Sayara Research for DRC-DDG

Conflict Analysis

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Introduction

This report, based on a conflict analysis conducted by Sayara Research and commissioned by the Danish Refugee Committee and Danish Demining Group, provides a systematic exploration of conflict dynamics affecting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and recent returnees in and around 10 "spoke sites" in Herat and Kabul. The analysis contributes to DRC-DDG's ongoing project, with funding from Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to establish urban service provision hubs, building on resources that already exist within government agencies and displaced communities. The hubs will provide integrated support services, including humanitarian, legal, psychosocial, economic and conflict mitigation. The project will also lay the foundation for a longer term approach that aims at increasing stability and integration at origin and along migration routes, before international borders are crossed.

This conflict analysis examines the causes, dynamics, and actors involved in conflict in identified areas of refugee return and IDP settlement (spoke sites). It also reflects on the project's theory of change (ToC) and provides recommendations for improving and adjusting the current protect to the extent possible to inform future project phases.

1.2. Displacement Context

An estimated 1.2 million Afghans are displaced internally and 2.6 million remain abroad, mainly in Iran and Pakistan.[1] Today, violent conflict persists in Afghanistan, displacing 580,000 individuals in 2016 alone and showing little evidence of attenuation in the near future.[2] As the conflict has evolved, so too have displacement dynamics. Protracted displacement is increasingly common, as new generations are born into IDP camps amid fading hopes for reintegration. Meanwhile, long-term assistance remains insufficient. Access to healthcare, education, land and housing, water and sanitation, and livelihood opportunities are key priorities, though IDPs' complex legal and residential status often disenables the establishment of permanent solutions.

External pressures from Iran and Pakistan are also shifting the displacement environment in Afghanistan. In 2016, an estimated 400,000 individuals returned from Iran and 600,000 from Pakistan, many of whom are unable to or disinterested in returning to their places of origin, having grown up in urban or semi-urban contexts abroad. The 2016 rate of repatriation from Pakistan represented a six-fold increase from the previous year.[3] This trend, along with the heightened strain it puts on already limited humanitarian resources, will likely continue through 2017. UNHCR will continue its cash grant program for voluntary returnees, though at a lower level than 2016. Meanwhile, Pakistan has extended refugee status to Afghans only through December. As of March, rates of return from Pakistan were 3% higher than they were the same quarter last year.[4]

1.3. Key Findings: Conflict Dynamics

- **Long-term structural inequities** combined with an unfavorable short-term outlook undermine community resilience. **Proximate causes** of tension vary from site to site, ranging from the availability of drugs and firearms to unemployment, debt, competition over aid and natural

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[1] Afghanistan Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 56. 01-30 September 2015. UNOCHA online.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Hashim, Asad. "Afghan refugees return home amid crackdown." Aljazeera. 26 February 2017. Online.

[4] Afghanistan Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 56. 01-30 September 2015. UNOCHA online.

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resources, and lack of privacy. Actual **triggers** of conflict include petty crime, the inability to pay back debt, and settlement behaviors that challenge land tenure arrangements.

- Spoke site residents often feel **targeted or stereotyped as criminals**, though long term residents describe a slow but organic process of trust building with local law enforcement, mainly prolonged exposure to one another. For the most part, **host communities** did not convey animosity toward IDPs, though in cases where violence had taken place, research suggests that IDPs were either responsible or perceived to be responsible.

- In terms of **governance**, spoke site residents frequently lack formal representation, relevant language skills and official documents. In addition, IDPs' social and physical isolation limits their pathways for civic engagement and constrains the ability for government and other service providers to comprehensively understand their needs. Pervasive mistrust and fear of exposure or expulsion contribute to both real and perceived exclusion from good governance.

- On rare occasions, it appears that **local elites (outside of spoke sites) intentionally manipulate power structures** within camps, resulting in unequal representation among shura members and escalations in ethnic or tribal tensions. In such cases, it is possible that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms more frequently fail to result in equitable or sustaining solutions.

- Conflict over **housing, land and property (HLP)** varies substantially throughout the spoke sites though, overall, represents one of the greatest challenges facing IDPs. Sites located on private land experience the greatest levels of instability. This has manifested in severely inadequate infrastructure, low levels of community investment, the inability for residents to picture or plan for a future, and psychological trauma resulting from the everyday possibility of eviction.

- **Poverty, unemployment, and vulnerable livelihoods** are perhaps the greatest drivers of instability in spoke site communities. Proximity to urban centers, in theory, should facilitate market access and employment opportunities. However, many IDPs lack the capital to start even small-scale enterprises (e.g. carpentry) or lack the skillset (e.g. masonry or construction) for available work. It should be noted that individuals displaced from rural areas and those displaced from urban settings have distinct livelihood skills and experiences and thus varying support needs.

- The **drug trade in** spoke sites affects communities in two ways: 1) within spoke sites, addiction is rising, especially among youth, challenging social cohesion and straining resources both at the familial and community level; 2) drug trafficking is contributing to crime (namely, theft), which increases tensions with local law enforcement and erodes trust with host communities. Research suggests that these issues are intensifying, thus potentially exacerbating tensions between communities and local law enforcement.

- **Gendered issues** are exacerbated by the cramped conditions of spoke-sites and the high rates of unemployment, which mean that tensions or conflicts related to women's spaces and the public gaze are more common, as are disputes between spouses themselves. Most women have lost the social capital and the networks they had previous to their displacement and many spend significant time in isolation.

- The **international community** is seen in a generally favourable light but has contributed to local instability and conflict in two ways, first by distributing conflict insensitive aid and second, by enabling aid dependency. Aid organizations must operate with a clear understanding of power dynamics within and among communities, and the extent to which shuras are seen as trustworthy and representative. Additionally, given an unpredictable funding environment and the protracted nature of displacement, the more communities come to rely on and expect aid, the more vulnerable and less resilient they become.

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- **Water** is one of the most concrete triggers of conflict in the spoke sites and contributes to seasonality in conflict dynamics. In the summer, when demand is high, queues are long, and people are concentrated around what few pumps are functional, small tensions can ignite into violence. Tensions also rise when families refuse or are unable to contribute to repair funds.

- **Population** changes are related to perceptions of security in complex ways. All camps continue to experience high levels of natural growth. Meanwhile rates of in-migration due to conflict and repatriation vary and are difficult to reliably estimate. In some cases, it appears that larger influxes of people are associated with eroding levels of trust between neighbors. In other cases, where populations appear to be more established, newcomers might be mistrusted simply because they are less common. Targeted research is needed to better understand how population change will influence dynamics of trust, influence, and decision-making.

- **Boredom** as the result of underemployment and isolation is an underlying and under-addressed driver of tension. This is particularly the case for men (particularly young men), who are more likely to congregate in public spaces, such as water pumps, markets, or roadsides, and who lack professional or civic responsibilities. Support for livelihoods training and civil society development are keys to enhancing senses of purpose and reducing boredom.

1.4. Third Party Neutral (TPN) Mediation Trainings

Research found that TPN mediation is a relevant and compelling skill in the context of spoke site conflict dynamics. The greatest successes of the training included conceptualizing the main differences between mediation and arbitration practices, role playing mediation scenarios, and exposing a diverse set of participants to one another. At the same time while participants learned about mediation in an encouraging and effective manner, and unanimously found it applicable to their lives, they did not necessarily have concrete ideas about how or in which specific situations they will use their new skills. Follow-up will therefore be necessary to monitor and potentially facilitate mediation exercises.

DRC-DDG is clearly conscientious of the need to present training information in a balanced, culturally appropriate, and realistic manner and has adopted a highly developed, conflict-sensitive approach to its work. At the same time, care should also be taken to ensure delivery of trainings in a highly conflict-sensitive manner, ensuring that mediation is presented as an additional, rather than then *better*, tool for addressing conflict. Mediation must be presented as an option and not a replacement. Research suggests this is a point for follow-up and potential improvement in future trainings.

1.5. Recommendations

- In response to high levels of interest in TPN mediation trainings, and to address to underlying issues of boredom and civic disengagement, **DRC-DDG should expand their work on conflict mediation in spoke sites.** TPN mediation could serve not just as a conflict resolution tool in and of itself, but also as a platform for fostering dialogue, monitoring community needs and behaviors, and as a forum for discussing grievances that host community and IDP members identify independently.

- DRC-DDG should also **consider reframing target beneficiaries to include both spoke and host community members.** Research has identified the added value in providing services to multiple groups of beneficiaries simultaneously and in safe, shared spaces. Facilitating positive exposure between host community members and spoke site residents by addressing their shared needs would also help to foster understanding and empathy. Thus, broadening the definition of Hub site beneficiaries would not only reach more people but would increase the effectiveness and sustainability of all project activities. Because IDP sites occupy a uniquely vulnerable population, which is often reticent to initiate change for fear of negative exposure or a lack of recourse, DRC-

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DDG should identify creative ways to incentivize participation in project activities. Most importantly, DRC-DDG should work with the communities themselves to identify potential project activities and use local sources of influence and trust to conduct outreach and facilitate participation.

- Given the complex social and ethnic dynamics found in spoke sites, DRC-DDG field staff should work to **systematically identify the community actors and influencers with whom to coordinate project activities, facilitate transparency, and obtain information**. Sayara recommends that DRC-DDG consider investing in a dedicated team to conduct routine site visits, simply to monitor progress and build a nuanced rapport. Another option is to facilitate town hall-style meetings, which would help to understand who does what within the communities. As noted above, TPN Mediation and Dialogue sessions could also provide this platform. Findings from these visits should be incorporated into monitoring and planning tools.

- DRC-DDG should be proactive to **identify partners and stakeholders with whom to coordinate information collection and sharing.** This will improve their depth of knowledge regarding the pace and scale of returns and evolving community needs, and will increase the efficiency of tracking and service provision.

- To **monitor spoke site activities and ensure project efficiency**, DRC-DDG should consider the following: 1) conduct a census of all ministries, NGOs, and international agencies that work in each spoke site by surveying community members and triangulating with survey findings with external information (i.e. from MoRR, UNHCR, or IDP working groups); 2) map changes to local stakeholder networks over time, possibly using social network analysis; 3) help facilitate and TPN mediation trainings or exercises on a routine basis, documenting both changing levels of mediation capacity and evolving trends in conflict dynamics; 4) conduct a baseline survey to understand current levels of need and access to the services provided at Hub sites, followed by a formative evaluation in one year to explore how and how much Hub sites are being used and what adjustments might increase their effectiveness; 5) establish targets and strategies for reaching different age groups and genders, acknowledging that different types of beneficiaries engage in conflict in distinct ways.

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2.BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. DRC-DDG Hub Project

DRC-DDG, with funding from Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), is implementing a project which aims to establish urban service provision hubs, building on resources that already exist within government agencies and displaced communities. The hubs will provide integrated support services including humanitarian, legal, psychosocial, economic, and conflict mitigation. The project will lay the foundation for a longer term approach that aims at increasing stability and integration at origin and along migration routes, before international borders are crossed.

Two hubs will be established, one in Kabul and one in Herat. DRC-DDG anticipates that both hubs in Kabul and Herat will cater to both internally displaced populations and returnees, as well as a variety of ethnic groups. From the 'hub' locations, DRC-DDG plans to provide mobile services to displaced communities in the areas in which they choose to settle. Following several months of operation, DRC-DDG will analyze the communities in which displaced individuals settle, and set up longer term services in peri-urban areas, spoke sites, for communities that are more vulnerable. These longer term reintegration support services are 'spoke' services, linked to the urban multi-service hubs through mobile clinics.

The short term theory of change for the project is: if a multi-sector urban hub is established in cooperation with authorities, then vulnerable displaced populations will have improved access to services, leading to improved trust in the center, which sets groundwork for a longer term integrated approach to displacement. The long-term theory of change addresses drivers of instability through development of inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms, support for formal and informal rule of law, and development of livelihood opportunities, with an intended impact of lowering rates of conflict, improved perceptions of security providers and governance, and increased resilience and reintegration.

2.2.   Conflict Analysis Objectives

A systematic conflict analysis is a central component of DRC-DDG's project and the organization's commitment to the principles of *do no harm* and conflict sensitivity. Conflict analyses study the profile, causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict. In doing so, they help development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors to gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and their role in that conflict. This is with the aim of making projects conflict sensitive, i.e. ensuring that they do not do harm or contribute to further conflict or tension and instead can contribute to reducing conflict and enhancing social cohesion through their activities.

In order to speak to the context of DRC-DDG's Hub projects, this conflict analysis focuses on areas of return/temporary or permanent resettlement and the potentially wider impacts of the return process on local and regional conflict and security dynamics. The specific research objectives of this conflict analysis were as follows:

1. Identify and analyze existing causes and drivers of conflict;

2. Assess the potential impact of returns on the areas of return/temporary or permanent resettlement;

3. Identify conflict risks related to the influx of returnees

Similarly, the intended outputs of this study were to:

1. Recommend mitigation measures and opportunities for peaceful reintegration, possibilities of mediation opportunities over land, property, assistance? and natural resource disputes;

2. Establish a mechanism to monitor conflict dynamics in the spoke sites;

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3. Identify recommendations for improving or adjusting the current project to the extent possible to inform future project phase.

4. Discuss ways to engage in dialogue on the root causes of conflict with the project's target group of displacement-affected communities made up of IDPs, returnees, and host communities.

2.3. Location and Timing of Research

Sayara used DRC-DDG's spoke and hub model to collaboratively identify research locations. Spoke sites were selected for fieldwork purposively in order to facilitate access and ensure a variety of site conditions and residents. Fieldwork took place between February and March, 2017.

#	Name of Camp	Provinces of Origin	Host Community
	Kabul		
1	Charah-e-Qambar	Helmand, Urozgan and Nangarahar	Blocks of Qambar
2	Regression Camp No 1 Pule Company	Helmand, Urozgan, Kunduz and Nangarahar	Pule Company
3	Qala-e-Wahed Camp Koti Sangi	Nangarahar, Parwan and Kunduz	Qala-e-Wahed
4	Bagrami Camp	Helmand, Urozgan, Baghlan, Logar and Badakhshan	Bagrami
5	Otkay Camp Dehsabz	Parwan, Logar and Maidan wardak	Dehsabz
	Herat		
1	Camp Shaydai	Badghis, Faryab, Helmand, Ghor	Qaria e Afsaran
2	Camp Manarah (1)	Badghis, Faryab, Kandahar	Qaria e Wardakha
3	Camp Manarah (2)	Badghis, Faryab, Helmand	Qaria e Wardakha
4	Camp Karizak	Ghor, Badghis	Qariay e Karizak
5	Camp Shogofan	Daikondi, Wardak, Bamyan	Qaria e Kalata

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3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Analytical Framework

For this conflict analysis, Sayara has chosen to use the following definition of "conflict," as articulated by the UK Department for International Development (DFID)[5]. This definition better represents the ongoing and observed dynamics at spokes sites than does a narrow understanding of conflict as violent. It also views conflict as an opportunity for social change, which is consistent with many of Sayara's recommendations for how DRC-DDG can incorporate conflict analysis findings into future programming:

> Conflict exists in all societies at all times and need not necessarily be negative or destructive. Conflict is the pursuit of contrary or seemingly incompatible interests – whether between individuals, groups or countries. It can be a major force for positive social change. In states with good governance, strong civil society and robust political and social systems where human rights are protected, conflicting interests are managed and ways found for groups to pursue their goals peacefully. Where there is poor governance, however, grievances, disillusionment, become violent.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection for this conflict analysis was iterative and implemented in coordination with DRC-DDG's TPN Conflict Mediation trainings, which were ongoing throughout fieldwork and was comprised of six different research methods, as outlined below.

Desk Review

Sayara's desk review was ongoing throughout project implementation and responsive to evolving research needs, particularly those identified in feedback from TPN mediation trainings and collaboration with DRC-DDG's AVR advisor. The desk review thus informed the study's profile analysis, including documented economic, political, environmental, and security contexts and trends. It also provided the theoretical foundation for understanding the potential impacts of the return process on peri-urban areas, the dynamics of conflict in host and returnee communities, and lessons-learned from similar interventions. Findings from the desk review, particularly examples of similar interventions, are included in the discussion and recommendations sections below.

Preliminary Site Visits

In response to the project's condensed timeframe and DRC-DDG's request for immediate recommendations from the field, Sayara temporarily mobilized research teams in both Herat and Kabul to conduct preliminary site visits. Researchers visited Shaydai and Nawabad in Herat, and Puli Company and Charahi Qamber (1) in Kabul. Researchers were tasked with identifying local influencers, sources of trusted information and conflict mediation, available conflict mediation mechanisms, as well as any existing sources of tension. Notes from preliminary fieldwork informed Sayara's research design as well as our Recommendations for TPN Conflict Mediation Recruitment.

Stakeholder Mapping and Descriptive Social Network Analysis

Sayara conducted stakeholder mapping using findings from the desk review and in collaboration with local key informants. This method helped inform Sayara's understanding of relevant actors involved

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[5] *Preventing Violent Conflict*. DFID Policy Paper, May 2007. Online. http://www.conflictrecovery.org/bin/dfid-conflictprevention-may07.pdf

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at all scales of IDP service provision, intervention, and conflict mediation. Stakeholder mapping was included in all participant-observation and FGD guides in the form of a question module pertaining to participants' knowledge of and attitudes toward various types of stakeholders, including (I)NGOs, CSOs, UN agencies, and government ministries. The guides were not designed to take a full stakeholder inventory, but rather to gather community perceptions of international/national involvement. Sayara then collated this data into a matrix and then visualized the stakeholder network using the Statnet and iGraph packages in R.

Focus Group Discussions with Shura members

Sayara's past and preliminary fieldwork identified Shuras as main mechanisms for mediating conflict within IDP and host communities. Because Shura members deal directly with conflict resolution, because they exert strong influence over attitudes and information flow within villages/camps, and because their approval is essential for the success of any fieldwork mission, Sayara conducted the first round of FGDs with them (5 FGDs per site).

Participatory Mapping

Sayara facilitated participatory mapping exercises in order to use local knowledge to inform a social and spatial understanding of local conflict dynamics. Sayara engaged Shura members from both host and spoke sites in a total of 10 participatory mapping activities (in 5 spoke sites and corresponding host communities in each province).

Both the maps themselves as well as the social process of making them helped Sayara to identify key spatial characteristics of: perceptions of danger/safety; community mobility and patterns of movement; access to services; and key centers of information exchange and/or conflict mediation. Findings from these exercises essentially visualized findings from FGDs and have been incorporated into the conflict analysis as supportive evidence. Overall, the exercises were less successful in eliciting discussions about the root causes of conflict than simply identifying where conflicts take place (e.g. shops, markets, fields, roads, etc.). However, as discussed in the Recommendations section below, future rounds of monitoring and evaluation could build on the findings in this conflict analysis, using participatory mapping to track conflict over time, to help communities and DRC-DDG plan for interventions, or serve as a platform for mediation discussions.

Participant-Observation IDIs

Participant-observations are an ethnographic research method that enables researchers to study and describe events, behaviors, and artifacts *in context*. Researchers made notes of the places they went (or discussed) and what occurred at each stop. Important sites typically included mosques, water sources, camp boundaries, or sites of past conflict. Rather than having a structured question guide, researchers documented their observations and interactions in detail, including: key issues, topics, or events they witness; gender, age, or other demographic patterns in behavior or attitudes; types of conflicts discussed or witnessed, along with any corresponding resolution measures.

Each of the two provincial supervisors also attended one week of DRC-DDG's TPN Mediation trainings in Herat and Kabul, serving as both participants and researchers in those sessions. Supervisors then participated in exit interviews with Sayara's field coordinator and implemented small-scale evaluation surveys with other participants (around 15 in each province.) This follow-up research was conducted in a separate, second phase of fieldwork that Sayara and DRC-DDG coordinated iteratively, in response to findings and gaps identified in the first round.

KIIs with national and regional experts

Sayara's team leader and field coordinator led KIIs with national and regional stakeholders throughout the research process. To triangulate findings and gain a better understanding of the

institutional and political environment surrounding IDP/returnee experiences, Sayara conducted interviews with UNHCR, IOM, MoRR, independent consultants, and participated in Govern5Afg's Open Dialogue on Migration Governance in early March, 2017. Findings from KIIs are incorporated into the discussion and recommendations sections in this report.

3.3. Limitations of Methodology

Fieldwork for this study was conducted in 10 spoke sites and 10 host communities throughout Herat and Kabul, with the aim of exploring as many different conflict dynamics as possible. With limited time and resources the trade-off for breadth is, of course, depth. Analysis of more sensitive topics, such as ethnic tensions or the representativeness of shuras, would have benefited from a greater level of rapport between field researchers and research participants. This was not possible given the scope and timeframe of the study. In contrast, a case study approach would not have been able to capture the range of dynamics evident throughout the spoke site sites (particularly those related to land tenure), but would have brought to light some of the social nuances lacking in this report. For example, both KIIs and Sayara's past experience suggest that that while shuras are frequently the most accessible community members, there are other individuals whose influence is less immediately obvious but nonetheless essential to rigorous research, project planning and implementation. Sayara's inability to spend significant time in each spoke site disenabled our field team from identifying those influencers. As noted in the recommendations section below, an integrated conflict-sensitive approach should seek to comprehensively identify and include all community voices, particularly those power brokers both inside and out of the Shura.

It should be noted that, at the spoke-site level, experiences of displacement vary widely, which has important implications for how interventions are tailored at the local level. Overall, however, focus group discussions found that most participants had been living in spoke sites for more than 5 years, some for up to 24 years. This finding highlights the ongoing need to conceptualize IDP spaces as more complex than just humanitarian spaces, but places with concrete and long-term economic development needs as well.

Finally, the lack of reliable population data and demographic statistics in the spoke sites represents a significant analytical weakness. This limitation means that that predictions of change and near-future conflict dynamics lack precision. Regular monitoring and analysis, potentially in coordination with DRC-DDG's ongoing 4MI initiative or in partnership with other stakeholders, should be a research priority moving forward.

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4.1. Overview

This review of conflict dynamics in select DRC-DDG spoke sites represents a synthesis of primary fieldwork with IDP and host community members in addition to existing studies, key informant interviews with DRC-DDG, and dialogue with national and subnational stakeholders. Due to limitations in this study's methodology, namely, the inability to spend significant time in spoke and host community sites, the following analyses also build off existing studies to critically reflect on trends and dynamics at work in DRC-DDG's target areas.

Fundamentally, research revealed little evidence of violent conflict in spoke sites, either within communities or with host communities. Rather, spoke sites demonstrate varying levels of instability and fragility based on the drivers described below. Importantly, spoke sites demonstrate fewer characteristics that might enable them to absorb shocks (factors for peace), be they environmental (snow or rain), financial (job loss or debt), or demographic (influx of newly displaced individuals.) As a result, tensions most commonly arise within spoke sites rather than between spoke and host communities, are non-violent, and tend to be defused easily using traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. On the other hand, when tensions do arise between spoke and host communities, they are more likely to involve crime or land and property disputes and, as a result, have the potential to be more contentious and to require formal legal intervention or careful mediation/arbitration.

4.2. Profile

Displacement History

Over the last 40 years, Afghanistan has experienced multiple, distinct waves of conflict and displacement, beginning with the Soviet invasion of 1979, followed by a tightening of asylum conditions in the 1990s, the Taliban regime, civil war, the American invasion, and finally, the withdrawal of international forces at the end of 2014. Corresponding population movement has been characterized by waves of out-migration and refugee return, internal displacement, and a new wave of irregular migration to Europe. The complexity of Afghan population movement and the long history of conflict and displacement has created a particularly challenging and fluid environment in which to understand humanitarian needs. Eroding security conditions combined with both voluntary and involuntary returns from Iran and Pakistan are putting additional pressure on humanitarian resources. Meanwhile, the protracted nature of displacement in many areas requires an integrated economic development approach, a need that has only recently begun to attractive significant attention among policy makers and international stakeholders.

Current Figures: Conflict-Induced Displacement and Repatriation Challenges

Most recent figures estimate that 1.2 million Afghans are displaced internally (as of December 2016) and 2.6 million Afghans remain abroad, mainly in Iran and Pakistan.[6] In 2016 alone, 580,000 individuals (84,257 families) were documented as conflict-displaced (as opposed to displaced by environmental disaster), half of whom were under the age of 18.[7] Additionally, in 2016, an estimated 400,000 Afghans returned from Iran and 600,000 from Pakistan, many of whom are unable to return to their place of origin.

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[6] Afghanistan Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 56. 01-30 September 2015. UNOCHA online.
[7] Ibid.

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While returnee monitoring and IDP statistics are still inconsistently reliable, some studies estimate that more than 40% of returnees will settle in a residence other than their place of origin (UNHCR 2016.). Many of these decisions are in response to insecurity, lack of land, shelter, livelihood opportunities or access to basic services. The fact that so many returnees were born and raised in urban or semi-urban contexts also contributes to their decision to reside in cities such as Kabul, Jalalabad, or Herat, rather than return to ancestral communities. Many recent returnees are food insecure and jobless. Additionally, reports indicate that, despite the Tazkera waiver, 80% of school age children have been barred from schools due to lack of documentation.[8]

High rates of return in 2016 were facilitated by a combination of political pressure, economic hardship, fears of deportation, and cash support from UNHCR, which provided $400/family who returned voluntarily[9]. This trend will likely continue throughout 2017, though will be influenced by the extension of refugee status in Pakistan through December of this year and the reduction of UNHCR cash grant for returnees[10]. (Voluntary returnees will only receive $200/family in 2017.) At the same time, threats of violence and reports of human rights abuses suggest that coercion could continue to be a central motivating factor for repatriation, either voluntary or forced.[11] Rates of return for the first quarter of 2017 were 3% higher than those for the same quarter last year.[12]

Ongoing Trends: Security and Employment

Factors affecting the needs and experiences of Afghanistan's most vulnerable populations include unemployment, security, and an increasingly overwhelmed humanitarian sector. For IDPs, the complexity in providing appropriate support is magnified by a lack of migration governance and a long history of displacement, which requires both humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

In Afghanistan, unemployment and an acute economic downturn have undoubtedly contributed to rising insecurity throughout the last year. While GDP growth was, on average, around 9.8 percent in the years between 2003 and 2012, the rate plummeted to 0.8 percent in 2015.[13] Simultaneously, unemployment increased threefold from 2011 to 2014 and the poverty rate hovers around 40 percent.[14] IDPs represent an acutely vulnerable population, for whom livelihood security is much less consistent or unpredictable. Due to varied experiences of education and migration (i.e. years of displacement in Pakistan and Iran vs. recent, conflict-induced displacement from rural Afghanistan), skills and opportunities vary significantly.

Joblessness is a particularly important concern given Afghanistan's demographic profile. Total fertility is still more than 5 children per woman and the population growth rate is approximately 3 percent per year, making Afghanistan one of the youngest counties in the world, with more than 20 percent of the population between the age of 15 and 24 (UNHCR Policy Brief).

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[8] Afghanistan: Returnee Crisis Situation Report No. 8. UNOCHA. March 22 2017. Online.
[9] "Tough choices for Afghan refugees returning home after years in exile." UNHCR. February 3, 2017. Online.
[10] Qazi, Shereena. "UN cuts cash grant to Afghan refugees in Pakistan." Al Jazeera. March 04, 2017. Online.
[11] "Pakistan Coercion, UN Complicity: The Mass Forced Return of Afghan Refugees." Human Rights Watch. February 13, 2017. Online.
[12] Ibid.
[13] "Fragility and Population Movement in Afghanistan." UNCHR Policy Brief, 2016.
[14] "Afghanistan - Human Development Report 2015". UNDP. Online.

4.3.Drivers of Conflict

Distinguishing between structural, proximate, and triggers

One key finding from this conflict analysis is that while violent conflict does not appear to be an acute issue in DRC-DDG target sites, long-term structural inequities combined with an unfavorable short-term outlook will continue to challenge community resilience and stability. Structural factors that contribute to conflict dynamics include Afghanistan's long history of invasion, foreign intervention and civil war; historic and geographically bound tribal affiliations; poverty; and weak governance and land tenure systems. The country's young demographic profile continues to contribute to both conflict and peace, depending on the extent to which the labor market is able to absorb its working-age population. In the case of spoke and host communities, proximate causes vary from site to site, ranging from the availability of drugs and firearms to unemployment, debt, competition over aid and natural resources, and lack of privacy. Amid these circumstances, single events or issues can trigger conflict, if not outright violence. According to FGDs, common triggers of conflict include petty crime, the inability to pay back debt, and settlement behaviors that challenge land tenure arrangements. Most of these conflicts are resolved informally through shuras, with the exception of highly contentious cases where shuras might refer to formal legal authorities, such as district governors or courts, following the failure to reach resolution through traditional mechanisms. Importantly, the potential for triggers to result in conflict or violence depends on highly fluid conflict dynamics, the specific actors involved, and even seasons.

4.3.1.   Structural Factors

Insecurity

Regional and national insecurity have the potential to directly affect conflict and tension within spoke sites. Individuals in spoke sites are generally unarmed (with the exception of Company camp), but poverty and joblessness among young men leave them more vulnerable to recruitment by armed opposition groups, or even just petty crime. Notably, field research revealed no cases of AGE recruitment in spoke sites and few instances of violent crime. Focus group discussions identified petty crime to be more prevalent in Herat spokes sites, though further research would be needed to understand or compare crime levels between target locations.

While violent conflict is not typically a main concern (perhaps with the exception of Company camp), a generally insecure environment has contributed to tensions between spoke sites, host communities, local security forces and law enforcement. Spoke site residents often feel targeted or stereotyped as criminals, though long term residents describe a slow but organic process of trust building with local law enforcement, mainly prolonged exposure to one another. For the most part, host communities did not convey animosity toward IDPs, though in cases where violence had taken place, research suggests that IDPs were either responsible or perceived to be responsible.

Governance, Power, and Rule of Law

Weak governance and highly limited political power have exacerbated grievances among spoke site members with the Afghan state at both a local and national level. Corruption and unequal access to justice are common grievances among many Afghans. However, spoke sites are exceptionally exposed to these weaknesses because members frequently lack formal representation, relevant language skills and official documents. In addition, IDPs' social and physical isolation simultaneously limits their pathways for civic engagement and constrains the ability for government and other service providers to comprehensively understand their needs. Finally, pervasive mistrust and fear of exposure or expulsion contribute to both real and perceived exclusion from good governance.

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One of the most common complaints among FGD participants was that children have no access to schools because the families still lack proper documentation for them. (This is particularly challenging for recent returnees, 80% of whom, in one study, were estimated to be out of school.[15]) Importantly, documentation requirements have been waived for returnees and IDPs. It is essential that DRC-DDG and other service providers stay informed of such exceptions in order to facilitate awareness among beneficiaries and help ensure accountability among local schools. Other complaints include the inability or unwillingness of local police to properly protect spoke cites, targeting them as the perpetrators of crime, ignoring cases, or addressing cases incompletely in such a way that actually enables or fuels crime.

On rare occasions, shura members reported that local elites (actors external to the sites themselves) intentionally manipulate the power structure within camps, resulting in unequal representation among shura members and escalations in ethnic or tribal tensions. While this does not apply to all sites, it does suggest that displacement settings are vulnerable to the erosion of traditional structures of influence and decision-making by external manipulation. In such cases, it is possible that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms fail to result in equitable or sustaining solutions.[16]

> *"I am afraid of one thing based on my experience and it's when they say, 'form a Shura' –and they always insist on forming a Shura. I am old and I have seen people fighting one another about becoming the head of the Shura and donning the hate of the boss. I have seen people thinking there are benefits and there are resources in the Shura so everyone wants to be in it. But we have our own Shura and we don't have anyone intervening in our work, we work united and we deal with issues. Many Shuras have been formed in other camps and towns but they have not been sustained because people have been only thinking about filling their own pockets and thus contributing to conflicts rather than solving them" – Shaydai FGD Participant 1*

Importantly, the weak governance structures surrounding migration and displacement mean that many IDPs lack accurate or complete information about their rights and potential access to services. This pattern was apparent throughout all spoke sites regardless of how old or new they were, though it is likely that awareness is particularly low among recent IDPs and returnees. Awareness is also especially low when it comes to education, in which case displacement forms are accepted as officially valid forms of identification, though it is unclear how many spoke site residents have these papers or are aware of their validity. On the other hand, weak governance and an incomplete understanding of Afghan migration and displacement patterns also means that aid and development agencies often lack a clear vision of where or who their target beneficiaries are.

Conflict Dynamics: Governance, Perceptions of Aid, and Access to Information

"The life here is hard and everyone knows about our problems, but it is hard for me to talk about it because it fills my heart with agony. Why do we have to be subjected to such a life? The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation knows about our plight but its representative, Mr. Shamsi and the head of IDPs, are all playing tricks at camps. They make distinctions between us. I don't know why they are doing this. They treat everyone differently and give

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[15] Afghanistan: Returnee Crisis Situation Report No. 8. UNOCHA. March 22 2017. Online
[16] On the other hand, it is always possible that the instability caused by shifts in influence or power actually leads to more equitable representation and participation, though further research would be needed to test this possibility in DRC-DDG spoke sites.

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preference to one over the other but we are all IDPs and all Muslims so I wonder, why do they do this?

At Chahrahi Qambar camp we are all Muslims and Afghans, at Kartai Naw they are also Muslims, at Pule Charkhi camp they are Muslims, or be it in Sharakay Police or in the Taimani square. We have 52 camps in Kabul for IDPs and they are choosing favorites, and this has created problems. I will speak openly and plainly. If I am making up a story then you can blame me but I am speaking the truth and will speak the truth no matter if it the minister or even Ashraf Ghani, or anyone here, agrees with what I am saying: last year we were given 31 kg of wood for burning here at this camp. The same amount was given this year. They surveyed and counted the number of families living here and it sums up to about 1,456 families in this camp. They said they would give assistance to 960 families. That was only the issue with us, not with the rest of the camps in Kabul. When we complained they said you can go and tell whomever you wish, go and tell UNHCR or another NGO, go and tell Ashraf Ghani himself. But I cannot get to meet Ashraf Ghani or Abdullah Abdullah to tell them of the miseries we are encountering here, the police commander won't listen to us, the Ministry of Refugees won't listen to us.

They are all in on it together. All the rooms of the camps are leaking, meanwhile, the government officials are in warm houses and in good places. We all came from Helmand. Our youth were killed. We came to Kabul to take refuge here from war and provide some kind of safety to our children and to our women... Those who are alive will be put in prisons under this and that pretext. Helmand is in war, Lashkar Gah is falling. What kind of government is this? With air support with tanks and with a huge force at its disposal, they cannot provide us security in Helmand so that we can return home.

The Ministry don't give us the due consideration and importance, the IDPs directorate cares less than the Ministry and the other representatives treat us like we're aliens. I don't know why they do this to us. They undermine our rights as the citizens of this country, and if we are not considered citizens and we cannot enjoy our basic rights, then we should leave Afghanistan for Pakistan or Iran and be done with life here. If I have rights and I am from this land and I have children and wives, elders, Mullahs, Agha and Shiekhans then treat us properly and listen to us. Consider our plight and conditions and send a delegation to have investigations to assist us and let us have the relatively little assistance that is made by UNHCR and by others. Or else you are all looting from us to taking advantage of the assistance that is for us. They are stealing the wheat, the flour, the rice and everything intended for us and nothing gets to us. But if they are true and are not on the take, UNHCR, WFP, the ministry and other relevant organizations can send surveying delegations to go through the camp and verify for themselves if I am telling the truth or if these stories are blown out of proportion and woven out of thin air."

-   Charahi Qambar FGD Participant 3

Ethnic and Tribal Tensions

Despite the fact that IDP camps bring people of disparate backgrounds and ethnicities into close proximity, surprisingly few participants cited ethnic or tribal tensions as a contributing factor to conflict. As noted early, though, the limited scope of research in each individual camp meant that data collectors were not able to speak with fully representative samples of people. Indeed, if community shuras were not fully representative of a site's multi-ethnic population, conversations regarding ethnic or tribal issues likely disregarded or downplayed minority experiences. Secondary sources suggest that, within camps, ethnic monitories (such as Tajiks in Chahari Qambar and Bagrami

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camps) have at times been excluded from aid delivery, driving relative deprivation and ethnic tension.[17] However, overall, communities demonstrated relatively high levels of cohesion. One clear exception to this pattern was in the Manarah Host community, where one FGD participant explained the following:

> *"The conflicts are mostly about ethnic issues, everyone is considering language and tribal issues, color, faith and where loyalties lies, which faction do you belong to are the issues that are taking over the people here, and that is unfortunate and this is not the way to go about our lives, this which existed in other areas of Afghanistan is also emerging in the camp as well. Since last three years I think that these issues are getting bigger and more people are getting involved in it."* - *Manarah Host community Participant 1*

This finding is particularly interesting given the feedback from both Manarah 1 and 2 camps, in which no participants cited ethnic tensions as a cause of conflict, but rather, focused on tensions over land tenure. (Residents are not permitted to construct permanent structures in either location.) What this points to is the likelihood that communities subsume ethnic tensions into other issues, such as fights over water, land, and aid distribution. A closer look at specific instances of conflict might therefore reveal that, despite water or land being the trigger, deeper structural issues of ethnicity or marginalization are also at work.

Conflict Dynamics: Land Tenure, International Community, and Conflict Mitigation

"There have been several times that people have come to create a ruckus on the issue of the land, once the government came and then there were people from Karizak who stopped us from building our houses on the land and then once the Afghans (Pashtuns) in the beginning of the establishment of the camp, came to demolish the foundation of couple of houses people were building in the Karizak camp because the Karizak camp is adjacent to the township which is allocated to the Afghans and they also want to stretch their settlements to the Karizak camp premises, we then approached the NGOs and they said that the land is a still a dispute and no one can lay claim to it, thus they have no right to come and bring down your constructions."

- Kazirak Participant 1

Housing, Land and Property

Conflict over housing, land and property (HLP) varies substantially throughout the spoke sites. Those sites located on private land experience the greatest levels of instability, which manifests in inadequate infrastructure (e.g. homes and mosques in disrepair, or incomplete) as well as psychological trauma. Karizak, camp, for example, is reportedly located on private land where landlords prohibit any activities that could lead to a more permanent settlement. Moving soil or brick is forbidden, which means that families struggle to maintain adequate shelter and are in constant fear of eviction. Residents in Shaydai report similar issues, which compound grievances over governance:

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[17] "Challenges of ID Protection: Research study on the protection of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan." Samuel Hall. 2012.

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> *"We brought orders from the president and the governor approved it but it has been 6 years we are waiting, twice the governor has given orders for the land to distributed but to vain, we are registered in the municipality and they write execute the orders but no one is doing it, the governor should specify lands for us and then we will be able to get the municipality to then work on those lands we need." - Shaydai Spoke Site FGD Participant 12*

HLP issues also intertwine with issues of elite power, manipulation, and host community integration. As one shura member explained:

> *"This village has been there for over 200 years and then new people came from other places who have been motivated by the municipality to create their own area. They would put up a box for them to gather votes for their own representatives. When this happened, peopled started to hold grudges against one another. Instead of providing a larger community the opportunity to work together, they divide the people." – Manarah Host Community FGD Participant 2*

In the instance described above, the extent to which power and representation was intentionally manipulated is unclear. However, perceptions of relative deprivation, under-representation, or favoritism nonetheless erode community stability and contribute to potential conflicts. These findings also suggest that there may be increasing tensions between host communities and newly arrived residents due to difference influences and circumstances.

4.3.2. Proximate causes

Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty, unemployment, and vulnerable livelihoods are the greatest drivers of instability in spoke site communities. Proximity to urban centers, in theory, should facilitate market access and employment opportunities. However, many IDPs lack the capital to start even small-scale enterprises (e.g. carpentry) or lack the skillset (e.g. masonry or construction) for available work. Additionally, it is unclear to what extent fear of stigmatization affects IDPs' willingness to pursue all avenues of potential employment. In this regard, KIIs indicate that individuals (particularly recent arrivals with very low levels of integration) might travel far beyond their immediate surroundings in order to avoid identification.

Dynamics: Displacement, Mismatched Skills, and Unemployment

"We don't have any wheat or corn plantation nor do we have any kind of employment, we are not even hired to work in the construction and it is all about construction work, but alas we don't even know how to work in the construction sector to work on daily wages to earn a living for our families, what we know is the work of masons but there is no requirement for that here so the construction owners either hire Punjabis or the Kabul residents who know this work so we are left without any work, what we know is plantation and working on the fields which we don't have here"

– Charahi Qambar FGD Participant 2

Family or individual debt is also common at spoke sites and in some cases (Company Camp in particular) is cited as a direct trigger for conflict and physical violence. Importantly, while debt is a common trigger of conflict, the ability to borrow money often indicates that an individual possesses social capital in the community. These individuals tend to be longer-term residents and are generally

thought to be less vulnerable than newcomers.[18] In this sense, conflict over debt might represent a useful scenario for TPN mediation, but does not necessarily represent an issue affecting the most vulnerable.

On a more fundamental level, research indicates that the boredom and sense of purposeless stemming from persistent underemployment (especially among youth) significantly contributes to instability and small-scale conflicts. These conflicts involve youth, elders (who can instigate them) and elders or shura members who are responsible for settling disputes.

Drug Trade

The drug trade is an underlying force behind community instability. While FGDs identified the drug trade as particularly problematic in Herat spoke sites, KIIs with DRC-DDG staff who participated in TPN mediation training, identified it as common in Kabul sites as well. The drug trade in spoke sites affects communities in two ways: 1) within spoke sites, addiction is rising, especially among youth, challenging social cohesion and straining resources both at the familial and community level; 2) drug trafficking is contributing to crime (namely, theft), which increases tensions with local law enforcement and erodes trust with host communities. Feedback from community members suggests that these issues are intensifying, thus potentially exacerbating tensions between communities and local law enforcement.

Conflict Dynamics: Drug Trade and Governance

"We have informed the government, we have 25 people in the Shura and we have approached the PD 08 of the police and have asked them to stop these drugs vendors, all of the security forces knows, the governor's office knows, even the district administration of Injil knows about the situation of drugs sellers in the Shaydai camp but they don't intervene. Yes it does happen that the government asks us to specify the drugs vendors and inform the government about them but when we introduce them we receive calls from the drugs vendors, who then warn us and threaten us. So we are left with no choice - we tell them when you won't act on the information why do you put us in bad situation."

– Shaydai FGD Participant 10

Gender-related issues

Research did not specifically target gender-related issues. However, spoke site visits identified several ways in which gender-based issues are distinctive in DRC-DDG's target locations, and which could be addressed through DRC-DDG programming. First and foremost, spoke sites are uniquely cramped, lacking the space and structures that would give families the level of privacy customary in Afghanistan and lacking places for women, specifically, to socialize with one another.[19] Due to high rates of male unemployment, IDP camps also spaces where men and women spend more time in close proximity to one another than in almost all other settings in Afghanistan, both rural and urban.

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[18] "Agency and choice among the displaced: Refugees and IDP's choice of destination in Afghanistan. DACAAR/Samuel Hall (2015).
[19] Anderson, Hanne Eide. "Displaced women and girls trapped in Afghanistan's cities." Norwegian Refugee Council (2015.)

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As a result, within sites, tensions or conflicts related to women's spaces and the public gaze are more common, as are disputes between spouses themselves.

In addition, while some women work informally in the service sector, most are unemployed, meaning that they spend much of their days in isolation, often inside small, dark rooms with no permission to go out. This isolation further weakens already insufficient mechanisms to connect women with protective assistance. Most women have lost the social capital and the networks they had previous to their displacement. Meanwhile, girls have been born into places of highly restricted movement and precarious livelihood stability and are at heightened risk for early or forced marriage.[20] As a result, while this conflict analysis did not specifically research links between displacement and violence against women, it does suggest that the physical conditions of spoke-sites place women in particularly vulnerable positions.

Conflict Dynamics: Poverty, gender-based violence, and conflict resolution

"Mr. Ahmadi had given money to someone and they were not paying it back. They had a physical brawl and the police were involved. Basically, it was something that had to do with the women so the policewomen came and arrested some of the women and some of the men. But then the Shura intervened and settled the dispute and we were able to get them out of the prison (heavy static sound of wind) …. most issues happen over clothing, shoes, lack of food provisions and not having money to bring items home. This can cause a rift between a couple. The woman may start a quarrel and then the husband will beat her. She will come to the Shura to complain and we solve that. Such are the issues."

- Participant-Observation Exercise, Shogofan, Herat

International Community

While the international community is seen in a generally favourable light, it has contributed to local instability and conflict in two ways, first by distributing conflict insensitive aid and second, by enabling aid dependency. Several factors have led to conflict insensitive aid provision in DRC-DDG spoke sites. For example, aid organizations frequently target only the most vulnerable households but fail to effectively manage community expectations, leading to perceptions of relative deprivation or favoritism. In many cases, organizations lack accurate information regarding community size and need, or simply lack adequate resources and are forced to make difficult decisions about distribution without proper contextual information.

Shuras are quick to advise the international community to go through them when distributing goods rather than, as some have put it, "dumping" resources in community centers. At the same time, aid organizations must operate with a clear understanding of power dynamics within the community and the extent to which shuras are seen as trustworthy and representative. For example, secondary

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[20] "Listening to women and girls displaced to urban Afghanistan." Norwegian Refugee Committee. 2015. Online.

sources suggest that in both Charahi Qambar and Bagrami camps in Kabul, ethnic tensions are fueled by inequitable representation, effectively marginalized a Tajik minority from aid delivery.[21]

Aid delivery must also be sensitive to the ways in which IDP camps perceive each other. Shura members demonstrated a high level of awareness of other sites and of the aid packages delivered there. That community members perceive there to be intra-camp competition has important implications for delivering conflict sensitive aid. One of the underlying reasons that tensions arise over the distribution of aid is that community leaders lack a full understanding of the aid process itself.[22] Inadequate communication with communities and their exclusion from decision-making processes has facilitated unrealistic expectations and mistrust in NGOs.

Conflict Dynamics: Aid Delivery, Effective Communication, and Perceptions of Relative Deprivation

"These NGOs that I mentioned are contributing to conflict by giving priority to some and treating some better than others. This will cause conflict, wont it? If they are making favoritism in their work and not dealing with justice with all the camps, we will have a problem and we will have issues, and this will cause conflict. So, in some ways, NGOs are indirectly responsible for creating conflicts. They even tell us, 'you have a freehand at complaining to whomever you want, take it or leave it.' When they treat us in this way we will get angry and we will have problem.

– Charahi Qambar Participant 2

This research also suggests that humanitarian aid without adequate development support is contributing to dependency within spoke sites. Given an unpredictable funding environment and the protracted nature of displacement, the more communities come to rely on and expect aid, the more vulnerable and less resilient they become. Part of this issue stems from an enduring focus on the part of both policy makers and NGOs on reintegration in locations of origin, which comes at the expense of other priorities, particularly, economic development.[23]

Access to water

Access to water is a consistent source of tension in spoke sites. Particularly in the summer time when demand is high and youth often wait in line for water, insufficient access can lead to conflict. Many of the pumps in spoke sites are non-functioning, which concentrates access and potential conflict around the remaining pumps. Tensions also rise when families refuse or are unable to contribute to repair funds.

4.4.   Conflict Dynamics

Security

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[21] "Challenges of ID Protection: Research study on the protection of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan." Samuel Hall. 2012.
[22] Linke, Lenny. Interview, Kabul. March 13, 2017.
[23] Open Dialogue Workshop: Sharing Primary Findings on Migration Governance. Govern4Afg and AREA. Kabul, 2017.

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Given their proximity to large urban centers and connectivity to places of rapid repatriation, it is possible that spoke sites will be experiencing increased population growth, or at least change, in the near future. Preliminarily, mini-surveys indicated that camps Shogofan and Manarah 1 and 2 Herat, along with Regretion and Qala-e-Wahed Koti Sangi Kabul, are experiencing greater levels of in-migration than other spoke sites, though some secondary sources describe limited movement in and out of camps that are well established. Interestingly, despite varying reports of population growth, approximately a third of all survey participants (n=50) and half of those in Herat responded that, "people moving in are from a different tribe and province/district and so sometimes create mistrust." In some cases, such as Shogofan and Manarah, it is possible that larger influxes of people are associated with greater levels of mistrust. On the other hand, it is also possible that in places where populations are more settled or established, such as Chaharri Qambar, newcomers might be mistrusted because they are relatively rare. (Due to the small sample size of the follow-up survey, these hypotheses would require additional research and larger, representative samples to test.)

 Where populations are shifting, DRC-DDG can learn from past IDP experiences of integration to facilitate services and aid that decrease tension between IDPs, host communities, and local law enforcement. KIIs and Shura FGDs suggested several keys to DRC-DDG's success, including: 1)increasing mutual understanding; 2) ensuring that services and aid are provided in relevant languages; 3) facilitating positive exposure among relevant stakeholders; and 4) and identifying project activities that add value by combining aid with development initiatives. These activities should be priority in areas of influx but will nonetheless be useful in all spoke sites, as there appears to be limited direct interaction between the various communities/stakeholders.

Governance

Rapid rates of return from Pakistan and Iran in 2016, in addition to the anticipated increase in both forced and voluntary return from Europe in 2017, are bringing migration governance to a head. The political will behind migration reform signals an important opportunity to address many of the governance issues facing both new IDPs and those experiencing protracted displacement. Formalization of Afghanistan's IDP policy, implementation of the e-tazkira program, and generally increased public attention all bode well for project activities that seek to facilitate good governance and rule of law on behalf of IDPs. At the same time, discussions of migration governance will have to critically reflect on the way IDP needs and services are framed and thus distributed. DRC-DDG's focus on vulnerable populations broadly, rather than on spoke-sites alone represents a relevant and conflict-sensitive approach to service provision that will allow DRC-DDG to comprehensively identify all potential beneficiaries without excluding others.

On the other hand, there remains a policy focus on reintegration, which is also evident in DRC-DDG's project theory of change. While reintegration represents an important potential outcome of free movement, research suggests that its prioritization will foster an incomplete and in many cases irrelevant approach to policy and programming. Particularly in more established camps, where movement in and out appears to be minimal, a focus on reintegration and a continued emphasis on aid provision could contribute to continued aid dependency and stifle community resilience. DRC-DDG and the broader stakeholder community should carefully identify those scenarios in which development cooperation, including education and skills development, is more appropriate.

Housing, Land and Property

HLP issues have been ongoing in spoke sites for years. While the political movement behind migration and IDP policy reform is encouraging in some regards, all land issues remain the purview of ARAZI (the Afghanistan Land Authority) alone. In this sense, there is no evidence suggesting that IDP-specific tenure concerns will experience significant improvements in the near future.

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Additionally, given increases in conflict-induced migration and the massive influx of returnees in 2016, many of whom have no intention or ability to return home, displacement-related issues of land tenure will potentially rise. Without adequate tracking and monitoring mechanisms, however, it is difficult to predict the exact impact these processes on conflict within specific spoke sites.

Issues over land tenure can be exacerbated not only by new influxes of returnees/IDPs, but also by natural population growth. As this process is inevitable, and also easier to predict, population change represents a very concrete area for intervention and planning.

Conflict Dynamics: Land tenure, Population Growth, and Governance

"As you would know from the condition of the camp, the people here are extremely poor and the houses are in a very fragile state, there are so many problems. It will take hours to explain the issues we face but the biggest concern is that we don't have a proper house, we have families who have many members and they just have one room to live in, there is no spare space for us, we cannot build walls or extra room, the government won't allow us to build extra rooms, we are not even allowed to carry soil here to prepare clay and build our walls, people have been living here for 25 years and is obvious that families will grow, children will get married, so the families are living in the same room for the last 25 years, in the Laisay Babzangi Ata we have a check post of the police who comes every day to see that no one has built an extra room, they are tasked to make sure the people are living in hardship and not allowed to even repair the one room they have which is damaged in rains and snow, although there is a lot of free space around the camp but just to make things harder for the people they won't allow us to expand or to repair."

-   FGD Participant 2, Camp Manarah 2, Herat

Poverty and unemployment

Evidence suggests that issues stemming from unemployment and poverty are likely to increase in the near future. Urban population growth combined with an economic downturn and a demographic "youth bulge" will increase competition for already constrained job opportunities. In this regard, it is essential that both IDP policy and programming take an integrated approach to aid and development cooperation. Particularly in some of DRC-DDG's more established spoke sites, priorities should shift from aid to long-term community resilience. This will involve market assessments and targeted skills trainings that acknowledge the likelihood of long-term settlement in urban or peri-urban areas. Whether they be computer skills or construction skills, identifying ways to work with both IDP and host communities to provide trainings and identify employment opportunities will have multiplying effects. If implementing in a conflict-sensitive manner, such activities can simultaneously and cost effectively facilitate community engagement, job growth, and poverty reduction.

Additionally, while broad economic circumstances are unlikely to improve, it is possible that spoke-site residents are choosing not to enter the labor force for lack of information or fear of stigmatization or expulsion. When this is the case, it is important that stakeholders identify the specific circumstances or misinformation surrounding those decisions and gear activities toward outreach and fostering an enabling environment for labor market entry.

Drug Trade

Depending on the exact services ultimately provided through hub sites, DRC-DDG might consider providing drug treatment or at least serve as referral centers to connect those in need with relevant

health services. DRC-DDG should acknowledge its limitations in directly impacting on drug trafficking in spoke-sites, but can prepare for the types of conflicts and needs that will arise as a result of this problem. Coordination with relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement and health agencies, can facilitate DRC-DDG's effectiveness in this role. In terms of conflict, DRC-DDG should also be mindful to monitor the potential for aid resources to become more contested or valuable as a means to acquire drugs. To do this, DRC-DDG would include drug abuse in a systematic needs assessment within each site and would carefully monitor trends in reported drug abuse or related crime. Of course, such activities would require a high level of sensitivity and risk assessment and mediation in order to uphold Do No Harm principles.

Conflict Dynamics: Drugs, Rule of Law, and Relations with Police

The government's bad role is that when we send them the drugs addicts and the illegal activity indulging culprits they are not put behind bars and released the next hour, these culprits then creates problems for us and threaten us on why we have informed the government about them, so instead of being help to us the government increase the chances of conflicts here."

- Shaydai FGD Participant 3

International Community and Stakeholder Engagement

As noted above, the international community has a generally favorable reputation in spoke-sites, especially when compared to perceptions of local and national government. However, there is significant room for aid delivery to be more conflict sensitive and more responsive to the evolution of IDP needs. In the context of protracted and urban displacement, needs have evolved beyond basic humanitarian aid, which still views reintegration as a desired and feasible outcome. Rather, for both long-time residents and recent returnees from Iran and Pakistan, many of whom settle in urban or peri-urban areas, economic development might be a more effective lens through which to identify needs and promote resilience. This shift in focus would also facilitate integrative project activities and inter-agency coordination, which will simultaneously benefit IDPs, host communities, and government institutions alike.

Social Network Analysis

The chart on the following page depicts the 28 national and international actors cited by shura members throughout the course of FGDs. Sayara used the netCoin package in R to quantify the overall level of engagement of each actor (at least, as perceived by FGD participants) and to quantify linkages between them, or where their involvement overlaps. While this network analysis is far from comprehensive (which would require a census of actors within the sites), it points to some potentially revealing patterns in the how communities experience and perceive outside engagement.

Perhaps the most obvious feature of this network is the pivotal involvement of UNHCR, which was mentioned in 8 of the 10 FGDs. Other commonly cited actors included UNICEF (3), WFP (5), and NRC (4). These actors share the important characteristic of widespread recognition and connectedness to other organizations, meaning that people see their work as not only important but overlapping with the work of other agencies. This gives them power and influence as potential coordinators.

Another important feature of this network is the tendency for certain types of actors to be clustered together, meaning that participants perceived external engagement in their communities to follow a particular theme. Circled in red at the top of the chart are two informative examples: 1) Police—District Governor's Office—DoRR; and 2) ANP—ANA—UNAMA. That these actors are always

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mentioned in the presence of one another could suggest several things, including the presence of distinct local governance needs, patterns of crime or police involvement, or simply community perceptions of security and external involvement. Where such clusters are evident, DRC-DDG could explore potential explanations in depth, help facilitate dialogue between actors, and work to create linkages for a more balanced or connected network.

The last feature that stands out in this network is the presence of small, relatively isolated actors. These actors, such as Align, Asheena, and Pamlaran, were mentioned only in sites that were either removed from all of the largest actors, such as NRC, UNHCR, or WFP, or had very few ties with other members of the network. This pattern suggests that some spoke sites experience limited but distinct engagements with external stakeholders, perhaps in greater isolation from the international community. This pattern also suggests that smaller organizations operating in more isolated places could carry significant influence and trust. They are therefore essential partners or "brokers" with whom DRC-DDG could coordinate activities.

Finally, we can note that DRC-DDG (visualized as "DRC" for the sake of space), occupies a middle ground between wide recognition, connectedness, and isolation. (Of course, this is particularly telling, given that DRC-DDG's involvement was a criteria for selecting research sites where this data was collected.) DRC-DDG is also noticeably removed from local governance and security actors, such as DoRR, district governors, ANA, ANP, and police. These characteristics suggest two recommendations: 1) DRC-DDG could increase outreach or branding initiatives in spoke sites; and 2) DRC-DDG should consider how/if involvement with governance actors could increase the effectiveness of their work, as those linkages appear to be lacking. If DRC-DDG decides to facilitate mediation or dialogue sessions between communities, spoke sites, and local security/governance actors, an important measure of success would be to track how DRC-DDG's network structure changes over time.

Figure 4-1: Stakeholder Mapping via Social Network Analysis
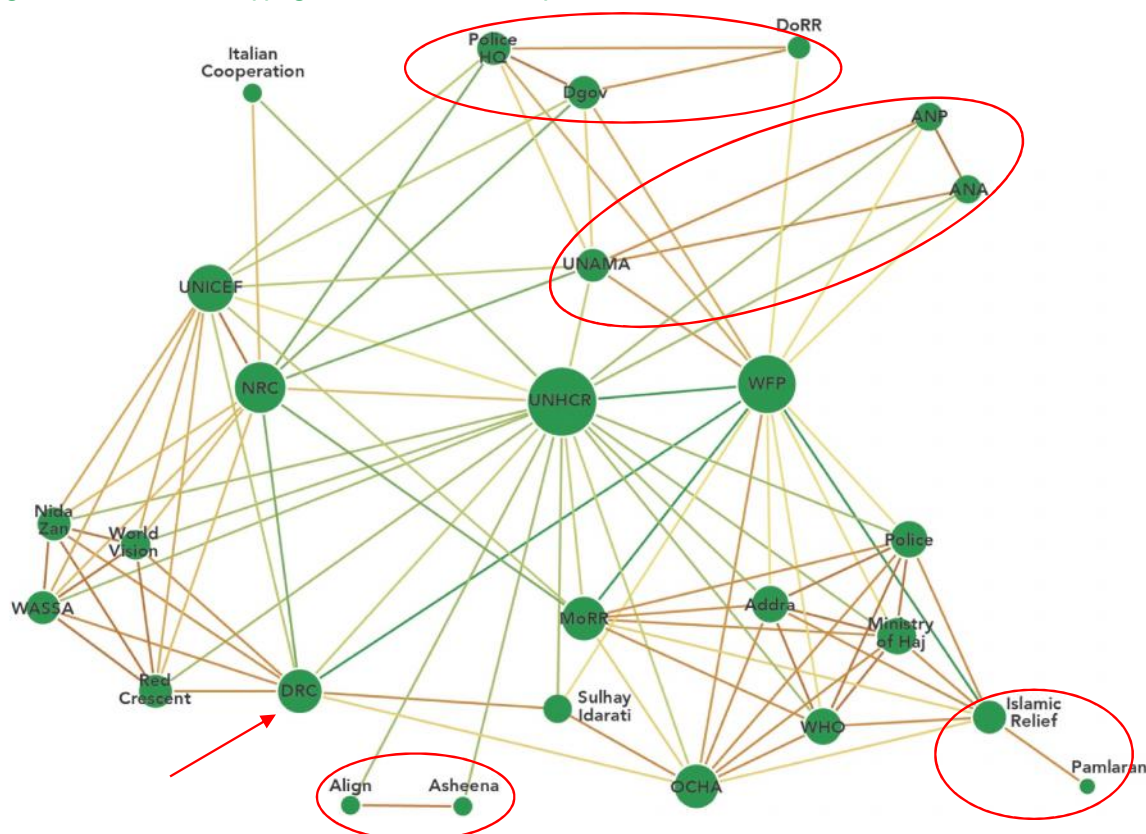
5. TPN MEDIATION TRAINING IN SPOKE SITES

Sayara's provincial supervisors in Herat and Kabul each attended one week of the TPN Mediation Training sessions facilitated by DRC-DDG as a supplementary research component for the conflict analysis. Following completion of the first phase of data collection, Sayara's field coordinator conducted exit interviews with supervisors to elicit evaluative feedback on the trainings. Supervisors then followed-up with other participants to conduct short training assessments. This round of fieldwork was conducted in in early March 2017, at least one week after the trainings in Kabul concluded and up to a month following the conclusion of trainings in Herat. Key findings can be summarized as follows:

Participants found the content of trainings to be highly relevant, as conflict resolution is a deeply embedded practice within traditional Afghan culture. As seems to be common at the outset of TPN trainings, participants initially conflated traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with mediation. Simply identifying and understanding the difference between mediation and arbitration was thus an important conceptual step for them. This distinction fostered critical reflection on traditional decision-making processes, inclusivity, and benefits and potential pitfalls of traditional arbitration. The concreteness with which participants now understand what mediation is suggests they could feasibly pass on this information to other members of their families or communities. Indeed, surveys suggest that participants intend to share their experiences with other community members. However, additional follow-up research in the communities should quantify the extent to which the benefits of training actually cascaded from participants to non-participants.

According to respondents, once the difference between mediation and arbitration was established, group work and role playing were key elements of training because they were engaging, participatory, and required participants to synthesize conceptual and practical learning. These activities were also memorable because they gave participants the opportunity to learn about one another. Indeed, exposure to different types of people, to the extent that the sessions facilitated it, was another important benefit from the training and likely helped to facilitate informative and diverse discussions of conflict and resolution. This finding suggests that recruiting for a diverse set of participants is another important component of successful trainings. However, keeping participants grouped into similar occupational or community roles (e.g. all shura members or elders or all service providers) might still be necessary to ensure full and honest participation, at least in initial stages.

This effectiveness of group interactions also suggests that continuing mediation training, or routine mediation sessions, could be an important method for ensuring project sustainability and increasing community engagement. Mini-surveys found that civil society organizations (CSOs) play essentially no role in contributing to peace in spoke sites, and that civic engagement is minimal overall. Thus additional TPN mediation training or practice could not only provide a new tool for conflict resolution, but also fill a gap in community resilience.

The only cautionary finding from evaluation interviews was the absence of any critical, reflective feedback on the mediation technique itself. While respondents could immediately point out the weaknesses in traditional arbitration techniques, they were likely to provide only positive accounts of mediation and broad, overarching explanations of its applicability. The risk here is that without critical and pragmatic reflection on mediation techniques, beneficiaries might lack the skills to identify when mediation is or is not appropriate and might have unrealistic expectations for mediation outcomes. In a worst case scenario, a few instance of failure might be discouraging enough for participants to stop using mediation altogether.

Additionally, respondents tended to convey normative comparisons between traditional arbitration and their new mediation skills, signaling that mediation was viewed as a replacement for, rather than supplement to, their prior knowledge. For example, one person explained that, "In traditional methods, arbitration is more practiced but here, mediation was the focus, which is a better way of resolving conflicts." Another respondent summarized that, "the training was designed to improve and to change the way traditional elders resolve conflict." Many other participants said that

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mediation would be the "dominant" approach to conflict resolution in the future and referred to it as "more professional" than their previous methods. While all of this feedback is undoubtedly positive and reflective of participants' enthusiasm for the course, it bring up questions of conflict-sensitivity. Naturally, TPN mediation training was designed to diversify conflict resolution skills, not to replace existing ones. Ensuring that participants understand this should be an important feature of training and of training evaluations.

Overall, these findings suggest that there is significant momentum behind TPN mediation and numerous potentials for its continuation or expansion within spoke sites. There is also evidence to suggest that DRC-DDG could include measures to ensure its sustainability and that it meets their standards for conflict-sensitivity. They will also need to do some experimental pre-post research to monitor and evaluate the impacts of these training sessions and their mediation training, which should be ongoing.

6.CONCLUSION

In many ways, this conflict analysis has validated the theory of change behind DRC-DDG's multi-sector urban hub project. Findings suggest that access to humanitarian, legal, psychosocial, and economic services represents an important unmet need for spoke site residents (particularly for women). More important than the project's short term objectives will be its long-term goal of addressing drivers of instability through inclusive mechanisms, support for rule of law, and the development of livelihood opportunities. This integrated approach implicitly acknowledges the deep structural vulnerabilities and development needs that contribute to instability in spoke sites.

By framing hub sites as spaces for integrated, dynamic development, rather than one-off services, DRC-DDG can add value to projects activities and amplify the impact of its work. For example, by understanding that women need not only medical services and livelihood opportunities, but also, and more fundamentally, access to places for socialization and community engagement, hub sites can develop creative and cost effective measures to combine service provision. By simply incentivizing women's participation in hub site activities, DRC-DDG could address specific health or legal needs while also providing a platform for women to engage with one another, define their own needs, and contribute to developing long-term solutions. This nuanced approach to identifying and meeting beneficiary needs will enable DRC-DDG to better predict, monitor, and evaluate the impacts of the hub site project.

Similarly, this conflict analysis suggests that DRC-DDG can leverage TPN Mediation not only as a hard skill for conflict resolution (the effectiveness of which remains to be assessed), but also as a platform for addressing some of the drivers of conflict identified here. For example, incomplete information and a lack of exposure between local stakeholders (host communities, IDPs/returnees, police, etc.) have been identified as drivers instability and mistrust. Repeated TPN mediation trainings or practice sessions could systematically reinforce the skills DRC-DDG sought to foster, help DRC-DDG understand the long-term utility of TPN mediation trainings, and also proactively address grievances that disenable community development and stability. In this sense, evaluation of DRC-DDG's TPN mediation trainings should go beyond their immediate impact on conflict resolution to explore ways in which TPN mediation could be incorporated into future project activities. Sayara envisions that guiding trained stakeholders as they facilitate mediation sessions would also provide DRC-DDG with important information to track conflict in communities and monitor project success.

This analysis identified two risks to DRC-DDG project success, one an issue of problem framing and identification and the other an issue of information availability and management. Both of these concerns represent potential opportunities to adjust the current project and inform future project phases. The first potential weakness in DRC-DDG's ToC is that it replicates discourse that frames IDP needs through the lens of reintegration and aid. Like with policymaking, this approach risks under-prioritizing important economic development and governance needs. While reintegration should always remain an important potential outcome of DRC-DDG services, this conflict analysis provides substantial evidence to support that the majority of DRC-DDG's beneficiaries will not return to their places of origin. By shifting away from reintegration and toward a broader development approach, DRC-DDG project activities will not only become more relevant to the context in which they operate, but will also be able to reach non-IDP beneficiaries, including host communities and other local conflict actors. Conflict analysis suggests that not only would project impacts be greater, but also more sustaining/sustainable?.

The second risk to DRC-DDG project success stems from the general challenge of identifying and maintaining accurate information about the demographic composition and population flows within individual spoke-sites. Because returnee numbers have increased dramatically in the last year and because patterns of resettlement clearly identify the importance of urban and peri-urban areas in the return process, understanding population change at the spoke site level will be key to project success. Changes in the number of people in spoke sites, their ethnic characteristics, educational backgrounds, and language and skills capacities all directly affect conflict dynamics. However, there

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are currently few mechanisms in place to track and monitor community populations. DRC-DDG must continuously assess the reliability of site-level population data and participate in coordinated efforts to obtain reliable information. DRC-DDG's integrated approach to the hub-site project and TPN mediation can facilitate community-driven tracking. At the same time, DRC-DDG can work with other stakeholders to establish a more cohesive knowledge management system, not only to track IDP numbers but also to monitor the impact of project and policy implementation, share lessons learned, and maximize resources.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use TPN mediation not just as a conflict resolution tool in and of itself but also as a platform for fostering dialogue, monitoring community needs, IDP behaviors, and as a forum for discussing grievances that host community and IDP members identify independently. Along these lines, DRC-DDG should train up its staff and partners to be able to facilitate "mediation sessions" that serve as structured, externally facilitated but community-led dialogue sessions.

- Because IDP sites occupy a uniquely vulnerable population, which is often reticent to initiate change for fear of negative exposure or a lack of recourse, DRC-DDG should identify creative ways to incentivize participation in project activities. A top-down (though slightly coercive) approach would be to link aid to or services to, for example, participation in TPN mediation and dialogue sessions. Another option to encourage attitude and behavior change would be a cash transfer program, which could be used to establish an initial flow of beneficiaries into Hub site locations. Finally, DRC-DDG could work with the communities themselves to identify potential project activities and use local sources of influence and trust to conduct outreach and facilitate participation.

- To mitigate conflicts that arise as a result of incomplete or inaccurate information, DRC-DDG should take care to be highly transparent from the beginning and systematically enable both spoke and host communities to participate in identifying needs and priorities. By engaging beneficiaries directly in the project design and monitoring process, DRC-DDG will not only provide more relevant services, but also help build community capacity to engage with development and government institutions.

- DRC-DDG should consider reframing its target beneficiaries to include both spoke and host community members. While there would be cost implications to providing services to host communities, evidence suggests that providing opportunities for positive exposure will help foster and maintain stability and cohesion. Thus, broadening the definition of Hub site beneficiaries would not only reach more people but would increase the effectiveness and sustainability of all project activities.

- Given the complex social and ethnic dynamics found in spoke sites, DRC-DDG field staff should work to systematically identify specific community actors and influencers with whom to coordinate project activities, facilitate transparency, and obtain information. The most effective community partners might not be shura members or community elders and, in fact, DRC-DDG could lose legitimacy in the communities if it does not invest in an effort to work with the appropriate facilitator. To do this, Sayara recommends that DRC-DDG consider investing in dedicated team to conduct routine site visits, simply to monitor progress and build a nuanced rapport. Another option would be to facilitate town hall-style meetings, which would help to understand who does what within the communities. (TPN Mediation and Dialogue sessions could also provide this platform.) Findings from these visits should be incorporated into monitoring and planning tools.

- DRC-DDG should identify targets and strategies for reaching different age groups and genders in a sensitive way. Both youth and women demonstrate distinctive ways of engaging in conflict. For example, youth might benefit substantially from TPN mediation training, as they are frequently cited as direct instigators of conflict. Simultaneously, engaging youth in any type of skills training would help to mitigate boredom, which is a clear, underlying driver of tension. Women, on the other hand, would benefit from project activities that combine specific health, legal, or livelihood services with opportunities for social engagement. Including a diverse set of beneficiaries will have cost and duration implications but research finds substantial evidence to justify the expansion of target beneficiaries.

- DRC-DDG should be proactive in identifying relevant partners and stakeholders with whom to coordinate information collection and sharing. This will improve their depth of knowledge

regarding the pace and scale of returns and evolving community needs, and will increase the efficiency of tracking and service provision. Potential include contribution to the UNHCR Displacement Tracking Matrix and to the IDP working group.

- To monitor spoke site activities and ensure project efficiency, DRC-DDG should consider the following: 1) conduct a census of all ministries, NGOs, and international agencies that work in each spoke site by surveying community members and triangulating with survey findings with external information (i.e. from MoRR, UNHCR, or IDP working groups); 2) map changes to local stakeholder networks over time, possibly using social network analysis; 3) help facilitate and TPN mediation trainings or exercises on a routine basis, documenting both changing levels of mediation capacity and evolving trends in conflict dynamics; 4) conduct a baseline survey to understand current levels of need and access to the services provided at Hub sites, followed by a formative evaluation in one year to explore how and how much Hub sites are being used and what adjustments might increase their effectiveness; 5) establish targets and strategies for reaching different age groups and genders, acknowledging that different types of beneficiaries engage in conflict in distinct ways.