HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION FUND
Final Report

Organisation Name	DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

Project Title	Piloting Accountability Systems for Humanitarian Aid in Somalia
Problem Addressed / Thematic Focus	Remote management and lack of oversight/ Accountability, monitoring
Location	Somalia
Start Date	1 June 2011
Duration	23 Months

Partner(s)	N/A (single entity application)
Total Funding	GBP 140,585

Reporting Period	1 June 2011 t 30 April 2013
Total Spent	GBP (HIF funding)

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

This section summarises all the activities carried out during the period under review which forms part of the general DRC strategy to encourage feedback on all project activities. Thus, the SMS feedback system complements feedback collected in face to face encounters.

Initially the project had duration of 18 months, but this was first extended for four months then for one additional month. Therefore the project covered a period of 23 months; three months for the development and testing of the system and procedures, seventeen months for implementation and three months for dissemination of the results and lessons learned for future replication and improvements.

The sub-section below provides a brief update of the activities carried out during the reporting period. The activities are grouped by results as stated in the work plan enclosed to the proposal for this project.

Result 1: Beneficiary feedback system has been established and is operational

Activity 1: Operate beneficiary feedback system

This activity started on 1June 2011, and continued throughout the implementation of the project. During the reporting period, various related sub activities were carried out as follows:

i. Roll out the project to all DRC Project beneficiaries in Somalia.

The project initially was rolled out to CDRD beneficiaries and later extended to other projects reaching out to 127 villages in Somalia under twelve districts, including three districts in Mogadishu, Galka'ayo, Abduwak, Qardho, Af-afweyn, Ainabo, Sheik, Berbera, Odweyne and Salahley districts. Different projects covered by the SMS feedback successfully included CDRD, Cash Relief, Food for Work, Small business and Voucher for Asset projects.

The SMS feedback team made thirteen field trips to roll out the beneficiaries' feedback system to the above mentioned areas across Somalia. DRC prepared videos, pictures and interviews from visited areas and explained how the feedback system works, with its processes and procedures. In total, 360 SMSes were received as tabulated below;

SMS from June 2011 – April 2013

Type of SMS	Mogadishu	Somaliland	Galka'ayo	Bosaso	Dollow	Hiiraan	Total
Request	21	59	13	3	0	0	96
Inquiry	4	22	4	1	0	0	31
Complaints	99	22	1	0	0	0	122
Appreciation	8	54	15	10	0	0	87
Suggestion	0	7	4	0	0	0	11
Total SMS	132	164	37	14	0	0	347

DRC opened new feedback phone numbers (0616624640 with the Hormood Company, 090795027 with the Golis Company) in Galkayo office to reduce the costs, and to enhance the beneficiaries' easy access. Further, five staff were trained in Galkayo to participate in the project roll out.

To guide on the use of SMS feedback, DRC developed publications including posters, brochures, stickers, and business cards both in English and Somali language printed with the feedback numbers. These publications were distributed to both field staff and direct beneficiaries of the system.

ii. System Improvement and additional innovations

During the project period, DRC planned to enhance the system and developed new gate ways for DRC by Contracting Local Service provider (Shaqodoon) to develop a new system using a new short code both calling and SMS sending. The short code was meant to reduce some of the challenges experienced during the first phases of project implementation. The short code developed was 332 and has been tested and working. This enabled beneficiaries to send their feedback at no cost.

iii. Follow-up on the feedback that have been sent by the beneficiaries

In the course of the reporting period, the following standard procedures were fine tuned to process SMS;

- All incoming messages are immediately registered and translated into English.
- In all cases, the SMS sender receives an auto response from the SMS feedback system to acknowledge receipt.
- From time to time it is needed to ask for clarifications. Initially in case of no reaction the sender was called by phone.
- If there are doubts about the correctness of the content of the feedback, DRC carries out and investigation before compiling a response and closing the case online. This outcome is shared with the person who submitted the message.

Some messages were answered immediately; others directed to specialists especially questions related to quality and timeliness of construction materials that could be answered by engineers. In few cases, the questions were reported to the Area managers if the contents were of management concerns or complaints. However, more attention was also given to where competences or commitments of senior staff members and or contractors were questioned. Larger percentage of the SMSes were dealt with and fixed at the entry point, approximately 25% dealt by national staffs and a low number forwarded to area managers and only in exceptional cases specific cases were brought to the attention of the Country Director.

iv.   SMS Feedback trainings held by DRC during the HIF period.

Staff Trainings: During the period under review, 78 (7 HAP focal points and 71 field staff including 5 Galkayo, 2 Bossaso, 4 Mogadishu, 10 Dollow and 50 Somaliland) DRC staff were trained on SMS feedback system. The trainings were meant to enable staff to roll out the SMS feedback system in their program areas including awareness creation.

Partners Trainings: Members of the Return Consortium (UNHCR, IOM, NRC, INTERSOS, Mercy corps, FAO and other local NGOs staffs) were also trained on the SMS feedback system in Mogadishu as from 19 to 24 March 2013 for 17 staff members.

After the SMS feedback trainings, visibility materials were distributed to participants to share with local communities in their programme areas.

v.   Project developed, published and distributed visibilities.

Based on the lessons learned during the early stages of the project implementation where it was realized that beneficiaries could omit the SMS feedback number, and therefor send no feedback at all, DRC developed some communication materials including guidelines, Brochures, Posters, Newsletter, Stickers, and Business cards, all translated into simple clear Somali language. These materials were given to visited communities around the country. It was a good mitigation strategy to teach the beneficiaries about how to use the SMS feedback system, why and where to use it. This reduced the frequently asked questions by the community as the feedback number was posted on the walls in the community. During the reporting period, DRC distributed 3500 pieces of posters, business card, stickers, Frequently Asked Questions, Guideline,

For the new system short code system, SMS feedback materials were developed including posters, business cards and guidelines to adjust the new change of the short code. These will be distributed to DRC project locations. 690 copies were ordered.

Result 2: On-line communities are established and functional
Activity 1: Post content on the on-line communities

This activity started 1st June, 2011. The activity experienced a slowdown in the implementation especially when the communication Officer left the Organization. Having completed the set up phase relative to the result above, the project has put more emphasis and effort to this activity. As a result, social media pages have seen a steady increase in visitations and membership/followers.

- Blog. Since the project started, 61 posts have been uploaded with 1865 pages for viewing. However, the blog has experienced little interaction and only seven followers. http://drcbeneficiaryfeedback. blogspot.com/
- Facebook – During the reporting period, this had 282 members. The page statistics show that almost all the items we post are viewed on average by about 30% of our members but there has been very little interaction. http://www.facebook.com/SomCDRD?ref=ts.
- Twitter – this platform has reached 204 followers and 319 tweets. Twitter and Facebook are still more interactive than the blog, though the latter has a higher level traffic. https://twitter.com/#!/DRCSomalia
- Flickr – 502 pictures organised into 14 sets of albums from the regions/districts we have visited and have so far had 518 viewings. http://www.flickr.com/photos/somcdrd
- YouTube – Three short interviews with beneficiaries have been uploaded and there are 8 edited and ready to upload. This was delayed due to slow internet. http://www.youtube.com/user/somcdrd/videos

ACHIEVEMENTS

The project outputs that are linked to the two above results:

(a) The establishment of a beneficiary feedback through text messages over mobile phones, where 13 districts were reached.

(b) The creation of on-line communities on Blog, Twitter, Face book, YouTube, and Flicker

Others

- The System has seen an improvement in the number of SMS received, 347 at the end of the reporting period.
- Processed and addressed all pending SMSes, including serious complaints, shared the findings with the beneficiaries and satisfactorily closed all cases.

- A simple short code which is free of charge to beneficiaries and easier to use developed and operational.

- 78 DRC staffs and 17 staff from partner agencies trained.

- Standard operating procedures developed and operational.

- Different type of publications were designed, printed and distributed to the project locations.

METHODOLOGY

As underlined in the project proposal, the key factor that will determine the effectiveness of the project is whether beneficiaries will make use of the ICT tools and provide feedback. During the project period, there was significant ground work laid and basic structures put in place such as; testing the SMS feedback system in selected villages and towns, consulting beneficiaries and assessing network and other potential challenges and setting up the social media pages for the project. In addition, MIS officer was recruited to manage the system.

There are several lessons that were learned during the project implementation; first, a system over SMS should be meant to complement and enhance other system and not replace them. Observations made shows that some beneficiaries were not yet willing to send an SMS and preferred making a phone call or reporting directly to the project staff. Secondly, the fact that the feedback is posted online has created an incentive for DRC managers to take prompt actions on the feedback. Finally, the feedback triggered changes in some of the DRC programmes especially CDRD project which adjusted its outreach strategy in the course of the project implementation.

MAJOR OBSTACLES

This section describes all the obstacles faced during the implementation period and how they affected the planned activities and results. It also indicates what steps DRC has taken to address these obstacles in the upcoming period.

- The SMS feedback attracted varied feedback people who were not direct beneficiaries to the system or projects implemented by DRC. The SMS feedback team carried out extensive community mobilization.
- Most of the beneficiaries tended to be impatient and demanded for immediate feedback for some questions that required some internal consultations. The team clearly explained to the beneficiaries the SMS feedback process and the time it would take for an issue to be addressed.
- Some of the beneficiaries are poor and could not afford an SMS. DRC contracted Shagodoon and funded the project.
- Poor network in some villages meant that beneficiaries had to walk considerable distances to send SMS.

- Most of the beneficiaries consulted were illiterate. Parents were partnered with their more literate school children and teenagers to send the SMS and also given an option of the voice messages.
- Insecurity in some project areas like Galkayo. DRC trained local staff to conduct community awareness of the SMS system and distribute hard copy information material.
- Some of the target areas have no internet such as Salahley. Communications is either via the SMSes by phone to the team leader or print them out and send them when there are DRC cars going to the field.

BENEFICIARIES/HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IMPACTED

The project enhanced beneficiary participation in DRC projects as beneficiaries were able to get clear information about the project including beneficiary selection criteria and entitlement including the humanitarian plan. This also improved the interaction between the duty bearers and right holders. The CDRD programme changed implementation strategy based on the feedback.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Describe the partnership arrangements and how these may have changed during the course of the project. N/A

DISSEMINATION

The findings, field trip reports and project updates are sent to the HIF blog, posted on all project social media pages and promoted through the team's personal social media networks, and shared on selected Somali Diaspora social media pages, especially on Facebook. DRC staff gave a presentation at the UN/NGO Public Information group in Nairobi and that resulted in the interest expressed in the project by UNICEF, UNPOS, OXFAM, CESVI and OCHA.

The project was also showcased in the UN/NGO expo held in Hargeisa from 29th to 30th August, 2012. The SMS feedback team had developed a video clip of beneficiaries who had benefited from the SMS feedback system.

Following the project roll out to DRC's humanitarian projects in Mogadishu, a press release was issued on 12th July, 2012, on the projects' milestone. This was published in DRC's global website, Alertnet and sent to Reliefweb.

A brief project introduction letter with the links to the social media pages was shared with the Somalia NGO consortium and was consequently circulated to all humanitarian agencies working in Somalia.

DRC co-organized with OCHA a workshop on improving Aid Accountability and Transparency which included a training on how to set up the SMS system on the

Ushahidi platform. This workshop was a follow up of the event co-organized by OCHA on humanitarian, media and technology held in Nairobi on 6th December, 2012, where DRC presented the SMS feedback system.

DRC facilitated the visit of Mr. Kim Scriven, the Research and Innovations Officer of Active Learning Network for accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), based in London. He visited the project from 2nd to 9th December, 2012 in order to prepare a case study.

Additionally, DRC participated in several events to present the SMS feedback system. The main aim was to share best practices and lessons learnt for the project with humanitarian agencies that were interested in adopting a similar system. The Advisor on Local Governance of DRC regional office for the Horn Of Africa and Yemen, jointly with representatives from HIF, presented the project at DFID in London on 14th November, 2012 in the occasion of a DFID in Development Day event. He also presented the project on the same day in and event organized in London by HIF. In addition, he presented the project in Nairobi on 6th December, 2012 in an event co-organized by OCHA on humanitarian, media and technology collaboration.

TRANSFERABILITY

The project has excellent potential for transferability. The Returns Consortium of Somalia has already replicated the SMS feedback platform with the assistance of DRC. Additionally, other agencies have expressed an interest in replicating the system. World Vision, the lead agency for the Somalia Resilience Consortium of seven INGOs, is investigating whether they can merge their monitoring system and make it compatible with the SMS feedback system to expand the manner in which the SMS feedback system is used.

DRC continues to receive queries from various NGOs seeking information on how to replicate the SMS feedback system developed under HIF and will assist all interested in establishing the system.