

# Accountability Framework for the Danish Refugee Council's international programming<sup>1</sup>

"In DRC we wish to be accountable. Not just to our donors and membership, but – most importantly, to those we try to assist. We have many instruments in place for this, such as participation, feedback, complaints-handling and reporting. An important element is informing our beneficiaries and stakeholders about our Humanitarian Accountability Framework thereby clearly defining what they should hold us accountable for."

## THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (DRC) IN GENERAL

### Vision

"No refugee must be in want of help to find protection and durable solutions. And nobody who wishes to be integrated into Danish society must be in want of help to do so"

### Mission

"We want to be the best problem-solver in regard to displacement and integration."

### Mandate

DRC is a private, independent, non-governmental, 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 durable solutions to the populations affected by forced migration. DRC works in the context of *conflict-induced displacements of populations* and in return and reintegration situations.

DRC fulfils its mandate through:

- Providing direct assistance to conflict-affected populations, primarily, but not limited to: refugees, IDPs and host communities in the conflict areas of the world;
- Assisting refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark;
- Advocating on behalf 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.

### Values and standards

The following values and internal standards can be found on DRC's website and apply to the entire organisation and its staff in Denmark and abroad:

- Value Compass

<sup>1</sup> DRC's complete international accountability framework comprises the present global AF and area-specific AFs with additional commitments specific for the area in question. The area-specific AFs can be found under the respective country portals on <http://www.drc.dk/relief-work/where-we-work/> and <http://www.danishdemininggroup.dk/about-danish-demining-group/where-we-work/>

- Cooperation standards
- Management standards
- Management concept

## 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 4,800 volunteers. Its head office in Copenhagen is organised under a Secretary General (including Press & Communication) and comprises of the following three operational departments: *Protection & Repatriation*, *Integration*, *International* (international programmes, including the Danish Demining Group). The operational departments are supported by the *Resources & Development* department (administration, HR and internal development). Outside Denmark, DRC works through its own offices in 27 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

## Affiliations and additional interests

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 - HAP
- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action - ALNAP
- People in Aid
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines – ICBL
- Cluster Monition Coalition
- International Mine Actions Standards Review Board (a body under UNMAS – the United Nations Mine Action Service)
- The Danish Fundraising Association - ISOBRO

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

## DRC'S INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS

### Mandate for the international activities

DRC's mandate for international programming is the protection and promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement-affected populations, 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, of rehabilitation and support to return home, and of contributions to the promotion of durable solutions
- Contributing to capacity building and co-operation between local and national authorities, as well as other relevant organisations. 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
- Recreating a safe environment where people can live without the threat of landmines, unexploded ordnance and small arms and light weapons.

## Code of Conduct

A DRC Code of Conduct applies to all staff in DRC's international programmes including DDG. It is available on DRC's website.

## International 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
- The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Geneva Convention and protocols of 1949

### 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, Protection Principles and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
- The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management

### Related to humanitarian removal of explosive remnants of war (ERW) and small arms control:

- 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
- UNMAS International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)
- International Small Arms Control Standards (ISACS)

## Scope and funding of the international work

Under its mandate, DRC International focuses on protection, relief, rehabilitation, post-conflict recovery, capacity-building, humanitarian mine action and community safety, and advocacy. Over the years, DRC has developed particular expertise in relation to:

### Core Areas of Intervention

Housing and Small-scale Infrastructure  
Income Generation through Grants and Micro finance  
Food Security and Agricultural Rehabilitation  
Displacement related Law and Information  
Social Rehabilitation  
NGO Capacity Development and Networking  
Humanitarian Mine Action / DDG

### Support Areas of Intervention

Information Management and Coordination.  
Secondment of Emergency Personnel/  
DRC Stand-by Roster  
Logistics and Transport

Most of DRC International's activities are implemented by DRC programme structures set up locally for the purpose to work with beneficiaries, local authorities and other stakeholders. However, DRC also implements through local partners when this is the best way to meet DRC's mandate and values. In such cases, DRC is committed to assist the implementing partner strengthen its accountability and capacity.

DRC International's activities are funded by money raised from the public and from the private sector and by way of project grants from bilateral governmental donors, the European Union, and the United Nations. The accounts can be viewed in the Annual Report on <http://www.drc.dk/about-drc/facts-about-drc/annual-reports/> .

## Targeting assistance - strategic 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 solutions
  - Assistance must target both the displaced and those otherwise affected by displacement, as well as recognise the dynamics between the displaced and other affected populations
  - Displacement situations may principally be categorised as either (a) *Acute Crisis*, (b) *Protracted Displacement* or (c) *Durable Solutions* scenarios and the corresponding assistance be categorised as (i) *Saving of lives*, (ii) *Restoration and development of livelihoods*, and (iii) *Institutional and organisational change*. However, most displacement situations simultaneously contain elements and potentials for all three categories. 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 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 practise their rights.
- **Mine Action:**
  - Normally, clearance tasks are not selected by the clearing agency but assigned to it centrally by a national Mine Action Centre and/or by UN agencies;
  - However, there may be room within the task to consider beneficiary population priorities and DRC/DDG principles and targets.

## Programming principles

...are related to:

- Entry
- Targeting
- Modes of delivery
- Exit - when fundamental rights related to DRC's mandate are upheld and protected by willing and capable national and international institutions.

## Operational principles

...are related to:

- Participation
- Capacity Development
- Gender, Age and Diversity
- Advocacy
- Do-No-Harm / Conflict sensitivity
- Collaboration with Local Partners
- Complementarity
- General Replicability of Strategies and Methodologies
- Sustainability
- Environment

DRC's international programming approaches and principles are documented in DRC's Programme Handbook.

### **Monitoring and evaluation – a quality management system**

Monitoring and evaluation of DRC's assistance is 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 country programmes 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 thematic reviews per year.

## **CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF DRC INTERNATIONAL'S ACCOUNTABILITY TO ITS BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

### **Status of January 2012**

DRC's international operations were certified under the *HAP 2007 Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management* for the first time in 2007 and re-certified for another three years in June 2010. The recertification is based on an independent audit in accordance with the ISO 19011:2002 Auditor Standard and carried out at DRC's Copenhagen head office and at a DRC country office selected by the auditor, informed by accountability self-assessments carried out by 21 country programmes. The audit resulted in three HQ and two field *Corrective Action Requested* "CARs", of which four were closed in 2011.

### **Accountability Improvement Plan (AIP)**

The plan comprises DRC's internal development projects, identified through DRC's local and central strategic planning processes. The plan is an appendix to DRC's accountability framework and available on <http://www.drc.dk/relief-work/how-we-work/humanitarian-accountability-framework/>.

### **Strategic planning in DRC International – is connected with learning processes**

#### In country/regional programmes:

All regional or country programmes must have a *Strategic Programme Document* (SPD), which defines DRC's area-specific rationale and goals within a medium to long term perspective. It reflects DRC's general intent in an area, not necessarily the sum of projects assured at the time. The SPD is revised following an internal annual programme review, which looks at progress and lessons learnt, expected situational context, validity of programme goals and assumptions and, finally, DRC's capacity to achieve its goals. Annual reviews are jointly conducted by project and Head Office staff, and carefully prepared through impact studies, solicitation of beneficiary and stakeholder feedback including complaints, external evaluations or sector reviews. The annual reviews must include the accountability commitments undertaken by DRC and also consider the need for external reviews/evaluations.

#### At Head Office:

Beneficiaries, local stakeholders and field staff influence the process through the local annual reviews, which are condensed in a meta-evaluation of lessons learnt that are reviewed by the annual meeting of DRC regional/country directors and HO management, desks and OPSU. This process combines with the strategic planning process conducted at HO for all departments in DRC. For DRC International the combined processes result in a number of internal development projects, which are specifically planned, resourced and monitored.

The overall internal development theme for the entire DRC 2010-2012 is defined as *DRC Version 2012 – supporting more refugees better*. Accordingly, DRC International's internal development projects are structured around three pillars, namely, *Preconditions for sustainable growth*, *Innovative programme development* and *Expansion of area of operation*. Each internal development project is accorded a Focal Point and often supported by peer groups of HO and field staff. The focal points can be contacted by email via the addresses shown in the AIP.

DRC's internal development theme for 2013-2015 is defined as *DRC – an international organisation*.

## COMPLAINTS

DRC International and its staff must comply with this Accountability Framework.

Complaints or feedback regarding non-compliance should be submitted as follows:

- Field programmes: Through the Complaint/feedback Mechanism of the programme in question. If there is no local Complain/feedback Mechanism: Through the resident DRC country director.
- DRC International Head Office: Through the Head of DRC International.

## Annex

- AIP Status of January 2012