

## Intervention Strategies for Returning Refugees: The Somalis in Finland



**D**uring the 19th century the refugees who have come to Finland have integrated well in the Finnish society and enriched the country in many ways. Sometimes a refugee needs shelter and aid for some years only, and sometimes for a life time. It depends much on the establishment of social and political structure of the ex-country and on the integration of the refugee in the new country whether the refugee will return or not.

There has been growing recognition in the 80s by the international community that returning refugees should be assisted in their efforts to reintegrate in their home countries. Moreover, African governments and many other groups have become more aware of the urgent need to explore how ad hoc interaction strategies and relief programmes for returnees can be linked to long-term local reconstruction and development programmes.

The Somali refugees in Finland are among the new wave of human migration. At present, about 1 500 individual Somalis are seeking asylum in Finland. They can be regarded as genuine political refugees although some recent accidents in Finland have been rather unhuman towards them. The political situation in Somalia is

still unsettled after the former regime of Siad Barre and the country is structurally and economically destroyed and general unrest is rampant in the cities. Thus, some kind of workable infrastructure and political stability must be established, before return of Somali people can take place. This work will require tremendous external assistance and time and, for example, FINNIDA can act as an effective partner in the re-establishment of social welfare.

So far, no research has been undertaken in order to explore the social and economic aspects of return of the refugees. Thus, the Institute of Migration is planning to launch a research project as a joint venture with the Institute of Educational Research, Addis Ababa University.

The aim of the project is to explore the return of Somalis and to identify intervention strategies the basis of this case. Furthermore, the project will produce data on the re-construction and development of the social structure in Somalia. This information is needed in the developmental co-operation in Somalia. The project is the first of its kind in Scandinavia.

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