Therefore HLP cases of refugees are referred to Afghanistan and vice versa including eastern region.

Recommendations:

- The LAS is not effective and should be reviewed by the government. Lessons learnt from the current LAS should be considered in the identification of new sites.
- Presidential decree 104 should be amended.
- Advocacy is needed both at regional and national levels considering most of the eviction cases. These issues affect large numbers of displaced communities and an organized and coordinated approach at national level is needed.
- The IDP policy implementation should be ensured including the chapter on HLP rights.
- Capacity building of stakeholders as well as adjudicating authorities regarding HLP rights should continue.

DACAAR provides WASH services for IDPs and returnees since long time here in Afghanistan. They work with cross cutting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Gender Age Diversity (GAD) and Environmental Markers (EM) and aim to ease the access to safe drinking water and improved basic health. Beside DRR and Hygiene Education (HE) messages, DACAAR conducts trainings and blather reservoir for emergency program and provides hygienic latrines to rural communities and disabled persons.

Their activities are in coordination with relevant ministries, local authorities and district's Shura, DACAAR has a MoU with line Ministry, and coordinate also with community, to mobilize the local population in the selection of sites for new water points and other activities. To ensure the sustainability of the projects, they train the care taker in pipe scheme operator and mechanic. They also establish Water Management Committee (WMC), as well as community base Operation and Maintenance system, and formal hand over of projects to community. Lastly, they follow up all Water Points (WPs) with visits and monitoring of Water Inspection Team (WIT) and coordination and cooperation with community, mechanic and pipe scheme operator.

Challenges in the region:

- Insecurity and kidnapping of aid workers (DACAAR staff).
- Remoteness and difficulties in access some areas.
- Unavailability of good quality project materials in Afghanistan.
- Dealing with Government Ministries and local authority as well high bureaucracy.
- Weak analysis system of field data and reporting information.
- Local and social conflict among the community.
- Rotation of staff in some area (Nangarhar).
- Work load and using of high budget than planned.

UNICEF gave a general update on WASH and progress made for IDPs and returnees at district level. Access to clean water has been increased to about 55380 rural people following completion of construction 26 new wells, 5 pipes schemes and rehabilitation of 200 wells in Kunar, Nangarhar, Nooristan provinces. As well as access to safe drinking water to about 9360 people by installation of 12 solar pipes schemes in Kunar, Lahgman and Nangarhar provinces.

Program challenges:

- Access to clean water and improved sanitation remains a serious challenge for the majority of people especially in rural areas and for the returnees from Pakistan and IDPs.
- Low partner capacity and departments have few qualified staff.
- Limited availability of demographic and basic services data.
- Shelling along borders with Pakistan affecting mainly Kunar and Nangarhar reducing humanitarian space and causing displacements.
- Unpredictable security situation.

SCI Nangarhar has updated participants from the financial crisis they face and strive since last several months to handover Community Based Education (CBEs) to DoEdu but yet not ready to officially take the handover of hundred community based education classes which include children from IDPs, returnees and host community.

Urgent needs:

- Deficiency of school teachers, buildings, and toilets
- Unavailability of safe drinking water in schools
- Distance of schools from communities

Long term needs:

- Health Facilities
- Strengthening of CBE Program
- Educational awareness in communities
- Capacity building program of teachers

Recommendations:

- Support the development of community-based schools
- Local integration plans must be developed by government
- Mobile toilets should be provided as well as tents, hand pumps, and first aid kits and fire extinguishers
- Training program for teachers has to be developed and conducted
- Education awareness through mass media must be provided
- Most vulnerable IDPs should be prioritized regardless of the duration of their displacement
- IDPs themselves has to be aware of their rights
- Long-term vocational training programs for IDPs should be provided
- Support IDPs to develop linkages to employers based on skills taught or existing skills
- Develop targeted livelihood programs for women
- Ensure that needs for emergency food and potable water are immediately met
- Develop awareness-raising programs around early and forced marriages
- Carry out comprehensive research program in Gender Based Violence (GBV) in IDP sites

IMC GBV SC was first established in September 2009. By the help of AIHRC, IMC, UNHCR, DoWA, WAW, UNAMA and other humanitarian organizations and it was decided that IMC would lead the GBV SC and AIHRC would co-chair. In 2013 IMC arranged a total of four batches of training to GBV SC members that covered 106 NGOs, INGOs, and UN staff. In 2014 IMC conducted “Multi Sectorial Response” training for GBV actors and did GBV mapping. The program covers all in general including returnees and IDPs.

Needs:

Allocation of fund from global cluster to DoWA/AIHRC after the NGO hand over

Fund for safe houses

Active involvement of police in cases

Recommendations:

- Trainings should be conducted to GBV key actors staff especially for those in the field such as CRPs, CWs, and so on.
- Referrals mechanisms should be strengthened via advocacy and awareness(Multi Sectorial)
- Duplication of activities should be avoided by different donors and NGOs
- Livelihood/ Medics/ Shelter support to GBV cases

WHO ER is one of the border and mountainous regions of Afghanistan and has nearly 1800 Km long border with KPK (Pak), Particularly Nangarhar and Kunar Provinces. WHO in cooperation with its IPs mostly deliver over all routine Health services in their area of responsibility for all Permanent Residents (Host Communities), IDPS, returnees, seasonal migrants/nomads... In Case of any outbreak or emergency, WHO and other members of Health cluster fill the gaps in terms of medicine and equipment.

Conclusion:

- ER is prone to natural hazards and conflicts as military operations, AGES intimidations, Tribal conflicts and cross boarder Mortars shelling resulting IDPs within the ER.
- Preference by returnees to stay ER particularly in Nangarhar province.
- High number of seasonal migrants compare with other regions.

Recommendations:

- Durable solution to reduce the number of IDPs.
- Provide extra support to the host communities.
- Disparity in population data (CSO, UN-Data and NIDs Data) should be solved to provide equal services.

TDH organization works for child protection particularly provides non-formal education for street working and working children. Beside this, provides hygienic materials, family visit of children, reintegrating children in to public schools, referring disable children to service providers.

Annex 5: Herat workshop

Refugees Workshop Minutes Herat

Discussion

The head of DRC introduced the goals and objectives with ACBAR Deputy Director and Advocacy Manager.

UNHCR presented the situation of returnees that they have been monitoring since 2002/13. They added that returnees are those Afghans who were registered in neighboring countries and returned to Afghanistan/ especially here in the western region through the facilitated voluntary repatriation operation. This doesn't include migrants, spontaneous returnees and deportees. In upper mentioned period, the total number is 284,237 persons of which 87% has returned from Iran and 13% from Pakistan. Based on ethnicity, about 41% of the returnees are Tajik, 37% Pashtun, 8% Hazara, 6% Baluch and remaining 8% others while both Tajik and Pashtun comprise 78% of the 100. The percentage cover western region in general.

Regarding their occupation/ skills and education level while in exile, 52% were engaged in some form of work while the remaining 48% has carried over as domestic workers, unskilled labors, and construction and agriculture workers. 28.5% had some academic or religious education out of which only 0.9% has found the way to universities or higher education.

On update to vulnerabilities, it was stated that returnees had some vulnerability in terms of medical sides such as long term medical illnesses, physical disability, and mental disability while other types include pregnancy of adult women, unaccompanied female and single parents.

Returnees' Monitoring Findings;

UNHCR carries over three phased monitoring over 12 months namely;

- Border monitoring with two page questionnaire covering questions to assure nature of return, problems encountered during the journey and special needs.
- Encashment Center Monitoring with three pages questionnaire covering questions in order to assure basic profile of returnees, life in Iran, info on destination, push and pull factor, expectations and special needs.
- Monitoring after return by phone, home visit and exit as following two stages to assure their satisfaction, availability in the place or their displacement.
- Using a predesigned questionnaire (13 pages, more than 80 questions that cover all aspects of life) and reintegration challenges of individuals or families.
- Focus group discussions with returnees at community level for community monitoring.

Push factor from country of asylum were namely stated as indirect pressure for return because of economic burden, increasing living cost, high taxation, school fees, limited job and/or livelihood opportunities, Amayesh fees. The problem of mistreatment by Iranian Authorities and fear of arrest and/or deportation was also highlighted. Moreover in Iran there is still the "no go area policy" and complicated procedure for movement. While pull factors in country of origin are relative improvement in security and less fear of persecution,

as well as better job and livelihood opportunities, land allocation scheme and/or UNHCR shelter program, improvement in health and education facilities, and UNHCR's assistance package and some other reasons.

As other findings; livelihood and employment were pointed as main concern from refugees while some returnees had prioritized shelter, food and land.

Shelter project of UNHCR is purposely allocated for returnees who need it the most and doesn't cover all returnees, was told in reply to question.

NRC developed its coordination with UN-Habitat and some other organizations regard to returnees HLP and shelter findings in terms of urgent needs, gaps, long term needs and finally recommendations.

In terms of urgent needs, returnees are actually in need to have temporal shelter as they mostly settled in relative houses or on the other hand live in rented houses which is definitely difficult for them without having access to job/livelihood opportunities. They need HLP right awareness and should have access to legal documentation such as reaching IDs, title deeds for ownership issues and passport for CRP holders as well as legal representation for legal disputes such as inheritance, money recovery and other belongings.

Gaps regarding returnees situation include weak or no implementation of HLP laws, in particular decree 104, and Law on Land Management (LoLM). Decree 104 is very complex and require in article 1 to have documentation to be able for land entitlement. But most of the refugees and returnees, don't have ID cards so cannot be entitled for land. And most of them have no access to places of origin due to security constraints and other issues. Moreover, a legal case should be filed in the defendant's place of origin based on current civil law and this is a very lengthy bureaucratic process (sometimes taking 4 to 5 years). At the same time due to imbalanced budget allocation to provinces it is not possible for the majority of returnees to go back to their places of origin (weak ownership registration system within the formal justice system, risky and cost full, and no implementation of IDP policy that actually ease the guidance and support returnees to somehow extant obtain the national ID).

As long term needs, returnees should have adequate housing, security of tenures and distribution of agricultural land for a sustainable livelihood.

It was recommended that humanitarian actors should advocate to reform relevant housing and land rights laws (decree 104), to add an amendment of LCD laws, for suitable and proper township for returnees, and for the creation of a special law covering HLP aspects of RRs life as well as to lobby for the ratification # 563 of 2012 to a comprehensive law to ease registration of ownership in government offices (Court, Arazy), and establishment of a regional referral system among (AFG-PAK-IRN).

Regarding shelter, NRC shelter coordinator stated that there are still returnees' families who yet haven't reached any shelter support and organizations also cannot access due to security reasons.

WFP focus its presentation on food and nutrition for returnees. They highlighted that an MoU was signed with IOM falling under WFP Strategic objective 1 to support returnees through the channel of IOM.

Beneficiaries for the immediate post-arrival assistance are families, PSNs as well as document claimants among the undocumented Afghans deported (or involuntarily removed) and other voluntarily (without deportation and forced removal returning undocumented Afghans with critical or serious vulnerability). Beneficiaries qualified for distribution of food assistance are the undocumented Afghans returning from Iran and Pakistan without proper planning, subject to joint assessment results/findings.

In 2013, 1500 households (10500 individuals) with an average of 7 persons per family were assisted by WFP with the total amount of 92.4 MT assorted food commodities, 15 hundred KC per day to each person. Actually, the package was not enough to feed each person but in 2014 WFP has changed its food basket by adding high energy biscuits that can fortify/energize the body for at least a couple of days.

The project for 2014 is ongoing without any major obstacle. So far 400 families were assisted unluckily with no High Energy Biscuit (HEB) due to pipeline grace but it was committed that they will hopefully cover some in 2015. The current basket of FI provides more than 21 hundred KC per day which is the required amount for a normal person.

As midterm plan, WFP is supporting returnees through its long term projects namely "asset creation activities". Returnees and communities will be supported with food including cash component and NFI items. The duration of the project is at least six months and it gives small job opportunities to returnees in rural areas. The second one is a three months project called "Economically Stressed Rural Population Activities" and is a general food distribution but also doing something for the communities such as "cleaning canal" in exchange of food... Beside this, WFP provide cash voucher supporting people including returnees who are economically stressed especially those in urban areas.

Above all, Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) is the project that supports nutrition side of the food security. Through this program, WFP targets acute malnourished children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating women with different commodities.

Regarding the gaps, WFP stated some questions whether the food, and HEB is really helpful to the refugees? If the food commodities are really appropriate (quality and quantity)? ...

WFP recommended to conducting study on the following areas to use the findings to bring a positive change in the life of returnees.

- 1) Returnees' food and nutrition's requirement.
- 2) Status of access to reliable food sources in the place of origin and in the host community (Iran/Pak).
- 3) Status of access to nutrition services and nutritious products in the place of origin and in the host community.
- 4) Food assistance to continue through activities such as simple labor jobs, vocational training, food stamps/ coupons, etc. for a longer period of time after return.
- 5) Nutrition support to the population at risk; children under 5 and pregnant and lactating woman and appropriate support.

The WFP food package for returnees is once per arrival to the homeland through WFP transit centers in Herat and other regions. The package includes documented and undocumented returnees.

WFP has an extensive monitoring mechanism being implemented through WFP monitoring assistance team and they haven't received any single case since July 2013 to date. But he agreed that monitoring is still challenging and all sides cannot be 100% covered.

WFP is piloting a project of cash in voucher for returnees to give them option what kind of food they would like. Apart from this, they are piloting another project "Purchase for Progress" or P4P together with 15 other countries. The project is allocated for northern region of Afghanistan and will be expanded to other provinces in the coming future if it has no negative impact on local market.

CRS updated the participants on returnees' short term and long term needs, gaps and recommendations.

Short term needs:

Materials and training to start basic agricultural and livestock activities started. Organizations should distribute seeds, animals, tools, fertilizer, and train refugee population in simple planting techniques, hygienic animal management... Vocational training are developed to provide income generation opportunities, including formal certification of returnees' skills learned in exile. The question of re-enrollment of children in educational services was asked. There are cases of students with MoEdu (because of no official docs) how to enroll and keep on their education. And, the issue of documentation like students ID, the school records was raised as an important one.

Long term needs and recommendations:

Providing sustainable job opportunities for returnees is a priority for the future. Trainings on advanced agricultural practices should be provided to increase yields and profit, such as pest and disease management, greenhouses, seeds multiplication, improved soil and water management techniques, value addition activities. Locally-appropriate post-harvest storage technologies should be introduced to enable farmers to sell their products with good prices. Improved varieties of seeds and livestock along with access to veterinary services should also be introduced. Moreover, access to microfinance services and/or savings boxes, particularly for women is important. To make their skills further improved and productive refugees and returnees need income. Training on developing sustainable enterprises is a key for durable solutions (market analysis, developing business and marketing plans, understanding profit and loss, and etc.)

Gaps:

- Insufficient coordination among UN, NGOs and government that results the duplication of efforts.
- Tendency of donors and government to fund short-term projects which do not result in sustainable change in livelihoods/incomes of returnees.
- Inaccurate registration of returnees by responsible national and international organizations resulting in problems to identify and select beneficiaries (returnees).
- Lack of solution to the problem of land access for returnees' relocation to urban areas instead of their place of origin.

Recommendations:

- To support both short and long-term interventions for returnees until a sustainable livelihood and durable solution.

- To focus interventions on the development of skills and assets making returnees and families self-sufficient (such as training in improved agricultural production, animal husbandry, and vocational skills).
- To introduce microfinance and savings interventions as pillars for having a sustainable livelihood.
- To provide literacy training to women alongside vocational training to support women's enterprise development.
- To strengthen the capacity of Afghan service providers such as DoWA, DoRR, DoLSA in order to provide high quality services to returnees in a better way.
- To standardize government assistance packages to support returnee livelihoods

UNHCR highlighted that protection concerns similarly affects returnees what affecting other communities. Currently any discrimination was reported to UNCHR. All communities including returnees have equal access to resources, social services and justice system, no tension to communities or returnees while returned to the places of origin, move freely and reside where they want. But aside to the positive progress, still there are short term/long term needs and gaps in terms of protection.

Insecurity, disputes, intimidation and extortions, mines/UXOs affecting physical safety and wellbeing of returnees and many not being able to return to the places of origin. Therefore, improving security and mine clearance and mine education is the key recommendations.

Uncertainty about the future and limbo in the political situation could be called a gap and needs constant support of the international community.

Criminality and weak rule of law and justice system including corruption, inefficiency and lack of capacity, lack of confidence on law enforcement are the gaps that could be covered by strengthening and building capacity of law enforcement bodies.

In regard of obtaining legal documentation, humanitarian agencies should advocate for returnees' rights and minimize current bureaucratic obstacles for getting national ID card and in the meantime to facilitate providing National ID Card. Concerning to LAS, to advocate revision and implementation of Decree 104 is highly needed.

For lack of shelter and hiking living condition, providing shelter to needy people should be continued until they reach a dignified and stable life.

Limited job and livelihood opportunities compelling returnees into negative coping mechanisms like child labor or secondary displacement so the recommendation will be exploring possibilities of coping mechanism in different sectors and promote self-reliance and reduce dependency.

Different forms of violence against women including harmful cultural practices and limited participation of women in affairs of their communities is another huge gape. Therefore, strengthening and expansion of GBV services for GBV survivors and referral mechanisms at community level is recommendation at this stage what could be gained through conducting trainings, capacity building and advocacy to enhance women status and participation in affairs of their community including formation of female shuras

To overcome lack of support mechanism and community support in particular to most vulnerable individuals or families, the community support system ought to be strengthened and persons with specific need must get identified by the earliest.

The capacity of government Department (protection actors) should be developed for preventing, responding, monitoring and reporting all protection issues.

Points for 21st Aug refugees' workshop-Kabul;

As an advocacy messages to feed Kabul refugee workshop, it was agreed that following points could be raised and wisely discussed with other participants.

- The issue of documentation in particular females' access to obtain IDs as root of the benefit, to register for legal documents, to vote and to participate in communities and share their inputs, the issue of females' access is either possible through centralizing the process instead pushing it to the places of origin what should get raised with humanitarian actors as one of a huge advocacy point. Further to this, it would be great to see with Pakistani and Iranian colleagues how to facilitate part of registration in terms of return.
- Establishing a comprehensive referral system how to assist undocumented people claiming their rights in Iran and Pakistan same as we have dispute resolution committee comprised of Afghan, Iran and KPK representatives.
- As known, insecurity and limited access is the cross-cutting issue and bad insecurity directly have distinct economic outcomes in terms of food, shelter, and others, the deteriorating security situations at current stage has shocked humanitarian activities and NGOs are going to pull back what is the point to come up against.
- As a recommendation to NFI sector, agencies providing NFI support should keep in touch with WFP to assure what the food ration is and what NFI tools are fixed with and NFI kits should cover real cooking parts.
- Regard to education, the point of children education, certificates, and the school records is major advocacy point to be raised with ICRI in order to ease the process in particular to those who are missing, as its part of the protection as well as livelihood so all students ought to reach their rights and should their education.
- Returnees particularly women, should get/be early aware of the living conditions in here and there in Iran as many of them are not satisfied by their return but it will be by no mean to discourage them of the return.
- Proper repatriation and reintegration system should be in ground to the people who are interested to return which preventing rising up gaps and problems.
- Capacity building of Ministries but no cumulative benefit or result.
- Many organizations are involved in livelihood and taking the livelihood as a major sector among others, agencies should have a separate coordination meeting on monthly or quarterly basis.
- Establishing regional advocacy bodies in line with government to advocate for refugees/returnees in terms of all legal issues at abroad level and here in Afghanistan. Beside this, the bodies should provide guidance, efforts and highlight the international standards for refugees/returnees.

Annex 6: Refugees' workshop in Kandahar

Refugees Workshop Minutes Kandahar 13th August 2014

Discussion

DRC presented its livelihood program including the capabilities assets (both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with, recovers from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future. DRC's livelihood program strategies includes vocational trainings, backyard poultry farming, business grants for SMEs, apprenticeships, and cash for work both for IDPs and returnees. Regarding DRC ongoing programs, they established 3 vocational training (VT) centers in IDP sites and 2 VT centers for women and one for men.

The selection process for VTs is market assessment. They first do the identification of the market demanded skills for the vocational trainings, then prepare list of the frequently used vocation in Kandahar and through sharing the list with community DRC prepare a shortlist for the higher earning vocations. At the last stage, they select a vocation that provides them with good income. Trainees are selected through registration. DRC has separate selection criteria to highlight the ones who are most in need, including both IDPs and returnees.

Livelihood opportunities for intervention in Kandahar do support the available resources of human capitals, natural capitals, financial capitals and physical capitals.

In terms of human capitals, refugees and IDPs in Kandahar and the South region have labor capacity (day wages) with no any other sources of income. But they lack education capacity and owe limited skills.

In terms of natural capitals, refugees and IDPs in the region are landless and have access to common property resources. Most of them live in open areas.

In terms of financial capitals, they work on daily bases with low wages. They cannot support their family and in the meantime they have no access to credit or financial resources.

In terms of physical capitals, they have only access to poor water supply, poor housing and poor communication.

In terms of social capitals, returnees or IDPs have a low social status in particular women with restricted or conservative environment and they are missing links with relatives.

Regarding IDPs/Returnees human resource arrangement, they are also lacking natural and financial capitals and have no education or technical skills. So they are often entirely dependent on one male family members' daily wages to live. While women have to take care of all the rest. Livelihood opportunities for the urban population (surrounding suburbs) in Kandahar in terms of capital assets are land, water supply, labor capacity while available opportunities are small farming, poultry products, dairy product...

In the center of the cities, the lack of capital assets is mostly: no availability of land, not enough water supply and lack of labor capacities and livelihood opportunities. Only vocational training and SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprise) programs sometimes available.

Challenges:

Insecurity is very high in Kandahar province and the region. Apart from this, poor performance of partner organizations, low interest of the communities to contribute in the projects, short duration of the projects, cultural restrictions are other important challenges. It is for example really hard to find a male or female trainer with both education and technical skill. Also there is a serious gap in terms of accuracy of data and assessment. In some cases, IDPs are living scattered and it is hard to find and help them.

As a recommendation, DRC stated that it's very important for NGOs involved in livelihood to take advantage of the available local resources and support/guide IDPs and returnees toward a sustainable livelihood progress.

WFP: Aside to other core activities, WFP worked for in emergency since few years and covering nearly 45 districts of the southern region. They provide the same ration basket to natural disaster affected population, conflict IDPs and returnees. Beside this WFP provides food packages under the name of school feeding, food for trainees in vocational trainings, and food for communities. They also work for asset creation. On nutrition side, they provide food packages to acute malnourished children and lactating women.

WFP is implementing and cooperating with partners UNCHR, IOM and DoRR in terms of IDPs/returnees, AURC, ALO, OHA, ANNCC, HAP, IOM and ANDMA Disaster program partners, AHDS, ACTED, HADAAF, SAF/MoPH nutrition partners, IRA and DoE school feeding partners, IRA, OHA, AURC, DoLSA, DoEco and ARC as ESP-R-U program (Economically Stressed Population) partners and ARC and DRRD Department as FFA (Food For Assets) implementing partners.

Challenges:

- Access to areas (transferring WFP aids with security & escort) what is almost clashing WFP mandate.
- Low CPs/IPs capacity including (Govt, I/NGOs).
- Lack of proper support and coordination from Government
- Pipeline breaks.

NRC focused on NFI rationale and highlighted the emergency events where beneficiaries have lost or are without non-food items. NRC emergency program has the potential to provide NFI kits to help replace the lost items. In cases where local markets cannot match quantity and quality of goods required, or for severely disabled or elderly beneficiaries who cannot easily access markets, NFI distributions will be the preferred intervention.

In cases where markets are functional, and the key needs are for food or medicine, shelter or fuel not included in NFI kits, the larger cash transfers will be preferred. NRC provides NFI Kit contains 18 types of items that cover the necessary parts. Beside this, NRC emergency teams also purchase supplementary relief items to add where necessary to distribute standard NFI kits in order to tailor distributions to the actual needs of specific households.

It is expected that supplementary items will not be required in each case, and in order to tailor-make distributions to the number of individuals in a family and thus respond more effectively to actual needs, the exact number of supplementary items required will be assessed individually in each case, to retain flexibility, rather than adding a standard amount to each NFI kit.

Female Hygiene Kits includes

NRC emergency teams also purchase female hygiene kits to add where necessary but it's expected that female hygiene kits would not be required in each household case. In order to recover and make distributions to the number of individuals in a family and thus respond more effectively to actual needs, the exact number of female hygiene kits required is assessed individually in each case.

Cash for Work Rationale

The main objective of CFW is to provide short-term income for beneficiaries. A secondary benefit is to create a positive community impact through the project. The specific aim through CFW is to assist households in overcoming the shock of an emergency event, by increasing household options to meet their immediate food and non-food needs. As a result of the shock the following may have occurred: loss of assets, temporary food insecurity, disruption of labor opportunities and/or livelihoods and inability to cover daily costs.

CFW will be utilized where vital community infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed by disaster, and where affected households are able to provide labor. For the most vulnerable households, without any members able to engage in labour for physical reasons (e.g. disabled or elderly), cultural reasons (e.g. female-headed), then unconditional cash transfers will be used instead.

On average, the amount paid for CFW is expected to be 8000 AFS per beneficiary representing the equivalent to one month's average wage for daily labor (350 AFS per day for 20 days). This amount is calculated as appropriate to meet immediate food and non-food needs, and it includes provision for food, non-food items, health and education with an additional amount to assist in recovery through the paying off of debt or purchase of livelihood inputs. The cash amount being paid per day has been set at the current average rate for unskilled labor in target areas.

Unconditional Transfer (UCT)

UCT distributions can provide an effective, flexible and efficient way to enable beneficiaries to meet a range of emergency needs, while retaining the dignity of choice. The specific aim is to assist households in overcoming the shock of an emergency event, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms, by increasing household purchasing power to meet immediate food and non-food needs.

There will be two different levels of cash transfer;

1. Cash along with NFI Kit

Where households are also receiving distribution of NFI Kit, and where appropriate and justified, the UCT with amount of 8000 AFS is proposed to cover one month's average household expenditure on food, and contribute towards health and education needs as well as to provide an additional amount for the paying off debt or purchase of livelihood inputs, intended to invest in increasing household resilience without compromising their ability to meet basic needs.

2. Cash W/o NFI Kit

Unconditional Cash Transfer- UCT;

In cases where an NFI Kit is not distributed, an increased UCT amount of 12000 AFS is proposed based on amounts to cover one month's expenditure on food, and contribute towards health and education, to provide an amount for the paying off debt or purchase of livelihood inputs, and with additional funds for the replacement of assets or meeting other non-food needs.

CFS Rationale-

The primary goal of CFS is to ensure adequate shelter for displaced households, whose homes have been destroyed, especially during winter, where extreme temperatures can be

life-threatening and traditional distributions of tents and shelter kits have proved insufficient. Beneficiaries for the CFS project will be identified through the NRC assessment process with the criteria of having either a complete loss of houses, or significant damage to their houses rendering them uninhabitable.

The beneficiaries will be provided with cash payments in staged installments to enable them to procure shelter materials in the local markets and (for instance in Female Headed Households) to employ skilled labor if needed.

NRC provides two types of amount for CFS-

- A. Cash payment of- 50,000AFS for shelter materials and will be given to households most in need and unable to contribute financially to the reconstruction.
- B. Cash payment of- 75,000AFS for shelter materials that will be given to households for the most vulnerable who are unable to contribute financially to the reconstruction in particular women headed families

General needs, gaps and recommendation

Short term needs: Accurate data collection of returnees' for better access and response, providing UCT unconditional transfer, NFI kits including (household items, hygiene kits, emergency shelter kits, and winter kits), and food items. The emergency aids should be based on needs assessment, coordination with relevant actors/agencies, providing chances for timely transferring of aids and its distribution, repatriation, and providing potable water.

Long term needs:

Returnees need to have permanent shelter, access to job opportunities, access to market, access to medical facilities, access to vocational and educational centers. Institutions should also respect to the culture of communities. Projects have to be timely implemented, taking advantage of the lessons learnt to avoid repetition (business grants, loans with less or without interest, sustainable socio-economic progress, apprenticeships and including disables and marginalized groups to the agenda).

Gaps:

Lack of secondary transportation for IDPs/Returnees, as well as continued food assistance following to first three month. Lack of accurate data assessment, weak communication between stakeholders, unstable security situation, lack of access to impacted communities,. Also lack of education, lack of skilled and educated trainers for VTs, lack of community income sources, lack of communities trust on NGOs and problem in dispatching of materials to communities in remote are the more important gaps that need to be filled.

Recommendations:

- Adding disables to the agenda of all programs as priority 1,
- Providing good quality services with evaluation for future sustainability,
- Providing market accessibility,
- Providing official settlement to returnees who has no land, potential repatriation to the place of origin,
- Raising general awareness to communities regarding the projects going to be implemented in place of residence,
- Providing timely response to stakeholders,
- Monitoring and evaluation should be developed and improved for all projects
- Coordination between stakeholders must be systematic and actors have to share information and to work together.

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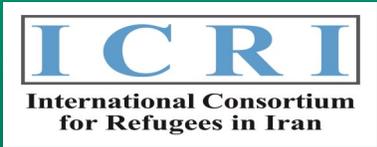
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