



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

**SUMMARY**



**IOM • OIM**



**SAMUEL HALL.**

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**IOM – International Organization for Migration** ([www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)) Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. Through the request of the Government of Afghanistan, IOM is mandated to assist with orderly and humane migration. IOM programmes in Afghanistan are implemented in close cooperation with national government counterparts and are designed to support the goals of the Afghan National Development Strategy.

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# Achieving Safe Return and Sustainable Reintegration: Challenges for IOM in conflict and post-conflict settings

## The case of Afghanistan

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**How can IOM contribute to the dual objective of return and reintegration in conflict and post-conflict environments?** This question presents a contradiction in terms, how can return and reintegration be planned in Afghanistan given an increasingly insecure context? Yet this is the strategic and operational environment for IOM in the country, further complicated by the inherent difficulty of balancing short-term (return) and long-term (reintegration) needs of uprooted populations. In 2014 Afghanistan, migratory movements represent a key dynamic in a country where layers of displacement form the texture of a fluid society: voluntary returns, cross-border migration, internal displacement, forced returns, human trafficking or rural-urban migration are the canvas of a complex and evolving migratory context. Displacement episodes each come with vulnerabilities, rendering complex the response to the growing needs of a population on the move. Current migratory trends call for an appraisal of the most effective humanitarian assistance to returnees and IDPs. For organisations assisting populations on the move, like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), one key challenge is to keep adapting its activities to a dynamic environment. A second important challenge is to map the needs adequately to avoid seeing specific groups of concern falling through the cracks of assistance. A third challenge for IOM is to adequately respond to the dual challenge of return and reintegration.

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

The evaluation draws lessons on the relevance and impact of reintegration activities for IOM, an organisation that has the ability to implement tailored and flexible projects in order to adjust future iterations of the projects to the Afghan evolving migratory context and to IOM's main strengths in programming. Three primary trends emerged:

- IOM has a clear short-term impact across provinces and activities, with greater strength in emergency assistance, while limited impact on reintegration
- Certain challenges – namely loose beneficiary selection mechanisms, questionable relevance of certain locations of implementation, disconnects in coordination with other organisations and lack of financial and technical follow-up – were endemic across activities
- The evaluation measured a positive but uneven impact on reintegration, as research highlighted important geographic variance in reintegration impact.

This evaluation points at three key axes to better tailor IOM’s return and reintegration strategy to the current context:

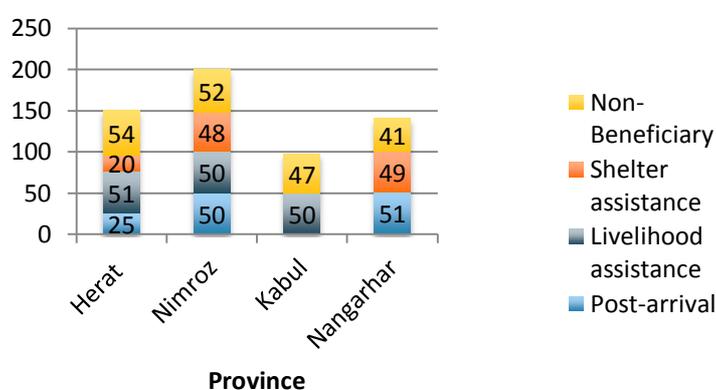
**Beyond return, aiming more effectively for reintegration:** IOM’s strength lies in emergency assistance rather than efforts to build livelihoods: immediate needs upon return are addressed more adequately than longer-term reintegration needs. IOM’s strength also lies in its flexibility and ability to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

**Beyond a strategy, addressing common implementation challenges:** The implementation of the projects present several crosscutting issues that create obstacles on the ground. These include the limited ability of staff to properly select beneficiaries and target groups, a disparate coverage of provinces and finally, a lack of coordination with stakeholders. These are problems for which solutions rest in: increasing the training of staff to properly identify and target vulnerable groups, tightening the geographic coverage and communicating more frequently with other agencies to increase IOM’s added value and limit the overlap of resources and activities.

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

## METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork, conducted in January and February of 2014, surveyed 588 households in the four provinces evaluated: 126 beneficiaries of post-arrival assistance, 151 beneficiaries of livelihood assistance, 117 beneficiaries of shelter assistance and 194 non-beneficiaries.



Quantitative data collection was completed with focus group discussions, case studies, community leader surveys and key informant interviews with relevant governmental departments, international and national actors and IOM staff. For a complete overview of the methodology, please see the full version of the report.

**Survey Respondents by Province and Type of Assistance Received**

## Flexible and Efficient Post-arrival Assistance

*IOM's post-arrival activities proved reliable and efficient at supporting the safe return of IOM's*



*population of concern. Activities are focused on returning Afghan households - mainly unregistered/undocumented returnees - from Iran and Pakistan, identified at centres at border points and who are given a set of post-arrival support including transportation, non food items and cash for transportation. Within this pre-defined framework, IOM adapted to the evolving migration context by including deportees, unaccompanied minors and vulnerable families who required additional and special attention.*

### **IOM optimizes its project-based approach by adapting assistance to displaced populations' needs.**

Over the course of the 5 projects evaluated, the target group for post-arrival assistance broadened, from returnees to vulnerable deported families, deported EVIs, in particular unaccompanied minors, and vulnerable families and individuals who returned spontaneously. This change in target population was based on field observations and identification of gaps in assistance, in coordination with UNHCR. The integration of individual deportees reflected the increase in deportations from Iran, whilst the inclusion of vulnerable spontaneous returnees responded to a gap in assistance.

**This shows a strong degree of flexibility and level of adaptation to the provincial migratory context, a welcome vigilance and coordination that enhance the relevance of their activities.**

**Special attention to UAMs and other EVIs.** IOM also adapted the modalities of its projects to the special needs of segments of its target population. In particular, unaccompanied minors, large families and single women were given specific assistance matching their needs, a positive indicator of relevance of IOM activities.

**The impact of IOM's post-assistance activity is most felt in Herat and Nimroz.** There, the organisation is successful in targeting highly vulnerable populations (deportees and UAMs) who benefit more from the services in transit centres.

**Satisfaction with Post-Arrival Assistance Provided by Location**  
*% of Respondents either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"; majority of remainder are "neutral"*

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

**Beneficiaries are satisfied as implementation of post-arrival assistance ran smoothly but beneficiaries report many extant needs. Just 24% of beneficiaries reported that short-term assistance was their first concern upon return to Afghanistan.** These requests call for a better integration between IOM's activities, especially return and reintegration.

#### **THERE ARE SEVERAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF POST-ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE:**

- **Selection and targeting:**
  - **Vulnerability criterion:** currently loosely defined, this means the selection of beneficiaries for post-arrival assistance and Non-Food Items (NFI) kits is not always consistent calling for increased staff training and sensitisation.
  - **Geographic:** some returnees – mostly spontaneous ones – do not return to the country through the 3 transit centres, and so are missed out on by IOM.
- **Assistance distributed:**
  - NFI kits should be strengthened as 44% report that there were not enough items in them for their families. Additionally, rare instances of mishandling of NFI kits by IPs were reported.
  - **Daily variations:** the system does not currently account for daily variation in beneficiary numbers, meaning supplies may run out.
- **Coordination with UNHCR:**
  - Systems to prevent “double-dipping” need to be improved.

**Overall, a lack of articulation with longer-term needs, especially shelter and livelihood, limits the sustainability and safety of the return of IOM beneficiaries, of whom a proportion attempt to migrate again to Iran. Within the confines of post-arrival assistance, IOM has proven its flexibility and capacity to address the needs of specific sub-segments of its target population. These can be built upon to improve selection, targeting, assistance and coordination as the next priority steps.**

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

## **Livelihood assistance: Relevant Activity, limited Impact**

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*Access to livelihoods and employment is an acute need and key to a successful reintegration of the displaced; IOM's livelihood assistance is thus hugely relevant in the Afghan context. While this component was implemented efficiently, the evaluation found that **livelihood projects had internal flaws limiting their impact on the socio-economic reintegration of target populations. It confirms that IOM has been more effective at achieving safe return than at addressing reintegration objectives, for which a project-based approach imposes inherent limitations.***

#### **SELECTION AS THE PRIMARY PROBLEM**

- First, **beneficiary selection** was successful in choosing needy beneficiaries, but was limited in choosing the target beneficiaries with the most potential to reintegrate due to the lack of clarity around selection criteria, nepotism and an insufficiently nuanced selection system. This led to:

- The poor integration of IDPs (only 16% of beneficiaries in Kabul, 14% in Herat province and 2% in Nimroz) and
- Tensions between vulnerability and building the potential for entrepreneurship. By prioritising assistance to the most vulnerable, IOM leaves out those who can provide the higher chances of successful reintegration, and of engendering a positive cycle. Who should IOM be targeting then? A more nuanced targeting criteria is needed to target those in most in need, while also target those with the most potential.
- Second, **selection of skills** was problematic. The two layers of market survey supposed to inform the choice of skills are not presently robust enough to guarantee a shift from traditional skills to marketable skills reaching less saturated markets, especially urban skills. That was particularly the case for female beneficiaries, for whom cultural constraints limit the range of skills accessible. This calls for a portfolio of adequate urban skills in future IOM programming through training and an “**urban skills toolkit**” for practitioners in the field.
- Third and last, the **selection of trainers** is a constant challenge in the field, especially in rural areas, where the qualification of trainers is not always guaranteed. Training of trainers will have to be integrated in future return and reintegration projects and integrated in proposals for donors as a necessary step to ensure great impact.

**As a result of these selection flaws – beneficiary, skills and trainer selection – the impact of the programme was limited**, especially for female beneficiaries: 62% of women beneficiaries reported only partial to no knowledge of the skills they were taught and 75% of beneficiaries across the board neither use their skills in a job nor earn money using the skills they learnt. Toolkits of poor quality and often distributed in an untimely fashion limit their impact in supporting beneficiaries’ access to self-employment and income-generating activities.

The long-term impact of livelihood assistance is questionable, but can be improved. Some positive impacts include secondary effects such as the space opened for women’s sociability. A thorough assessment of secondary effects can support more positive outcomes in the future. This will require further assessments on the chain of impact of IOM’s programming – beyond immediate objectives to a more holistic approach.

→ The evaluation recommends that the livelihood assistance be better tailored to

1. Target those with the most potential to reintegration – within the vulnerable group: target not only the most vulnerable but also those within them with the most potential to reintegrate, through a layered selection process – first defining the vulnerable, then defining their potential for reintegration
2. Target urban skills – through a stronger mapping and training of the adequate “urban skills toolkit” at the disposal of field offices. Assessing skills supply and demand will allow IOM to identify the right sectors for men and women, remembering gender-sensitive skills are needed to minimise the impact of displacement on women in urban settings
3. Target trainers – building a training of trainers programme in rural settings primarily.

IOM can develop a causal chain model to develop the positive effects that the programme has on the community, from an increased sociability for women to a stronger training of trainers. The project should be reinforced in urban areas through more adequate skills and in rural areas, where it suffers from the lower qualification of trainers and a lower connection to the markets.

## Shelter Assistance: a First Step Towards Reintegration

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IOM provided shelter assistance to beneficiaries in Nangarhar in 2008 and Herat and Nimroz in 2010, through a self-help programme where beneficiaries were given the materials and instructions necessary to construct their own homes. **Shelter assistance is addressing a proven need of populations on the move and represents a first step in the reintegration process.**



*Exterior of IOM shelters in Taqi Naqi, Herat Province*

**The programme itself had a positive impact and fulfils an important need for beneficiaries.** Indeed, 94% of beneficiaries reported using the shelter as a primary place of residence, and both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries reported that the shelter programme had a positive impact on their community.

However, research showed the need to improve shelter interventions:

**Beneficiary selection does not guarantee a roof for the most vulnerable households.** 84% in Nangarhar, 73% in Nimroz and 55% in Herat reported no specific vulnerabilities. The necessity for beneficiaries to own land or have access to land in order to be given shelter assistance limited the ability of IPs to select vulnerable households: as a result IDPs were marginalized in the shelter project, particularly in Herat and Nangarhar where interviewers did not meet any IDP households among shelter beneficiaries. Given growing internal displacement in Afghanistan, an adjustment is urgently needed.

**Shelter design was flawed – limited size and protective walls:** shelters were deemed too small, especially in Nangarhar, where the average family size of beneficiaries reached 10.2 people. The absence of surrounding wall posed protection challenges. The programme was, however, successful in allowing for some flexibility of design: in Nimroz, for example, dome-shaped roofs were adopted.

**Different levels of IP performance across provinces** were revealed by the research, as well as accusations of graft from beneficiaries. Whether these are true or rumours, they negatively affect the perception of the assistance provided and ultimately affect its impact. A community-based monitoring system based on a direct link between beneficiaries and IOM will ensure a stronger and organic evaluation of IPs to strengthen future programming performance.

**The sustainability of the shelter project** depends heavily on local economic conditions and availability of basic services. When those are lacking, secondary displacement occurrence can be high, as it was the case in the land allocation sites (LAS) in Herat province. For an efficient allocation of resources, the sustainability of the sites of implementation of the shelter project – through a mapping of local service provision – should be better assessed prior to the start of the project.

→ The study showed that the requirements for shelter assistance should be adapted to provide for the basic needs of the most vulnerable. Since the 2013 Samuel Hall/UNHCR evaluation of shelter assistance was released, there is proof that shelter assistance improves the chances of reintegration. The next steps for IOM are therefore to:

1. Develop stronger mechanisms to integrate vulnerable IDP households
2. Build **community-based monitoring systems** to increase oversight of IPs and guarantee better performance, and lastly
3. **Coordinate** with UNHCR, NRC and other shelter providers for displaced populations – lessons learned from shelter programmes across agencies should highlight changes to shelter assistance in Afghanistan in a more holistic way. This will improve accountability and oversight of IPs, increase relevance and effectiveness of actions, and create a greater advocacy potential and influence over donors to build on the proven successes of shelter assistance in Afghanistan.

**Advocacy efforts to adapt shelter assistance across partner agencies** – IOM, UNHCR, NRC and other shelter providers – is needed should the terms of the selection process change from the field upwards to the policy level. Requiring that beneficiaries possess land to provide for shelter no longer fits with the Afghan context.

## Cross-cutting Issues Limit IOM's Impact on Reintegration

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**Disconnect between IOM and its IPs: Need for stronger oversight.** The evaluation team found disconnects in coordination between IOM and its IPs, leading to delays in implementation, and overlaps among agencies due to poor coordination mechanisms. The lack of financial and technical follow-up limits the sustainability and effectiveness of IOM's activities. The lack of post-activity monitoring also weakens IOM's ability to identify issues and follow-up on them once the activity is over. Finally, the in-existent monitoring of beneficiaries post-activities reduces the chances for IOM to draw and build on lessons learned, and for a consultative process integrating beneficiary feedback.

**Despite these weaknesses, reintegration activities have supported the reintegration process of returnee and IDP households,** as they judge their socio-economic situation similar or better than non-beneficiaries. Forced undocumented returnees and IDPs were the most likely to note a positive impact of reintegration activities on their households: 81% of IDPs noted improvement in their household condition as a result of livelihood assistance, versus 56% overall. Evaluation of reintegration impact based on indicators such as access to safe water, registration to vote, trust in neighbours and land ownership showed the greatest impact on reintegration in Nimroz province.

**The sustainability of this improvement is less clear: make M&E and technical input systematic.** The lack of timely and systematic follow-up evaluations by IOM stands in the way of sustainable programming. The lack of monitoring is problematic: in some cases, difficulties affecting the sustainability of assistance appear after the actual assistance period is over. The lack of technical assistance and start-up funds for livelihood assistance means that beneficiaries cannot systematically use their new skills to earn money as the toolkits do not suffice.

# Conclusion – How can IOM better link Return and Reintegration? Lessons learned from Afghanistan

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## Strategic Review: Who, Where and How?

While IOM's projects, funded by the Government of Japan, contributed to a safe return and reintegration process, and improved beneficiaries' lives, significant gaps remain:

1. The lack of continuity between return and reintegration activities,
2. Confusion around beneficiary, skills and trainer targeting,
3. Irregular monitoring, follow-up evaluation and technical assistance limit success.

The reintegration component of IOM's activities suffers the most from these weaknesses. The independent nature of activities and limited follow-through poses serious questions about their sustainability.

Overall, IOM's project-based approach is both a strength and a weakness when it comes to addressing the needs of uprooted populations:

- *On the one hand*, it gives IOM the flexibility to adapt activities to a changing context – a precious capacity in conflict and post-conflict settings, where movements of population fluctuate rapidly and unexpectedly. In the Afghan context, IOM proved able to re-define its target groups and increasingly include sub-groups with specific needs.
- *On the other hand*, the challenges IOM faces with the implementation of its activities are also inherently linked to its project-based approach, which reduces IOM's capacity to implement sufficient pre-implementation and post-implementation mechanisms to guarantee the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of its activities. Reintegration is the component that suffers the most from this delinking.

Recommendations in this report propose ways to go beyond the shortcomings linked to IOM's project-based approach, while making the most of its advantages. For an optimal use of resources, this evaluation recommends to:

1. **Reduce IOM's geographic scope**
2. **Reduce target groups** to a few of the most vulnerable sub-groups, such as unaccompanied minors, female-headed households, drug-addicted households and IDPs.
3. Integrate beneficiaries in a **cycle of assistance** that would link return and reintegration activities, **creating synergies** between projects. This would allow IOM to increase the relevance of its intervention in a field where numerous actors are active, while increasing the long-term impact of its activities for groups who face the greatest challenges to reintegrate in the Afghan society.
4. Require **systematic M&E and integration of lessons learned** in each proposal submitted to donors – to highlight where IOM comes from and where it is heading in the long – and challenging – process of return and reintegration in conflict settings. This will lead to greater advocacy, coordination and improvements in the sector overall – not just for IOM.

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

## Strategic Overview

### ▪ WHAT activities should IOM prioritize?

**Should IOM continue both post-arrival and reintegration activities?** IOM currently finds itself fulfilling both humanitarian and development actor roles – a big stretch and difficult shoes to fill. Both the post-arrival and shelter assistance programmes have a short-term palliative effect on beneficiaries; however, without other long-term assistance, they do not allow migrants to be reintegrated into communities. Livelihood assistance programmes, when they lead to employment, can have a more fundamental impact, but research shows that in most cases here they did not. In this case, **synergies between activities, integrating beneficiaries in a cycle of immediate assistance, livelihood assistance and shelter assistance are needed.**

**Building a Partnership Strategy** – the cycle of assistance cannot be the responsibility of IOM alone – to the contrary, partnerships and coordination are required to create such synergies. Recommended partnerships with UNHCR, NRC, DRC on shelter provision and livelihood programmes; with UNHABITAT on service mapping and service provision; ILO and the World Bank on defining skills provision; and finally with research institutions and evaluators to provide systematic and unbiased feedback to the organisation. Last but not least, partnership strategy should integrate donors' plan in a decreasing funding cycle that will maximise limited resources. How to tailor this Partnership Strategy? Building on IOM strengths and filling in gaps highlighted in this study.

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

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

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

**Improving linkage between vocational trainings and labour market.** Project documents and IOM and IP staff discussed helping beneficiaries find jobs however few beneficiaries reported receiving much help in finding employment. Beyond helping beneficiaries find

employment, IOM could consider further development activities that have proven effective on the community development.<sup>1</sup>

#### ▪ WHERE should IOM focus its activities?

**IOM activities in Nimroz province had a greater impact than in other provinces: IOM fills a gap in a province that has long been deserted by other organisations.** Given the numbers of vulnerable returnees from Iran and the more limited numbers of other actors in the province, Nimroz stands out as an appropriate place to continue and enhance activities – and one in need. At the junction of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, Nimroz can become one of the core areas of IOM’s added value – a other organisations have limited outreach in this province.

**Of the areas considered by this evaluation, Kabul stands out as an outlier:** only one type of activity was conducted there, five years ago, and nothing since. Given the preponderance of organisations performing similar activities in Kabul, in particular in the Kabul Informal Settlements, further work in the capital can be de-prioritised. Such decisions will naturally have to be taken in consultation with donors, national actors and partner agencies.

The Humanitarian Country Team (OCHA) 2013 Strategic Response Plan identifies Helmand, Kunar, Badghis, Nangarhar and Ghor as the provinces with the highest humanitarian needs currently. Here **coordination** will be key: in planning future activities, rather than simply relying on the areas with the highest humanitarian needs, IOM should sit with other stakeholders to make sure that other areas that may still have great needs are not forgotten.

#### ▪ WHO to target in priority?

**At a strategic level** - The evaluation found inconsistencies in the definition of IOM’s population of concern. In particular, no continuum is in place between IOM’s population of concern immediately upon return (at the transit centre point) and then further on in the reintegration phase. IOM’s target group is a lot less clear in the reintegration phase where delineation of roles with UNHCR is not as clear-cut. The result is an incoherent and patchy reintegration intervention. This discrepancy between return and reintegration also reduces IOM’s opportunities to follow-up on its assistance: unaccompanied minors, for example, could benefit from a follow up of IOM’s activities in the reintegration phase to prevent risky migration abroad.

Three contextual trends are key to IOM’s future programming: a) the increase in the number of IDPs; b) the steady number of deportees from Iran crossing the border with Nimroz and Herat, and c) the presence of unaccompanied minors, drug-affected households and female-headed households. All of these target populations come with their specific vulnerability and protection challenges. The decrease in voluntary return makes this target population all the less relevant for IOM, especially given the scope of UNHCR’s programmes and its mandate over voluntary refugee returns. As exposed above, the integration of IDPs in IOM’s activities remain weak.

Rather than stretching its resources over large and vaguely defined beneficiary population, sometimes shared with other actors like UNHCR, should strengthen the definition of its target population to include a layered programming approach:

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the creation of dairy cooperatives in Herat province with the guidance of CRS, which are still functional five years after original project.

1. IOM: an agency focusing on subgroups within the displaced: IDPs, unaccompanied minors, drug-affected households and female-headed households.
2. IOM: an agency focusing on the needs of deportees from Iran to Nimroz and Herat
3. IOM: an agency working hand in hand with UNHCR to avoid overlap and improve targeting

▪ **HOW? Creating synergies: continuum between post-arrival and reintegration activities**

**Geographically integrated approach to assistance**

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

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

**Enhanced referral system to other development programmes**

It is very important to ensure the sustainability of created assets – if IOM itself cannot ensure this follow-up, other organisations can be tasked to complete this task. Beyond follow-up on created assets, such as the geographically integrated approach, IOM could liaise with organisations involved in other reintegration programmes to solidify beneficiaries' socio-economic situation via additional assistance – and referrals.

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

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

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

**Based on the findings and conclusions of this study**, a plan with actions to be taken and partnership strategies is recommended to strengthen future IOM programming. It has three steps:

1. Strengthen post-arrival assistance and linkages to development assistance.

2. Develop four stand-alone programmes to target specific vulnerable groups: IDPs, UAMs, women's resilience in displacement, drug-affected households
3. Build a monitoring system based on geographic specificities and causal chain mechanisms.

These three priorities will enable IOM to make programming more relevant and more sustainable:

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

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

	<p>4. <b>IOM support to drug-affected households:</b> Improve programmes targeting drug-affected households returning from Iran in Herat and Nimroz. Adopt a two-phased approach: i) identification of cases at the transit centre; ii) Specific assistance cycle including medical treatment and a social and economic re-integration programme</p>	
<p><b>BUILD A SYSTEMATIC MONITORING FRAMEWORK BASED ON GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFICITIES AND CAUSAL CHAIN MECHANISMS</b></p>	<p>1. <b>Build a provincial evaluation mechanism and lessons learned to strengthen national programming</b> – the evaluation found differences across provinces and a lack of mechanisms to learn from past implementation and replicate best practices. A solid internal M&amp;E structure should be developed for return &amp; reintegration activities.</p> <p>2. <b>Identify IOM’s geographic added value:</b> The study shows positive results in Nimroz, a left-out province in terms of the assistance delivered and of the number of stakeholders present. IOM’s added value in a province left out by other stakeholders, a province at the border of both Iran and Pakistan and home to mixed migration trends (cross-border irregular movements, trafficking in persons, voluntary and forced returns, as well as increasing internal displacement trends) should be strengthened.</p>	<p>IOM will need to improve its information base to build a monitoring framework, based on the cooperation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Community members</b> through a community-based monitoring system. This can be done through CDCs or focal points that will report incidents and complaints directly to IOM</li> <li>- <b>Implementing partners</b> will have to strengthen their reporting mechanism in line with new guidelines built to highlight local specificities (both successes and weaknesses to be addressed). IPs will be required to provide solutions.</li> <li>- <b>Third party evaluators</b> who will track objectives using a longitudinal and comparative perspective</li> </ul>

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