

Summary report

Returns to Somalia: Setting Protection and Livelihood Standards

An Assessment of DRC's AVRR Pilot Programme to Mogadishu



UDI

DRC DANISH
REFUGEE
COUNCIL

A logo consisting of a network of black dots connected by thin black lines, forming a stylized geometric shape.
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ACRONYMS

ASWL	Association of Somali Women Lawyers
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMC	Modern Management Company
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PREMIG	Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
UDI	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization

1. ASSESSING RETURNS TO SOMALIA

Returns to (post-)conflict and fragile settings, from Afghanistan to Somalia, are increasing. The literature is clear on the return challenges to such contexts, and the diverse array of expectations of (re-)integration that differ depending on age, gender, timing and duration of exile, and conditions in exile. What this report measures is therefore not the impact of a program, as the overall context includes this complex backdrop of hopes and dreams, caught by reality and ultimately, by unplanned outcomes. Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes are a compromise that returnees turn to, and agree to, when other recourses have not been successful. This is where this programme intervenes: assisting returns when returns become, by circumstances, the most realistic option for migrants, and one that should be handled with sufficient care, protection and dignity for those who return. There are responsibilities to be upheld, by states and by organisations mandated to assist returns.

The methodology outlined in the coming pages is based on the beneficiaries' perspective, but also that of their families, relatives, friends, and also neighbours, non-migrants, who are part of their communities of return. It is not a negative feedback but a realistic feedback, at times also one that is confused, angry and confrontational. These voices should not be disregarded but listened to. They all tell us something that can improve the way states, organisations and individuals approach and organise returns.

This report looks at a small population but a representative sample – 7 returnees assisted by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in 2014-2015 to return from Norway to Somalia – and an equally diverse set of migration projects. Some were displaced internally first, effectively internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing conflict, before resorting to migration abroad. Others travelled with relatives, some alone, and their ages ranged from 60 to 30 years of age, mostly male but including one returnee woman as well, from various parts and journeys in Somalia.

None of them knew each other, and few of them are in touch in Somalia. The lack of ties between returnees is a gap this report can address, among other existing gaps. The fact that returnees do not have a role in the programme can be reversed, they can be reinforced as actors and agencies, as facilitators of return and reintegration. Half of them showed a willingness to be considered as such, the other half would welcome support from their peers, even when they reject the support of institutional stakeholders.

A one-size-fits-all approach to returns has been vastly questioned in the literature. It is not needed and in this particular case of returns to Somalia, given the sheer limits on voluntary returns, it is possible to adopt a more tailored approach. DRC is the right interlocutor for this, and has the right partners on board, from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the private sectors. This report gives specific recommendations of *who* the private sector actors are, and *how* they can be relied on.

The full report questions semantics – such as calling reintegration packages business start-up opportunities – with the aim of improving a tailored programming that takes into account individual cases and structural constraints. The reality of the labour markets is far more complex, and the need for skills more pronounced. Having the right words to plan programs will ensure that expectations can be better aligned. Having the right monitoring and evaluation framework will, in turn, ensure that responsibilities are aligned.

1. EVALUATING A PILOT AVRR PROGRAM

DRC in cooperation with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration UDI, is implementing a pilot programme on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) of Somalis from Norway to Mogadishu. This evaluation intervenes at the end of a first phase of the pilot: to assess, responsibly, outcomes of the project to prepare for future rounds of returns to Somalia, responsibly and respecting DRC's mandate as a protection agency, with a strong presence in Somalia and portfolio of reintegration projects cutting across migration categories.

This evaluation does not intervene at just any time in Somalia's history, on the contrary: 2015 has seen an evolution in the official discourse on return in Somalia: discouraged until now, returns have become commonplace and span across legal categories – from refugees, to failed asylum seekers, from assisted to spontaneous returns. 'Return' as a concept, therefore needs to be unpacked and understood; 'Reintegration' equally. This research not only assesses the reintegration of the returnees in this pilot programme, but also pays close attention to the important question of the extent to which the protection of returnees to Mogadishu is being safeguarded. As a result, this research aims to set standards on what conditions of returns to Somalia are and what they should be.

a. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is an evaluation of the pilot phase of the AVRR programme from Norway to Somalia. It offers an opportunity for DRC to better tailor its programme and for UDI to assess the standards with which returns can be made responsibly. The study provides an assessment of the reintegration process of the returnees. The following component were assessed full or in part – and constituted the 6 pillars of the research framework:

1. AVRR process: information; selection and screening of candidates - pre-departure procedures; and arrival procedures- provision of reintegration assistance and monitoring
2. Drivers of return: legal status and access to livelihoods opportunities
3. Beneficiary satisfaction and expectations: perceived situation, conditions of service, compensation, increase self-sufficiency, satisfaction, plans to re-migrate, and support.
4. Income generation and vocational training: learning outcomes and need for additional learning, increased skills to generate income and access to income, and satisfaction.
5. Return's impact on social network and family: increased and/or decreased pressure on resources, increased local capacities, assistance received, and perception of returnees.
6. Government policy and the sustainability of return: formulation and implementation of laws, regulations and policies, their transparency and their reflection of international legal frameworks.

b. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research framework was initially intended to take on a life history approach. In qualitative research, life histories mean collecting data on a person's life and family histories, as well as collecting oral testimonies from their peers. In summary, the qualitative data collection of this study focused on:

- Individual in-depth interviews with the returnees from Norway to Somalia (5 out of 7)
- Individual in-depth interviews with family and friends of the returnees (10)
- A control group: individual in-depth interviews with non-returnee Somalis (10)
- Key informant interviews: public and private stakeholders in Oslo, Nairobi and Mogadishu (20)
- Focus group discussion with the returnees

c. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Three main limitations and constraints were experienced during the fieldwork:

- The **unwillingness of some returnees to engage**: the research team only managed to secure face-to-face interviews with five out of seven returnees.
- The **security environment and the lack of direct access** by the authors of the study. The security situation in Mogadishu at the time of the research (October/November 2015) did not allow for international researchers to access the homes of the returnees. Research was therefore led by local-based Somali researchers, trained for this specific study.
- The implementation of the project, as **DRC AVRR programme activities were ongoing at the time of the evaluation**, contributing to a sense of over-solicitation of returnees and crossing agendas. Efforts of the research team were seen as redundant, by the returnees, with the ongoing activities of DRC staff. Being solicited by DRC and then by the research team resulted in a loss of interest and a sense of fatigue on the part of the returnees, ultimately proving to be counter-productive.

2. NOTIONS AND REALITIES OF RETURN

a. AVRR PROGRAMMES: BUILDING ON PAST EVIDENCE

AVRRs have been operating for close to three decades. They target unsuccessful asylum seekers, irregular migrants, stranded migrants, victims of trafficking and qualified and skilled nationals. Despite the growing popularity of AVRR programmes in many European countries, where they are increasingly assuming a more central role in migration management policies, AVRR's are not often monitored nor are they evaluated (Paasche, 2015). As a result, a limited amount of knowledge on how they are carried out and the extent to which their reintegration objectives are achieved exists. Monitoring and evaluation is crucial for setting standards on returns in such difficult contexts. In Somalia, where the return of refugees, migrants, and IDPs is increasingly occurring, setting these standards is imperative.

AVRR programmes have also taken a community-based approach to ensure sustainable reintegration and the creation of opportunities for returnees and their communities. In this light, sustainable return is not only dependent on the individual, but on his/her family, community, and immediate surroundings. In 2013, Whyte and Hirsland noted that "assisted return policies should adopt a more development-oriented focus that prioritises the long-term integration, or embeddedness, of returnees in the local cultural and socioeconomic environment. This requires a better understanding of specific return contexts and returnee populations, as well as a better integration between pre- and post-return measures¹."

The study builds on analysis from previous studies on returns and provides concrete recommendations to operationalize the community-based linkages, the development linkages, and the pre- and post-return linkages. It provides strategic input to approaching returns from a community perspective, and from a development perspective, to provide the full meaning of what 'reintegration' can mean in programming terms. Too often, AVRR programmes prioritise the return component, while the reintegration phase, the most challenging part, is boiled down to traditional and one-size-fits-all packages that have a limited impact. This research goes beyond the one-size-fits all to a more tailored response.

¹ Whyte and Hirsland (2013) *Assisted return of rejected asylum seekers – how can we create sustainability?* DIIS Policy Brief.

b. LITERATURE ON RETURN AND REINTEGRATION IN (POST-) CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

There is a gap in literature on return migration and reintegration. A considerable amount of the existing research is academic. However, operational studies that inform the gap between policies and programmes are far and few between. Logically, AVRR programmes often take place in post-conflict environments. However, as demonstrated by this pilot programme in Mogadishu, where the transition from conflict to post-conflict is both volatile and ongoing, not all AVRR programmes are being implemented in a classic 'post-conflict' context, and will have special considerations that need to be identified and addressed. More research on reintegration programmes in contexts like south-central Somalia is therefore crucial.

A specific lens must be adopted for countries like Afghanistan and Somalia that are not post-conflict contexts in the sense that they are not void of conflict, although investments are being made to transition out of conflict. Both countries have a complex road ahead and one that cannot be qualified by a 'post-conflict' label to justify returns.

DEFINING AND MEASURING SUSTAINABLE RETURN: NOTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY; AND INDICATORS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RETURN

The primary objective of AVRR programmes is to assist returnees in their sustainable return and reintegration in their country or place of origin. However, how does one define 'sustainable return'? Despite its importance, a comprehensive definition of sustainable return does not exist, with studies on return migration adopting different indicators to define and measure sustainable return:

- **Re-migration:** whereby defining sustainable return is based on whether or not a returnee re-migrates after returning to their place/country of origin. Without thoroughly assessing the reasons for a re-migration, however, assessing the sustainability of a return based solely on this indicator can be problematic. The reasons for an individual's re-migration can be linked to many factors and cannot solely be attributed to the inability to reintegrate. As discussed in the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty's policy brief², few countries, if any, have zero migration. Therefore, allowing for some re-migration in this definition is needed. The question then is, how much?
- **Socio-economic situation:** the returnee's ability to find employment, a livelihood, and access housing and basic services. However, a point of comparison is needed, either in relation to the returnee's status prior to the initial migration (comparing post-return with pre-migration socio-economic situations) or to the situation of the local population (who never migrated).
- **Protection:** the extent to which returnees are able to live free of protection concerns. Common protection indicators include: physical security and safety, legal protection including housing, land and property rights, documentation, family separation, social inclusion, and health. Reintegration will be affected if returnees' are faced with protection concerns, such as security incidents or mental health problems. However, protection on its own, just as one's socio-economic situation on its own, does not offer a full picture of one's situation to then accurately measure reintegration.

² Black and Gent (2004) 'Defining, Measuring, and Influencing sustainable return', Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.

The above indicators have all led to question regarding the need to identifying *benchmarks* in order to assess the extent to which one's return is sustainable. Without benchmarks, it is not possible to measure the impact of programmes and policy interventions on individuals. Temporal elements must also be considered (Koser and Kuschminder, IOM: 2015). For example, how long after return can a sustainable return be measured? Can a standard amount of time be applied to all return contexts or must it be looked at differently depending on the context? Furthermore, in the 'not so post-conflict context' of south-central Somalia, measuring sustainable return and reintegration is perhaps even more complex than in a classic post-conflict context. Specifically, the benchmarks used to measure a sustainable return would have to be further scrutinised as large amounts of the local population may be seen to be unable to access most basic services, enjoy even a minimum standard of living, and live free of protection concerns.

There is much to learn from the forced displacement and durable solutions agenda in setting a framework for returns. The IASC framework is an example of the guidelines and tools available in displacement settings that can be of relevance to return settings: what are the standards to be upheld post-return?

c. CHANGING CONTEXT OF RETURNS TO SOMALIA

Returns have featured more prominently in south-central Somalia in 2015, with forced returns from Saudi Arabia, the UNHCR-assisted voluntary repatriation of refugees from Kenya, AVRR programmes from Europe, and IDP returns. It is imperative for stakeholders to unpack the broader 'returnee' groups. Not all returns are voluntary and returnees do not have the same needs, nor do they have the same motivations to return. Returns require a tailored response, with an assessment of the absorption capacity on the ground and a commitment to engage with development partners on reintegration programmes. This is a focus of this study, with strategic recommendations on how to better address the needs of returnees, of their families and communities – to increase the absorption capacity – and of private sector actors to provide a link, when the work of humanitarians and protection-based agencies like DRC ends.

Key informants highlighted a growing risk for governments in Europe to view the Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali refugees³ from Kenya as an indication that mass returns can take place. South-central Somalia is not ready for mass returns and this is something that UNHCR has been careful to caution. It is imperative that governments eager to step up their AVRR programmes in Somalia take a sincere look at the situation on the ground; a situation that can only be seen as complex and volatile. When exploring the potential for implementing AVRRs in Somalia, governments hosting Somali refugees, rejected asylum seekers, and migrants, must consider the profiles of the potential returnees, the areas in which returns can happen, the absorption capacity of the areas where it has been deemed safe to return, and the areas where it has not been declared to return.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: ENGAGING WITH FGS ON RETURNS

An official migration policy or policy on return in Somalia does not yet exist. In principle, the FGS welcomes the voluntary return of Somali nationals to Somalia from foreign countries and has agreed to facilitate their arrival. To date, the role of the FGS in the implementation of this AVRR programme has been limited; however, there is space and a need for an increased role of the Government in these programmes. Prior to this taking place; however, the capacity building of relevant government institutions and training of immigration authorities on AVRR programmes is needed.

³ The tripartite agreement provides a legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya and their reintegration in Somalia. The agreement was reached and signed in November 2013 and covers a three year period.

2. DRC'S AVRR POLICY: SHAPING RETURNS IN PRACTICE

1. PRINCIPLES OF THE DRC AVRR PROGRAMME TO SOMALIA

The study explores DRC policy and operational guidelines for engaging in returns offering a comparative look into policy and practice. DRC has formulated 15 principles⁴ and rules that guide its engagement in donor-funded AVRR programmes. Below is a summary of the principles:

Principle 1: Voluntariness: where returns must be voluntary and based on the candidates free and informed decision, and on pull factors as opposed to push factors.

Principle 2: Endorsement of local authorities and data protection: relevant Somali authorities should formally endorse AVRR programmes.

Principle 3: Candidate assessment and interview: DRC must take part in the selection of candidates in order to assess the voluntariness of their decision to return and their general profile, level of support that the candidate would have from family and relatives in the area of return; and their degree of vulnerability.

Principle 4: Information sharing: candidates must received detailed information on the country and area of return to ensure that they are able to make an informed decision to return.

Principle 5: Return area assessment: with specific considerations to security, strength of family and clan-based networks, humanitarian situation including livelihood options and availability of basic services in the area of return, and the possibility of safe access for national DRC staff.

Principle 6: Candidate selection: DRC reserves the right to admit the candidate to the AVRR programme, request for additional information, or formally decline to assist the return of candidates whose profiles raise protection or security concerns, and who are not deemed capable of sustaining a livelihood in return.

Principle 7. Exclusion clauses and “red lines”: In no case DRC shall admit the following categories:

- Unaccompanied minors
- Persons who suffer from serious medical conditions
- Persons who have been found guilty of crimes by an appeal court in a fair trial
- Persons deemed likely to face immediate detention upon arrival in Somalia
- Persons standing trial in the host country
- Persons who committed Human Rights violations or acted in violation of IHL.

Principle 8. Family reunification: facilitate candidates’ reunification with their family in Somalia.

Principle 9. Safe travel to areas of return: Arrangements must be made by DRC and the host government to ensure the candidate travels from the host country to their areas of origin in safety and dignity.

Principle 10. Assistance package to ensure that returnees: are provided with information, counseling and medical assistance before departure; are able to meet their immediate needs upon return; are able to sustain livelihoods; are able to acquire new marketable skills and/or receive start-up support; have access to psychosocial support services, if needed; with special vulnerabilities receive ad-hoc support; have access to legal counseling; are assisted to obtain necessary documentation; and family reunification facilitated.

Principle 11. Harmonisation of assistance packages in monetary terms within and between AVRR programmes. DRC allows for part of the package to be adjusted to the needs of individual returnees.

Principle 12. Fair asylum rules, procedures and policies in host countries

Principle 13. Upholding humanitarian standards

Principle 14. Limitation of responsibility: DRC cannot be held responsible for crimes committed by returnees after their arrival in Somalia or security incidents caused by returnees on route or in Somalia.

Principle 15. Refugee-returnees and tripartite agreement: refugee returnees are subject to specific principles of UNHCR-backed voluntary repatriation programmes.

⁴ DRC (2014), AVRR guidelines for Somalia.

a. OUTLINE OF DRC AVRR PILOT IN MOGADISHU

The pilot AVRR programme started in October 2014 and is due to end on 31 December 2015. This study takes place towards the end of this timeline, to take stock, assess and evaluate the programme from a protection and livelihoods lens, to inform future phases. The programme was designed to assist 30 Somali nationals in their socio-economic reintegration in Somalia upon return from Norway and to ensure a sustainable return. To date, the actual number of Somalis assisted is seven (7). An eighth returnee was due to arrive at the time of this study. The target group comprises of Somalis in Norway who have family in Mogadishu and are able to return to Mogadishu. The programmed targets the following statuses:

- **Asylum seekers** (still within the asylum process but wish to return home voluntarily)
- **Rejected asylum seekers** who volunteer to return to Mogadishu
- **Somali nationals who were denied residence permits** in Norway and who volunteer to return
- **Somali nationals with a permanent residence permit or protection status** who want to repatriate

UDI identifies potential returnees and refers them to DRC for a second interview to assess their ability to fulfil the requirements of the programme. The objective of the interview is to determine the genuine voluntariness of the candidate's return decision as well as to ensure that the candidate's profile does not raise well-grounded protection or security concerns, and that the candidate would be capable of sustaining his/her livelihood in the area of return, should s/he return to Mogadishu.

CASH GRANT

All returnees received 10,000 Norwegian Kroner in two instalments upon return in Mogadishu. The first instalment is received upon arrival, on day 1, followed by the second instalment received 2-3 weeks later.

BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING

The returnees took part in a business skills training course, carried out by the Modern Management Company (MMC), a local, Mogadishu-based organisation. The training focuses on entrepreneurship and business skills and spans over 10 days. The objective of the course is to increase the business awareness of the returnees in terms of entrepreneurship and business skills, marketing skills, IT skills and book keeping skills. While MMC has conducted ad-hoc monitoring in the period immediately after the training, a full monitoring framework that includes agreed upon monitoring outputs between MMC and DRC does not exist. This was seen to be the main weakness of the training and a key area for future intervention.

IN-KIND BUSINESS START-UP ASSISTANCE

An in-kind assistance package of 30,000 Norwegian Kroner is provided to help set up a business, once they have completed the training and developed a business plan. For some, this involved purchasing a *tuk tuk* for a taxi/transportation service and for others, purchasing items for a shop they wished to set up.

LEGAL AID/COUNSELING

The UDI/DRC AVRR programme includes a legal counselling component, which is provided by the Association of Somali Women Lawyers (ASWL), a Mogadishu-based legal NGO. The legal counselling consists of a one-day group workshop, in which the returnees are counselled on the Somali legal system, housing land, and property rights, and documentation, and an individual counselling session, in which specific legal issues relevant to the returnees' situation are the focus.⁵

⁵ The research team did not assess the ASWL course as the first counselling sessions only took place towards the end of the evaluation (early November 2015).

b. RETURNING...AND REINTEGRATING?

The study took an in-depth look at the lived experiences of return and reintegration. The focus of this was mainly on the analysis of the main drivers for return; the voluntariness of the decision; the perceptions they and their family held on their return; and the protection and livelihood situations.

THE DRIVERS OF THE DECISION TO RETURN TO MOGADISHU

The decision to return among migrants and refugees is complex with numerous factors playing a role. Often times, it is hard for a returnee to separate the reasons for returning from one another (Black et al, 2004). This was true of the returnees interviewed for this study.

It was found that first and foremost, the decision to return was linked to the rejection of the asylum claim and the inability to acquire residence permits/permit to stay in Norway. This was followed by the lack of job prospects, lack of medical care and insurance, poor health, and an inability to send money home to dependents. The study's findings showed that for all the returnees interviewed, *structural* factors (their legal status in Norway, living in reception centres, lack of access to services) were the cause of return. Not having any legal recourse to stay led them to leave.

Just how voluntary when there was no option but to return?

The 'voluntary' aspect of assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes can be debated in cases where an alternative to return does not exist due to the legal status of the individual. All of them knew they did not have an alternative to staying, which formed the basis of their decision to leave. While their decisions have all been qualified by DRC as voluntary due to the absence of physical force (thus, not 'forced' as defined by DRC⁶), the primary drivers for their return were structural and, more specifically, rested on legal factors rooted in the conditions in Norway. Beyond the voluntary/forced debate, what the experiences of this group show is the agreement to return, an 'accepted return'. The concept of assisted or accepted returns is better adapted than a discussion around voluntary or forced returns in this case. This can feed into a revision of DRC's Principle 1⁷ (voluntariness) that states that the decision to return must be based on pull rather than push factors. Whether or not these returns should then be considered 'accepted', rather than 'voluntarily assisted' is an important debate that must be explored in policy discussions and during the formulation of AVRR programmes. Furthermore, it is imperative to keep in mind that one's reasons to return can have an effect on one's ability and motivation to reintegrate post-return.⁸

Accepting return: The long road to individual and family acceptance

Individuals often decide to migrate for the interest and wellbeing of their entire family. Families often pull funds together to finance the trip and this study was no exception. All the returnees interviewed and their families invested large amounts of money in their trip - within the range of \$10,000 to \$14,000. The responsibility and pressure that this carries must not be underestimated when exploring the return of migrants, especially when, as was seen among the returnees in this study, push factors played a major role in the decision to return. For many, returning can be seen as having wasted their money and efforts. As a

⁶ DRC uses the term 'accepted returns' to describe "individuals who voluntarily agree to return home, but where a legal order and a threat of possible sanctions may have influenced their decision." It defines 'forced return' as the return of individuals who do not voluntarily agree to return home and where, as a result, authorities may have to use physical force in conjunction with the departure." (DRC Policy Paper: Return of rejected asylum seekers and refugees whose residence permit has been withdrawn: 2015)

⁷ Refer to Page 11, DRC Principle 1 on 'Voluntariness'

⁸ 'Defining, Measuring and Influencing Sustainable Return' (2005)

result, accepting the decision to return was found to be complex and difficult for both the returnees and their families. Moreover, at a distance, not fully understanding the reality of life in Norway, the road to accepting this decision was often seen to be harder and longer for family, who were seen to have encouraged the returnees to stay in Norway and not to return to Mogadishu.

PERCEPTIONS OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

The returnees' narratives are often shaped by their perceptions of the process of return and reintegration, perceptions that are fluid. When asking questions related to topics that were explored in an earlier conversation, the returnees' answers would at times be contradictory to the views they had earlier expressed. This was observed with a number of returnees, specifically on the following topics: extent of social relations, their views of the programme, and, very importantly, their desire to re-migrate. Carling et al explain that return experiences are not entirely shaped by tangible outcomes. Furthermore, migrants form narratives on their experience, which can result in them presenting similar issues differently. "Migrants, like other people, tend to form narratives about their own choices that can be reconciled with their everyday existence and broader life projects. Returnees might therefore present similar challenges differently depending on, for instance, whether their return was wanted or unwanted. Accounts of return experiences are likely to change over time and depend on returnee's future plans, desires, and opportunities" (2015: 28).

All of the returnees spoke of their families as being their primary sources of support. It was difficult to gauge from the interviews the extent of their social networks. The degree to which they believed they could rely on the support of the community is linked to perceptions held by community members regarding their status as a returnee and the expectations that this status carries. The returnees explained that at times they are unable to reach out to non-family members for help since they carry the status of 'diaspora' and therefore the ones to be approached for help, not the other way around.

Ten Mogadishu residents who had never migrated out of the country were interviewed to provide a comparative base for the situation of the returnees. It was important to have an understanding of what life is like for the local population, people who are not dealing with reintegrating into a community or society. Generally, the livelihood and protection situations of the controlled group were not found to be different from those of the returnees. Although the non-returnees had more stable jobs and more stable personal lives, many did not have a full education and had limited skills. They were no better off than the returnees in their ability to mitigate the risks involved in living in a city that regularly suffers from security incidents.

A COPING STRATEGY OF RELOCATING ELSEWHERE

Many returnees show their agency by actively seeking out other solutions for themselves post-return. Internal relocation is one of these. Although the programme does not assist Somalis to return anywhere other than Mogadishu, two returnees chose to relocate (semi-permanently) to other towns post-return to Mogadishu. The chosen towns are Beletweyne⁹ and Afgoye¹⁰. In both cases, this secondary migration was strategic in that the returnees assessed that basing themselves outside of Mogadishu would be better for their businesses.

⁹ Beletweyne is a city in south-central Somalia, located in Beletweyne district and is the capital of the Hiran region.

¹⁰ Afgoye is a town in the Lower Shabelle region of Somalia, located 30 kilometres from Mogadishu.

2. KEY FINDINGS

a. PROTECTION

The study assesses their level of protection by exploring a number of indicators including physical security, legal protection, documentation, family separation, HLP rights, social inclusion, and health. The protection findings highlight particular concerns over returnees' mental health, which in turn have an impact on their economic and social integration in their society of return, and at times even, in their own families.

- **Physical security:** None of the returnees interviewed mentioned concerns over their physical security that would be above the local population's already high concerns over general insecurity. None had suffered any targeted incidents and, importantly, nothing that would be linked to their status as a returnee. Most noted the insecurities in Mogadishu and acknowledged that this presented a threat to their safety, as it did to the safety of every Mogadishu resident. Their status as a returnee was not seen as putting them at greater risk than other residents in Mogadishu – as long as they could keep a low enough profile. They did hint, however, that if opposition groups and specifically Al Shabaab knew of their status as returnees from the West, they could become targets. So far, being 7 returnees in a city of over 2 million inhabitants, meant that they could become 'invisible', a natural protection for them.
- **Legal problems:** Similarly, none of the returnees interviewed stated any problems with regard to their legal protection. While one of the seven returnees mentioned facing housing, land and property (HLP) right issues, he did not elevate this beyond the common difficulties around HLP rights overall in Mogadishu and Somalia.
- **Documentation:** All but one of the returnees interviewed did not have documentation but none mentioned concerns over their lack of documentation. As is often the case from other case studies, not possessing civil identification documentation is not seen as a requirement for having a normal life upon return.
- **Housing, Land and Property:** One of the five returnees interviewed has been experiencing problems related to the loss of property/land.
- **Social inclusion:** Four of the five returnees did not report any problems regarding their social inclusion. They felt at home. One returnee explained, "I feel no discrimination against me as a returnee because I'm in my land and with my fellow countrymen, I'm not looked at differently as a returnee, everyone welcomed me and made me felt at home" - Bashe, 46 years old. Yet two of the other returnees were found to be marginalized in their own families, one of them living on his own, the other not being accepted. The former was due to a state of mental illness, the second to issues – as reported by his families – of drug addition and being, even in Norway, in the business of dealing and consuming drugs. Their social inclusion was therefore hampered – but might have been hampered from before their migration. However, successive interviews with returnees showed that the mental health concerns had worsened during migration and after return, show a link not in the nature of the protection problems, but in the scope and extent of these problems. In two of the seven cases, these vulnerabilities had reached extremes blocking their ability to lead healthy lives.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING

The study explored the issue mental health and psychosocial wellbeing among the returnees. Depression, anger, short temper and other signs of stress were noted among 3¹¹ of the 7 returnees. Their life in Norway (living in a reception centre, having their asylum claim rejected, an inability to access to work, limited social networks, and an inability to fully socially or economically integrate) versus the life they had pictured for themselves prior to arriving in Norway are worlds apart and reconciling the two can be difficult and cause long-term distress. The returnees discussed feelings of disappointment and frustration with their situation. This can be accompanied by a sense of failure, stress, and pressure.

In 3 out of 7 cases, signs of mental health and psychosocial distress were clear and were attributed by returnees, families and friends as a consequence of the experiences in Norway. Most explain that problems started while waiting for an answer to the asylum claim. One returnee, 48 years old, suffers from depression, lack of sleep, and stress. He shared an official doctor's certificate (dated September 2015), with a diagnosis of chronic distress, depression and lack of sleep. The doctor recommended that the returnee seek appropriate medical care abroad, as the required care is not available in Somalia. The returnee's mental health is having an impact on his ability to reintegrate in Mogadishu: he lives separately from his family, distancing himself from his immediate network, only relying on his brother for help. He opened a money exchange stall, which he explained is not doing very well. From interviews with him and his brother, the researchers found that the returnee slips in and out of depressed and agitated moods, which not only affect his ability to socially reintegrate but to work. At the time of research, his brother was running the stall on his behalf. It is unclear how sustainable his business is, especially due to his condition. There was also evidence that the situation is putting a strain on his family and social relations, as he is unable to provide for his wife and nine children. Even upon return, he is absent from his parental responsibilities. He explained that he is between a lodge and his family home. He has suffered from discrimination from neighbours who believe that he has come back with a disease from Norway, in reference to his condition. He also explained that people think that he is mad. He is very disappointed that he returned to Mogadishu and believes that he was 'forced' to return to a country that is not safe and where he is unable to access the right medical care for his illness. He explained that his family was counting on him for support while he was in Norway and was disappointed that he had to return. While he is unhappy that he had to return, he would not want to go back to Norway and is would only consider re-migrating to seek medical attention.

Dirie Awale, aged 40, who the team were unable to meet but spoke to on the phone and also to his family (stepmother and cousin) in efforts to secure an interview, has been displaying signs of distress and mental health problems. He is stressed, easily angered, and agitated. His stepmother stated that he has not been well since returning from Norway, that he sleeps very little and 'talks to himself'.

Substance abuse

Abdinasir, 31 years old, who the team was unable to meet in person, is, according to family members, suffering from drug abuse. The team talked to the returnee on the phone a number of times in an effort to secure an interview with him. He was agitated and paranoid about the intentions of the research team – and mentioned himself needing to recuperate money in Norway that was taken from him, in relations to drug dealings. His cousin explained that he is often on drugs and when not, he sleeps and is nervous. The returnee himself admitted to taking drugs in Norway.

¹¹ Only one of three returnees was interviewed face-to-face. The two that were not interviewed talked to the team's researchers on the phone and displayed noticeable signs of stress and anger.

SENIOR RETURNEES: 2 OUT OF 7 RETURNEES ARE ABOVE 60 YEARS OF AGE

According to WHO (2013), the life expectancy in Somalia for females are 53 years old and 56 years old for males. The country is ranked 178 in the World Life Expectancy ranking. Two of the returnees in the UDI/DRC programme are over 60 years old (61-year-old female and 65-years-old male). Initial observations from the research point to their increased vulnerability due to their age. The findings show that, due to their age, the older returnees were disadvantaged in their ability to reintegrate, especially with regard to the operation of their business, as compared to the younger returnees in the group who were often in an easier position to employ coping mechanisms to help sustain their businesses

Senior returnees may also be at an increased risk of medical problems and illnesses. The two senior returnees in this study complained of a range of ailments including a hearing aid not functioning properly, a problem with one of the returnees' leg, headaches, stomach/gastric problems, and the need for general medical care. The returnees were both in need of a thorough medical check up. They also stated that they could benefit from counselling.

Research also shows that older returnees are more at risk of experiencing isolation. With regard to the 61-year-old returnee, her husband is in his seventies and is blind and weak. Elderly returnees will tend to have elderly spouses or be widowed. This can have a significant impact on the extent of their support networks, depending on whether or not they have children and where their children reside. In an article on the isolation and poverty that older returnees face in Sri Lanka, experts noted signs of trauma and isolation among older returnees and there was clear evidence that they struggled to meet their daily needs. This was particularly observed among those without extended family. They were found to face poverty, loneliness, dependency, ill health and lack of nutrition and access to adequate healthcare¹².

“Many Somalis with mental illness are socially isolated. The pain of this isolation is felt intensely because Somali culture is traditionally communal and family oriented. While a person with mental illness may be ostracized from the community, their fear of stigma may be even more powerful. Whether the ostracism is created by the community or self-imposed due to anticipated negative responses, the social isolation creates a profound worsening of the mental illness.” WHO 2010 report

“The situation of asylum seekers in Norway is perhaps harder for Somalis than in other countries: living in reception centers, dispersed throughout the country, in a very different climate, especially in the winter...all of these conditions can have negative impacts on their mental health”

– Key informant interview 2015

¹² IRIN, Sri Lanka, Older returnees face isolation, poverty, 30 March 2011

b. LIVELIHOODS

The business environment in Mogadishu is highly competitive with many small and medium-sized businesses in operation. This has put a strain on the livelihood situation of some of the returnees and made sustaining their businesses more difficult. The question remains on whether their activities can be qualified as businesses. In reality, these 'businesses' are micro entrepreneurship in low income generating activities. Labels and concepts are important and labelling some of the business schemes that the returnees have started as 'businesses' is not painting a clear picture of their situation.

Although they have received grants to start-up an activity, the activities chosen do not qualify as businesses per se. A business is defined as "a person's regular occupation, profession or trade", relating to existing skills. It can also be defined as "the practice of making one's living by engaging in commerce". Taking the definition of "business as skill", and of "business as profit generating, covering expenses", as two possible outlooks on assessing the viability of businesses, this section provides an objective account of the livelihoods post-return.

Difficulties generating a profit to cover monthly expenses

All the returnees interviewed are the main breadwinners of their households. For all but one of the returnees, there was a considerable gap between their monthly earnings and the expenses of the family and they stated that the monthly earning from their businesses was not enough to meet their family's needs. This caused concern and doubts among the returnees over the sustainability of their activities.

"Before" versus "after": Mismatch with prior experience and skill set

The returnees all explained that their livelihood before was better than it is now. However, 'before' must be defined as it does not necessarily refer to their life immediately before they migrated to Norway; but rather before their situations changed and became tougher, resulting in them migrating abroad. Some returnees faced real hardships and had to close their businesses in the years immediately prior to migrating abroad. Often times, when they talk about life being better 'before', they are referring to prior to encountering the difficulties that pushed them to migrate in the first place. The returnees also explained that life was cheaper before and that Mogadishu had become very expensive to live in.

All returnees agreed that their current income generating activity – set-up through the DRC grant – does not match their pre-migration skillset, employment or working experience. Their choice was dictated by circumstances rather than by a thorough review of their potential. Whether Leila who used to work as a cook in a restaurant, or Salat who sold construction material, their post-return income generating activity does not match their skill set. They are either too old to drive a tuk tuk, yet used closed to \$3,000 to buy one; or they are not sufficiently literate to be able to manage the financial requirements, the inventory stock and the purchasing of a small shop.

The mismatch with prior experience and skill set was a common trend among all returnees. Asked why they did not go back to their previous economic activity, most explained that the initial start-up or investment required far exceeded the grant given by DRC. The amount of the grant limited their options to the traditional transportation or retail shop sectors. From Afghanistan to Somalia, the same traditional sectors and the same obstacles are seen: a very high supply of tuk tuk drivers and of food shops or kiosks mean that returnees do not stand much of a chance to succeed post-return.

"I have many plans but can only do them when I get money. Why did I choose this line of business? It was my second choice. Initially I wanted to buy a taxi; I needed a car and did not have the money for it. The car that was too expensive. I tried the tuk tuk. My original education and skills are in electric work. I used to have an electronic shop. Things turned upside down when robbers attacked me at my shop. Everything inside my electronic shop was taken. I decided to sell the empty shop at a cheap price. I became bankrupt and made the decision to migrate to Europe." - Rashid Ahmed

Economic isolation threatens reintegration

All the returnees interviewed work on their own and neither have business partners nor employers and employees. As a result, the research showed that the returnees were experiencing various levels of economic isolation. The highly competitive business environment does not do the returnees any favours and the fact that they have gone at it alone has not helped their situation. All but one of the returnees reported difficulties with running their business. Considering the Somali cultural context, where family networks are close and business can often be run as a family business, it is not surprising that three out of the five returnees interviewed rely on family members to help run their businesses.

Seeing as they are economically isolated, the returnees could benefit from receiving support on how to employ coping mechanisms. The current programme model should be adapted to explore the possibility of introducing joint business schemes among returnees, or with a member of the local population. If the number of returnees were to increase, exploring the idea of business partnerships among returnees returning at the same time and with similar profiles and backgrounds could help to mitigate the problems that can arise from economic isolation. But even in a pilot phase, integrating family members in the business set-up would greatly benefit all involved: providing an additional source of support, contributing to building the collective capacity, and investing in the younger generation. In the case of the senior returnees, integrating their children in the training phase would have made more sense than solely investing in the returnees.

Across the board, given that family members are often brought in to help run the business, the research findings reveal a need for family members to be included in training. Returnees can be paired with a family member for the training course.

There is a strong connection between economic isolation and returnees in vulnerable positions. In the research, the returnees who suffered the highest degree of economic isolation were the elderly returnees and the returnee who has been suffering from psychosocial distress and depression. Adapting the model, as suggested above, for vulnerable groups is therefore of particular importance.

Training

Four out of five returnees interviewed took part in the training provided by MMC. The feedback given on the training was positive and the returnees all stated that the training was useful in setting up their business. As earlier mentioned, the training was originally designed to be a one-month course but was condensed to ten days as per the returnees' suggestions, which was found to not be enough to cover all the topics. If returnees are expected to start and manage successful businesses, learning basic business skills in a ten-day training will not suffice.

c. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive monitoring framework is missing from the programme design

The *absence of a comprehensive monitoring framework* in the pilot programme is the key strategic gap to be filled moving forward. Overall, DRC's current monitoring practices are carried out on an ad-hoc basis, rather than dictated by an existing framework with clear standards and outputs, that set out the modalities, including the form (phone calls, home visits, business site visits, questionnaires), and frequency of monitoring activities. Without a comprehensive monitoring framework, it is extremely difficult, to objectively determine the situation of the returnees and their level of reintegration.

- **Limited engagement on the part of returnees after return:** the research team encountered difficulties in reaching out to some of the returnees and were unable to secure interviews with two returnees. The research team observed that the motivation of three of the returnees to engage in the AVRR programme itself was not high, especially at the time the fieldwork was being conducted. DRC must strengthen its outreach to the returnees in order to have a full understanding of their situations, particularly to rule out any serious protection concerns.
- **DRC conducted a monitoring interview with five of the seven returnees.** These interviews took place between July and September 2015. In two cases, the interview took place seven months after their return, for another two returnees they were interviewed two months after their return and one was interviewed roughly ten months after his return. The feedback received from the five returnees was positive overall. The returnees noted the following areas of improvement:
 - o Speed up delivery of in-kind assistance (5 returnees noted this)
 - o Increase cash grant/entitlements (4 returnees noted this)
 - o Transportation procedures (2 returnees noted this)
 - o Provide housing / shelter support (1 returnee noted this)
 - o Create jobs for returnees (1 returnee noted this)
 - o Support to vulnerable cases through psychosocial counselling (1 returnee noted this)
 - o Provide legal assistance (1 returnee noted this)

The livelihoods support needs to be tailored

On the training, a mismatch with existing skills and the existing demand in Mogadishu was observed. Tailoring courses to match the level of skills, education, or qualification could address this problem. This could be especially prioritized for returnees who are illiterate and would benefit from learning some basic writing, reading, and book keeping skills.

All the returnees chose to start a business after being given the option to either attend vocational training followed by a job placement or setting up their own business. The main reason for this seems to be the 'shorter' process involved in the business start-up option. However, some of the returnees are now struggling to sustain their businesses and a job-placement scheme could have been more fitting to their situation. In follow-up interviews, some returnees regretted their choice and, in hindsight, stated that they would have preferred to be placed in a job.

The training providers, MMC, found it challenging to target such different profiles as the 7 returnees under review; they also found it particularly challenging that they were not being returned, and assisted as a

group, an institutional obstacle due to the lack of control over when returnees would choose to return. MMC argued for more tailor-made solutions with real life examples needed to show what works and what does not. Training staff interviewed for this research argued for the need to include all 3 steps of the usual training process: mentorship, training and follow-up. *This program has only covered the first two and one of those just partially as we do not provide vocational training. The post-follow up was not included here but we usually do it. (...) They all need stronger mentoring based on their existing skillset and existing demand.*"

- **Job placement schemes vs. business start up**

Based on the project agreement with UDI, DRC is responsible for assisting the returnees with access to vocational training or education, assisting returnees with an apprenticeship position, and assisting returnees with finding employment / job placement. All the returnees chose to start a business after being given the option to either attend vocational training followed by a job placement or setting up their own business. The main reason for this seems to be the 'shorter' process involved in the business start-up option. The reality of the situation is that some of the returnees are now struggling to sustain their businesses and a job-placement scheme could have been more fitting to their situation. In follow-up interviews, some returnees regretted their choice and, in hindsight, expressed that they would have preferred to be placed in a job. The question remains: can returnees be placed in jobs, in the Somali context?

- **Challenging common assumptions on job placement viability in the Somali context**

The assumption made by DRC staff – and voiced in conversations with the research team – that the Somali context is not adapted to job placement schemes needs to be revisited. Further training of DRC reintegration staff is required to go a step beyond common assumptions to more creative solutions (such as the ones detailed in Chapter 6). When asked why more returnees did not take the job placement program, the answer was that cultural constraints (reliance on trust and tribalism first), age (better suited for young people), and commitment were three obstacles to job placements in Somalia.

Yet, the training providers voice their regret at not having included a vocational training or job placement program in the training. Recognizing the difficulty of such programs, they are not impossible. The ILO has funded job placement programs that could be learned from and extended to this returnee population, as recommended in the report.

Individual counselling is required – beyond legal counselling

One of the most important findings of the study is the need to include more counselling in the programme, specifically **psychosocial counselling**. While the focus has been on the provision of legal counselling, the findings of the research show that just as important, or perhaps more, is the need for the returnees to be provided with psychosocial counselling both prior to return and upon return. The options are detailed in the recommendations.

- Three of the seven returnees interviewed showed serious signs of mental health problems. Interviews with relatives showed that returnees would benefit from psychosocial counselling, and that their families would welcome such an offer. Psychosocial distress and disappointment is common among returnees who failed their migration attempt, failing to obtain asylum, unable to live the life they had planned for abroad, and ultimately having to return home with little (or nothing for most) to show, at odds with the expectations that they are part of a wealth 'diaspora'.

OECD DAC CRITERIA REVIEW

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what degree do the programme's objectives remain valid? - Are the programme's activities and outputs consistent with its key goals? - Are the programmes activities and outputs consistent with its intended impacts and effects? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As returns become more prioritized among European host countries, DRC's program/approach remains valid; however, the relevance of the programme should be assessed in the future based on the numbers being assisted. If it remains low, then the relevance could be questioned. - Activities are consistent with intended impacts; however, areas of improvement identified notably on reintegration deemed incomplete. The livelihoods set-up should be improved to adopt a more creative, less standard, approach to business start-ups that do not provide sustainable outcomes in at least half of the cases reviewed.
EFFECTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To what degree were the programme's objectives achieved, or are anticipated to be achieved? - What chief factors were responsible for achievement or failure of goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of the target of 30, to date 7 people have been assisted to return. One more returnee will arrive in Mogadishu on 25 November, bringing the total assisted to 8. - DRC has little control over the number of people who choose to return. The decision to return lies entirely with the returnee and a number of factors will influence his/her decision to return or not. - DRC is limited by the lack of pre-return assessments and information to plan the programme.
EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How cost-efficient were programme activities? - Were objectives achieved on time? - How efficient was the programme compared to alternatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives, specifically related to the target number, not achieved on time. - The main inefficiency of the programme is linked to the fact that returns happen one by one, instead of groupings of returnees. From DRC management to the training provider, several key informants highlighted the fact that individual returns impede on an effective programming. The solution lies with UDI and the Norwegian government to organize returns in groups rather than in isolation.
IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What occurred as a direct result of the programme? - What real difference was made to the beneficiaries as a result of the activity? - How many people were affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Returnees have been trained and assisted to set up an income generating activity. For some returnees, the business is doing well. For most, the sustainability of the business is uncertain with insufficient profit to cover daily needs. - Some returnees stated in hindsight not being equipped for a business start-up. They would have preferred a job placement option. - Returnees and household members (number of dependants vary) are all affected, as the current returnees are the main breadwinners of the family. The impact would be greater if family members were included in the reintegration's training component.
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what degree did the programme's benefits persist? - What chief factors were responsible for the achievement or non-achievement programme? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of monitoring framework diminishes entry points to control risks to the programme - Continued assessment needed. Initial findings show that in some cases, sustainability of livelihoods/businesses is questionable and businesses could close in the foreseeable future. - Additional counselling required to ensure psychosocial wellbeing as a key factor for a successful reintegration. Mental health needs to be prioritized before and after return.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTH	OPPORTUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reintegration package: mix of cash and in-kind assistance - Testing a partnership model with IOM to build on partner strengths - Protection focus, and legal counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve families and communities to tie returnees economically and socially to their immediate surrounding. Turn family members into actors of the reintegration process. - Returnees to act as social facilitators with fellow returnees. . - Build networks between returnees by grouping returns - Expand outreach activities beyond Mogadishu - Strengthen partnership with existing implementing partners by redesigning agreement to include monitoring components and additional best practices. - Seek partnership with private sector, form public-private partnership - Seek partnership with development actors (UNDP and ILO) - Strengthen synergies with other DRC programmes (livelihoods, M&E) - Extend pilot phase to reach the 30 returnee target: phased approach
WEAKNESS	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No post-return monitoring framework or standardized follow-up - Lack of tailored support to vulnerable returnees (elderly and returnee with mental health problems) - Sustainability of the businesses schemes questioned and economic isolation of the returnees - More clarity to be given to returnees on the livelihood options (business set up vs. six month vocational skills training and job placement options) - Limited instalments of reintegration package – can be further broken down. This is linked to reintegration being understood as a process: if returnees “cash in” on their aid package too soon, their engagement diminishes. DRC needs to find ways to further engage with returnees post-return to ensure follow-up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deterioration of the security situation could lead to a decreased number of Somalis willing to return and access issues on the ground; thus threatening the relevance of the programme to the context. - Returnees hide their networks outside of Mogadishu. - Possible or increased unwillingness of returnees to connect with DRC. This could threaten the ability to monitor and measure protection risks, and risks to durable solutions. - Mental and medical health problems act as a barrier to sustainable livelihoods and durable solutions. - Business training duration of 10 days not adapted to durable solutions objectives.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS: TAILORING THE PROGRAMME

The feedback received from the five returnees was positive overall. When asked if they believed that the programme had assisted their reintegration, they all responded that it had. They were also asked whether or not they would apply to the same programme again. All but one of the interviewees said that they would. When asked if they would encourage others to apply to the same programme, all but two said that they would. The two who said that they wouldn't encourage others to apply cited reasons linked to their view that it was not a good time to return to Somalia in general so they would not recommend anyone to return regardless of whether returning by their own means or through this or any other programme.

Given the findings from the research, a series of key recommendations are put forth in this final section.

a. Towards an extended pilot phase and a consolidated programme

Based on the findings of the research, the pilot phase of the programme should be extended prior to any plans to scale up vertically (increasing target numbers). This means reaching the pilot's initial target of assisting the voluntary return and reintegration of **30** Somali nationals from Norway within an integrated approach that would include a comprehensive M&E framework. This recommendation takes into consideration the need to strengthen the different components of the programme, including protection, livelihoods, training, and monitoring as detailed above. Several missing elements need to be addressed before a scale-up can be feasible. These include:

- Adding human resources and building internal capacity to manage the AVRR programme
- Building a full-fledged reintegration package by testing a job placement programme
- Designing and testing a standardized monitoring framework for follow-up
- Piloting a pre-return skills assessment to inform post-return livelihoods programming
- Grouping returns to avoid solitary returns

b. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DRC

1. MONITORING: Develop a standard 12-month return monitoring framework

DRC will need a comprehensive monitoring framework built into the programme's objectives. The monitoring framework will then be communicated to returnees from the onset – pre-return – to ensure engagement and commitment post return. The framework will include clear indicators on how to measure the reintegration of the returnees. DRC will explain to the returnees at the beginning of the programme that monitoring is part of the process.

2. SUCCESSFUL RETURNEES: PIONEERS, MENTORS AND SOCIAL FACILITATORS: Hiring returnees as social facilitators and enablers

In this research, two out of the seven returnees could have qualified as taking on the role of **social facilitators**. This role would consist in acting as a mentor to other returnees. The social facilitators would be hired by DRC as part of the monitoring framework – they will intervene in addition to the standard monitoring framework, but will liaise directly with DRC on the outcomes of each conversation with returnees for an iterative monitoring process.

3. INFORMATION COUNSELLING: Visual messaging and films, recording interactions and feedback

It is recommended that UDI funds **a series of short movies on returns to Somalia** that can be screened in the reception centres in Norway. They would help potential returnees' to make informed decisions and to better prepare returnees for return. The films could be based on the actual life stories of returnees who have returned as well as on creative storytelling. They would show the common challenges, opportunities, coping mechanisms, resources, and contacts that returnees can rely on – beyond their families and

immediate networks. It is also recommended that UDI funds a **documentary on the work of DRC on AVRR programming** for returnees to understand the objectives of the programme, and to be clear on the fact that DRC is an independent, neutral and humanitarian actor engaged in the programme for the protection of returnees.

4. Recommendations on LIVELIHOODS: STEP-UP MODULE to complement the AVRR package

The economic isolation and lack of financial viability of income generating activities has been assessed in this study. Additional resources are needed to support returnees economically. It is recommended that a STEP-UP MODULE be added to the AVRR package to:

- Involve family members from trainings to livelihoods/businesses, to strengthen their support system and train the next generation
- Include vocational skills training
- Mentorship scheme

5. Recommendations on PARTNERSHIPS FOR LIVELIHOODS: PPP for credit & job placements

DRC: Linking up with the private sector for AVRR job placement:

Forming private-public partnerships to explore alternative livelihood opportunities for returnees should be a priority of the reintegration team at DRC. Initial findings from research shows that there is potential for DRC to form private-public partnerships with a number of actors in the private sector in Somalia – these opportunities have been discussed and already secured verbally with key actors as noted in the full report.

Re-examine DRC's job placement options for returnees. In the current programme, none of the returnees chose to take part in vocational training and be placed in jobs, yet some regret over this decision expressed to the research team. DRC should strengthen its counselling/communication on the livelihood options to ensure that the returnees have a thorough understanding of the option they choose. Furthermore, DRC should consider allowing returnees to transfer the job placement option to a family member in situations where they are unable to take part (due to age or specific vulnerabilities like psychosocial distress).

6. PROTECTION: Focus on medical care, psychosocial wellbeing and counselling

The key protection findings pointed to a need to strengthen the programmes focus on medical care, psychosocial wellbeing and counselling.

Firstly, conduct a **comprehensive protection assessment on the two returnees that were not interviewed for this study**. DRC must strengthen its outreach to these two returnees and thoroughly assess their situations, particularly from a protection angle. Secondly, **incorporate psychosocial counselling in the reintegration package, immediately upon return and as part of the monitoring framework thereafter**. One session should take place prior to departure to assess the mental wellbeing of the returnee, followed by a session immediately post-return (within week one). Based on the assessment of the counsellor, recommendations for further sessions can be made. DRC to also explore the peer-to-peer counselling, within the group of returnees. Thirdly, **returnees should be offered a medical check up prior to departing Norway** to ensure that they do not suffer from any serious medical conditions, for which treatment would be difficult to access in Mogadishu, Somalia.

c. RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO NORWAY / UDI

7. A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILING AND SKILLS ASSESSMENT before they leave Norway

The only common thread among returnees is their 'returnee status'. Returnees have different profiles, which constitute different backgrounds, skills, and social situations. A case-by-case approach to addressing their needs upon return is therefore preferable. **UDI should conduct a comprehensive socio-economic profiling exercise of each returnee prior to their departure from Norway** to facilitate the design of more tailor-made activities. The information from this exercise can be used to inform DRC of the specific considerations that may need to be included in their reintegration package.

8. Recommendation on A PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK to support sustainable outcomes

Reintegration programmes often fail because of the lack of involvement of development expertise. UDI must ensure that the AVRR programme is not shortsighted in its activities and broader objectives. The AVRR programme can therefore be based on a partnership framework that draws on the different expertise and strengths of the different development actors as detailed in the full report.

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