

Humanitarian Accountability Framework for the Danish Refugee Council's international work

“In DRC we wish to be accountable. Not just to our donors and membership, but also – and in particular - to those we try to help. We have many instruments for this, like participation, feedback, complaints-handling and reporting. One important element is informing our beneficiaries and stakeholders about our Humanitarian Accountability Framework – in other words what they should hold us accountable for.”

THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL IN GENERAL

Vision

“No displaced person must be without help when it comes to finding protection and durable solutions.”

“We want to be the best at solving problems associated with displacement – both internationally and nationally.”

Mission

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a private, independent, non-profit organisation (NGO), devoted, on the basis of humanitarian principles and the Human Rights Declaration, to supporting the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and to promoting long term solutions to the problems of forced migration. DRC works in the context of *conflict-induced displacements of populations* and in return and reintegration situations.

DRC fulfils its mission through:

- Granting direct assistance to conflict-affected populations – refugees, IDPs and host communities in the conflict areas of the world;
- Assisting refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark;
- Speaking the cause of conflict- affected populations internationally and in Denmark.

In Denmark, DRC assists refugees in all aspects of integration as well as asylum procedures. Internationally, DRC actively participates in the cooperative effort to promote solutions for conflict-affected populations. DRC is the only organisation of its kind in Europe covering all aspects of the refugee and displacement cause.

Organisation

DRC is an umbrella organisation consisting of 31 organisation members broadly representing civil society in Denmark committed to the refugee cause, as well as some 300 voluntary groups. Its head office in Copenhagen comprises of the following departments: Asylum and Repatriation; Integration; Volunteers; Communications; Resources and Development (administration); DRC International (international programs). DRC has program offices in 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Partnerships

DRC is a member of the following networks:

- International Council of Voluntary Agencies - ICVA
- Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies – VOICE
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles – ECRE
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (International) - HAP
- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action - ALNAP
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines – ICBL

DRC has signed general partnership agreements with ECHO and UNHCR and agreements on secondment of personnel with OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, and UNDP.

DRC'S INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS

Mandate for the international activities

The mandate for the international activities is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights, including:

- Providing refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected groups in situations of war and conflict with assistance according to their rights. This assistance can consist of relief and other humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and support to return home, as well as contributions to the promotion of durable solutions.
- Contributing to capacity building and co-operation between local and national authorities, as well as other relevant organizations. This work aims at strengthening advocacy and promoting solutions to problems related to situations of conflict, particularly with a view to improving the protection and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Key instruments, standards and codes that DRC subscribes to

[Conventions and the like:]

- The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees; and
- The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Geneva Convention and protocols of 1949
- Other key bodies of international humanitarian law

[Voluntary NGO codes and the like:]

- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
- The SPHERE humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response
- The Humanitarian Accountability Principles
- The Principles for Humanitarian Action
- Code of Conduct of DRC (for DRC and Staff in International Programs)
Related to humanitarian removal of explosive remnants of war:
- The 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention also named the Ottawa Treaty
- The 1980 Convention on certain Conventional Weapons, including the amended protocol II from 1998 and the protocol V from 2003 addressing Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)
- IMAS standards

Scope and funding of the international work

DRC International works with protection, relief, rehabilitation, post-conflict recovery, capacity-building, humanitarian mine-action, and advocacy. Over the years, DRC has developed particular expertise in relation to:

Core sectors:

- Housing and Small-scale Infrastructure
- Production & Income Generation
- Food security/agricultural development
- Social Rehabilitation
- NGO Capacity Development and Networking
- Displacement-related Law and Information, and
- Humanitarian Mine Action

The three support sectors of intervention are:

- Information Management and Coordination
- Logistics and Transport, and
- Stand-by Roster for Secondment of Personnel.

Most of DRC International's activities are implemented by DRC program structures set up locally for the purpose but working in collaboration with beneficiaries and local authorities.

DRC International's activities are funded by money raised from the Danish public and by project grants from the Danish government and other bilateral governmental donors, the European Union, and the United Nations.

Strategic program approaches

Contextual analysis and programming that recognize the dynamics of displacements:

- Displacement often transcends real or virtual borders, and so should DRC's contributions to finding the solutions
- Assistance must target both the displaced and those otherwise affected by the displacement, as well as recognise the dynamics between the displaced and other affected populations
- Although displacement scenarios may principally be categorised as either *Acute Crisis*, *Protracted Displacement* or *Durable Solutions* scenarios and the corresponding assistance be categorised as *Saving of lives*, *Restoration and development of livelihoods*, and *Institutional and organisational change*, respectively, most displacement situations simultaneously contain elements and potentials for all three. So should, therefore, the assistance provided. While using distinctly different approaches according to category, assistance in any situation must always look for potentials for building capacity for durable solutions.

Rights-based programming:

- focusing on the challenges of making duty-bearer stakeholders take up their responsibilities to protect people affected by war, conflict, during displacement and after;
- filling-in as much as possible when the duty-bearers are unwilling or unable to do so;
- encouraging and supporting "rights-holders" to claim and enjoy their rights.

Programming principles

...are related to:

- Entry
- Targeting
- Modes of delivery
- Exit (When fundamental rights related to DRC's capacity are upheld and protected by willing and capable national and international institutions)
- Sustainability.

Operational principles

...are related to:

- Participation
- Capacity Development
- Gender
- Advocacy
- Do No Harm
- Collaboration with Local Partner/Partnership

- Complementarity
- Replicability
- Environment

Monitoring and evaluation – a quality management system

Monitoring the relevance and impact of DRC assistance is a key to continuous learning and improvement. In addition to narrative and financial monitoring and reporting prescribed in the individual project contracts with a donor, DRC maintains an internal planning, reporting and evaluation framework for DRC programs comprising strategic planning, regular internal reporting and an annual internal review. In addition, DRC carries out or commissions external project reviews or evaluations and one or two cross-cutting reviews per year.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF DRC INTERNATIONAL’S ACCOUNTABILITY TO ITS BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Status of March 2007

An internal compliance assessment followed by an independent accountability audit in March 2007 found that DRC International is in compliance with the HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management. However, the assessment and audit identified a number of areas where DRC must further strengthen its accountability instruments, particularly in relation to information to beneficiaries and stakeholders and in relation to human resource management. These and other action points are included in the Accountability Improvement Plan below.

Accountability Improvement Plan

A key instrument in further improving DRC’s humanitarian accountability is DRC’s Program Handbook, which will be issued in 2008 in a completely revised version where most humanitarian accountability benchmarks are mainstreamed. Furthermore, one of DRC International’s four strategic focal areas for 2008-2009 is Human Resource Development, which focuses on human resource management tools and skills and on a comprehensive training program that will ensure that DRC International’s new Program Handbook is understood and applied by all staff in accordance with their respective functions.

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	MONITORING
Contextual HAFs available to beneficiaries; compliance with HAF is monitored	Country offices revise/draft their HAF and make it available as per information strategy in Program Handbook	Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook or new baseline assessment
Information provided to beneficiaries and stakeholders	Country offices revise/draft their information strategies to comply with Program Handbook	Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook or new baseline assessment
Field staff are aware of and use the HAF and quality management system	Comprehensive training program at HQ, regional and country level as per HRD strategic focal area	HQ monitoring of HRD strategic focal area. Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook
Field human resource management tools and skills are strengthened	Field personnel appraisal and development scheme and field staff complaint mechanism developed as per HRD strategic focal area.	HQ monitoring of HRD strategic focal area. Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook
Beneficiary complaint mechanisms in 50% of DRC’s programs	HQ support and advocacy with country programs, based on experience in other programs	Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook or new baseline assessment
Evaluate and support partners in strengthening	Applicable where DRC have entered quality partnerships. As per Program	Annual program reviews as per Program Handbook or new

their accountability	Handbook	baseline assessment	
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Strategic planning in DRC International

.....uses a bottom-up process in an annual cycle, taking its point of departure in the broad question “*What can we do as an organisation to further enhance the relevance, quality and accountability of our work?*”

In DRC programs:

Internal annual program reviews are conducted in order to, first, systematically review both implementation progress and project outcomes against specified targets and objectives, second, to revisit the validity of program assumptions and third, to engage in a process of strategic planning for the future. Annual reviews are jointly conducted by project and HQ staff, and are carefully prepared through impact studies, beneficiary and stakeholder workshops, external evaluations or sector reviews. The annual review must include the accountability commitments undertaken by DRC and also consider the need for external reviews/evaluations.

At Head Office:

The annual meeting of all DRC country directors and HQ program coordinators recommend/revise DRC International’s Strategic Focal Areas for the next two years, following which strategic focal areas are elaborated and resourced. Beneficiaries and field staff influence the process through the local program strategic planning. HQ makes a meta-evaluation of the annual program review reports, which is fed into the annual meeting

DRC International’s current strategic focal areas:

2007-2008	IDP protection: Further develop and advance DRC’s role and capacities, globally as well as at country level, with regard to IDP protection
2008-2009	Administration: DRC International’s Admin & Finance handbook is revised, understood and applied by all staff in accordance with their respective functions
2008-2009	Human Resource development: DRC's managerial and programmatic capacity at field level is further strengthened
2008-2009	Migration-Asylum Nexus: DRC’s role and engagement in respect of migration is clarified