

CHAPTER 5

THE ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK OF THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

5.1. Introduction

The Assistance Framework of the Danish Refugee Council presented in this chapter evolves out of the organisation's many years of experience assisting conflict-affected populations. The framework was developed to support the implementation of the organisation's vision, mission and the mandate for international activities, and constitutes the overall basis for DRC international activities in support of people affected by conflict.

This chapter provides an overview of the Assistance Framework and its various components, in particular the basic model of assistance. The chapter is particularly useful in providing guidance when conceptualizing and designing DRC assistance activities.

» Please refer to Annex B1 for the document: The DRC Assistance Framework

5.2. An Overview of the DRC Assistance Framework

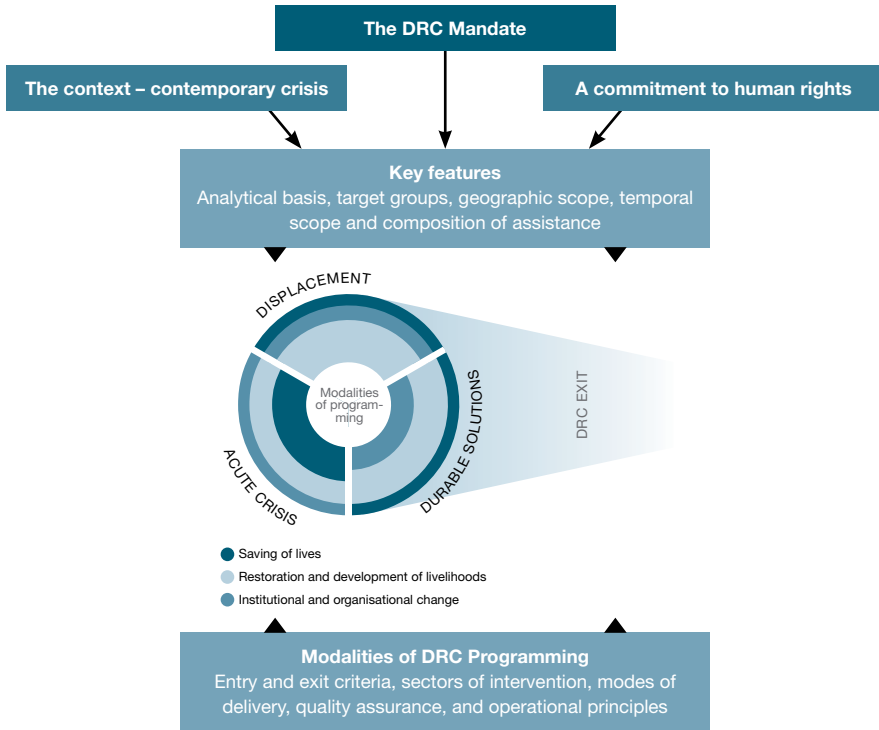
The Assistance Framework is based first and foremost on the DRC vision, mission and the mandate for international activities. It is thus an instrument for implementing that vision and mandate.

With these as a starting point, the Assistance Framework is further built around two key elements:

- » One derives from a number of observations regarding contemporary conflicts and displacement, and the resulting implications for assistance provision as detailed in Chapter 3; and
- » The other is a commitment to a rights-based approach floating from the related realisation that assistance strategies and plans need to be based upon a commitment to human rights as discussed in Chapter 4.

From these elements, a set of key features are derived as formative inputs for the basic model of assistance. This is further underpinned by a set of modalities of programming consisting of operational principles, entry and exit criteria, modes of delivery, sectors of intervention, as well as quality assurance mechanisms. This is graphically illustrated below:

Figure 5.1: The Assistance Framework of the Danish Refugee Council



The rest of this chapter discusses the key features of the Assistance Framework and the basic model of assistance. The modalities of programming are treated in detail in Chapter 6.

5.2.1. Key Features and Implications

The dual point of departure discussed above (i.e. observations regarding contemporary conflicts and displacement, the implications for assistance provision; and the related realization that assistance strategies and plans need to be based upon a commitment to human rights) has led to a number of conclusions of critical importance for the construction of the basic model of assistance of DRC. These conclusions concern the analytical basis, the targeting of assistance, the composition, as well as the geographic and temporal scope of DRC assistance strategies as detailed below.

» *An analytical basis informed by a normative commitment to the rights-based approach:* In practical terms, this implies that the analysis underpinning assistance programmes should be derived from the rights-based approach as de-

scribed in Chapter 4. Ultimately, this means that the overall aim of assistance is defined as promoting and ensuring the full respect for the rights of the individual – in accordance with the letter and the spirit of relevant bodies of law, including the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Protocol on the Rights of Refugees, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The analysis should also incorporate factors influencing conflict and displacement at the local, national, regional and global levels.

- » **Target groups:** While displacement of people constitutes the core reason for DRC to initiate assistance, the dynamics of conflict means that assistance cannot be targeted at refugees and internally displaced people in isolation, but should include all those individuals, groups, organisations and institutions that are affected by, and play a role in conflict, host populations in the areas receiving these, and on responsible governance structures and civil society organisations that have an active or potential role in ensuring or supporting access to rights for affected population groups.
- » **Composition of assistance:** Both the fluctuating and unpredictable nature of conflicts and their uneven impact on different population groups means that parallel implementation of complementary relief, rehabilitation and development activities is typically called for.
- » **Geographical scope:** As the causes and consequences of conflict tend to transcend boundaries, frontlines and borders, so should the search for solutions. Initiatives at the local level simply cannot stand alone, but must be conceived, implemented and coordinated within a framework that addresses root causes and needs, not only within a conflict zone, but also in areas next to this as well as in neighbouring and more distant countries affected by the movements of people that have been displaced by the conflict in question. Whenever feasible, the planning and implementation of DRC assistance activities should be “regionalized”.
- » **Temporal scope:** Emanating in particular from the rights-based approach, DRC will in principle continue its activities until such a time when individuals, authorities and agencies are able and willing to take up their respective responsibilities with regard to the protection of citizens - in accordance with national and/or international legal/policy frameworks. Usually, this means that DRC will remain active within any given complex crisis for a significant period of time, often several years.

For DRC, the above key features imply that assistance planning and implementation may be conceived as an analytical and strategic process that factors in causes and effects at the local, national, regional and global levels as defined by the displacement and migration patterns generated by one or several conflicts within a definable area. It integrates a detailed assessment of violations of rights and covers the full range of social, political, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural factors

as relevant. This is utilised as a basis for formulating accountable assistance that promote durable solutions for people affected by the conflict in question.

All these elements are taken into account in constructing the basic model of assistance presented in the following.

5.3. The Basic Model of Assistance

5.3.1. The First Dimension: The Impact of Conflict on People

The first dimension of the basic model of assistance is comprised of three distinct scenarios that individuals and communities affected by conflict typically move through – i.e.:

- » The Acute Crisis Scenario - referring to the situation that individuals and communities find themselves in during and immediately after the outbreak of conflict, often characterised by violations of rights and continuing forced displacement within a country and/or across international borders.
- » The Displacement scenario – covering individuals and communities that find themselves in protracted displacement situations and during which the continuation of conflict prevents the attainment of durable solutions but where the focus nevertheless should be on preparing for such solutions.
- » The Durable Solutions scenario - which materialises when a conflict has come to an end or when countries of asylum allow local integration - i.e. when a durable solution is actually an option for displaced individuals and communities.

The pre-conflict situation, when hostilities are brewing but are yet to become violent, could be considered as a fourth scenario but is not included in the DRC Assistance Framework. DRC's presence is always closely linked to conflict and displacement. However, a presence may nevertheless be considered in a pre-conflict scenario provided it appears almost certain that a violent conflict will break out. Similarly, DRC will retain a presence in post conflict situations in so far as there is a remaining risk for a resumption of violent conflict and human rights violations.

5.3.2. The Second Dimension: The Objectives of Assistance

Within the above three scenarios, DRC operates with the following three strategic objectives that define the fundamental and specific aims of assistance:

- » The saving of lives and the alleviation of immediate suffering among people affected by conflict.
- » The safeguarding, restoration and development of livelihoods.
- » Institutional and organisational change that ensures the promotion of values, policies and capacities, which contribute to the protection of peoples' rights and the peaceful handling of conflicts.

To achieve these three objectives, DRC operates with three broad categories of assistance:

- » Responsive, humanitarian activities that are geared to meet the first objective, i.e. the saving of lives. These include relief, protection through direct presence and monitoring as well as advocacy, and they are typically of a short-term nature.
- » Livelihood-focused, remedial activities that serve to strengthen the welfare of individuals, as well as the economy of households and local communities in general, through providing both targeted livelihood support and more general activities, including social and physical rehabilitation – with the particular focus being determined by the concrete scenario in which the activity is being carried out. The activities are of a medium- to long-term nature.
- » For further information on the concept of livelihoods, refer to Annex B3.
- » Activities aimed at building and supporting an environment – political, social, cultural, institutional, economic and legal – that is conducive to the protection of the rights of displaced people and to the attainment of durable, sustainable solutions. These activities are of a long-term nature and focused on institutions, organisations and governance.

5.3.3. The Resulting Model

In general, DRC programmes are designed to simultaneously address all three strategic objectives and consequently to include all three forms of assistance, during any of the distinct scenarios mentioned above. In part, this reflects the fundamental objective of continuously contributing towards the long-term overall goal of making states and individuals take up their humanitarian responsibilities to protect people in war or conflict. In short, even relief activities are designed with this long-term objective in mind.

As noted above, however, the parallel implementation of different types of assistance is also founded on the key observation that conflicts rarely, if ever, evolve along a continuum of linear transition. Thus, a combination of different types of support is called for - by the simultaneous coexistence of emergency and non-

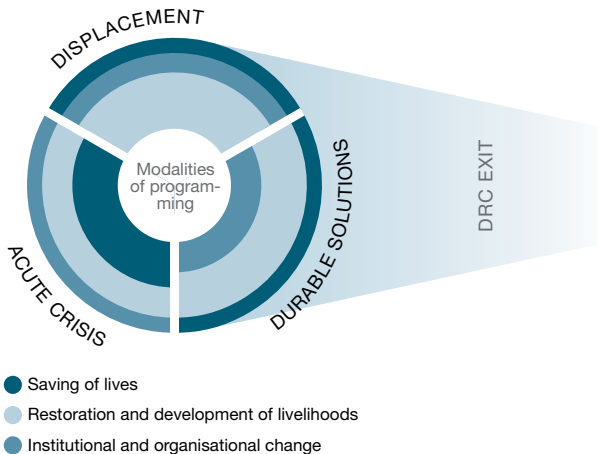
emergency situations within the same country and region; by the fact that conflicts typically fluctuate over time between periods of relative peace on the one hand and outbreaks of violent conflict on the other; and by the fact that various individuals and groups may well be affected by conflict in widely different ways at the same time - for reasons related to ethnicity, religion, political allegiances, social status, proximity to actual zones of violence etc. Some may, for instance, be in a situation of acute crisis, whereas others find themselves in a displacement scenario.

The overarching DRC 2006-2008 strategy for North Caucasus is founded on the key observation that while the overall situation has improved, the path towards recovery and attainment of durable, sustainable solutions does not evolve along a continuum of linear transition; the Chechen separatists continue to clash with Russian forces; there is little genuine economic growth to speak of and human rights organisations continuously report on various human rights abuses. As a result, vast numbers of people and families remain displaced and most people that opted for a durable solution face deprived conditions with limited means and opportunities.

For the foreseeable future therefore a combination of different types of support is called for. This includes activities that simultaneously combine responses to persistent basic humanitarian needs; protection and recovery of people’s livelihoods; and longer-term recovery and development needs.

The model below illustrates the resulting basic model of assistance.

Figure 5.2: The basic Model of Assistance



The relative importance of the various forms of assistance will be fully dependent on the situation of the target group – i.e. in which scenario it finds itself. This is illustrated in the figure where the strategically most important form of assistance is at the centre and the thickness of the ring describes the relative amount of resources typically invested. This is further explained in the following description, detailing the complimentary and parallel application of the three forms of assistance in the various scenarios:

During acute crisis

In situations of acute crisis where massive forced displacement takes place, DRC regards it as paramount to ensure both the sufficient and timely delivery of life-saving relief and the initiation of protection activities aimed at the prevention of further violations of basic human rights, including for instance protection by presence and monitoring. In this scenario, short-term, responsive activities will evidently dominate in all respects - as illustrated by the placement and thickness of the line in question within the Acute Crisis scenario in the figure above.

Indicative characteristics of persons/households/communities in acute crisis scenario

- » *Livelihoods*: livelihoods disrupted, lost of assets, restrictions to camps and/or marginalized areas
 - » *Protection and Human Rights*: rights often violated, non-functional institutions, documentation may be lost, etc
 - » *Social factors*: normalcy disrupted, individuals exposed to traumatized events, family separation, and unaccompanied minors, large proportion of women and children, family and community structures broken or weak at best, weak connections to host community
 - » *Access to services and basic needs*: food needs, lack of shelter, lack of social services such as access to schools, clinics, etc difficult
 - » *Security*: militia elements, often in zones of conflict with physical threats – mines, military, etc, possible hostile local communities, often presence of government security elements
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Activities of a remedial nature that safeguard the livelihood capacity of displaced people may, however, also be relevant in this scenario. This could, for instance, include work to keep roads open so as to facilitate population movements from conflict areas – and relying on existing capacity among the beneficiaries for pur-


poses of organising various aspects of camp management already during an initial emergency phase etc.

Lastly, in almost all situations of massive displacement and in particular where there is a potential risk of hostilities between the newly arrived displaced on the one hand and the host population and/or authorities on the other, it may be of crucial importance to address the underlying policies, beliefs and attitudes that are conducive for such potentially aggressive behaviour. Likewise, there is often a pressing need to enhance basic protection capacity, e.g. through supporting existing management capabilities among newly displaced people, the host population as well as relevant national emergency management authorities. Therefore, assistance focusing on institutional and organisational change can also be of relevance.

During displacement and pending durable solutions

During displacement, the relative mix of types of assistance depends on crucial factors such as the length of displacement; the situation in the hosting areas; and the willingness and capability of the local and/or national (host) authorities to ensure adequate protection of displaced people. Often, responsive strategies remain relevant for the most vulnerable groups. Also, as most post-conflict scenarios tend to remain unstable and protracted, maintaining an emergency preparedness capacity may be necessary.

Indicative characteristics of households and communities in displacement pending durable solutions

- » *Livelihoods*: livelihoods partly restored and some asset accumulation, more diverse coping mechanisms developed, where land is allocated possibility to undertake agricultural activities, small scale commerce, etc
 - » *Protection and Human Rights*: protection improved as a result of presence of humanitarian actors but can breakdown when there are outbreaks of conflict, there can be restrictions with respect to freedom of movement and other economic and political rights, etc
 - » *Social factors*: normalcy partly re-established, still a degree of social trauma, family separation, and unaccompanied minors, large proportion of women and children but family and community structures restored to varying degrees. Emerging social and economic ties with host community
 - » *Access to services and basic needs*: improved access due to assistance provided by humanitarian community and/or host states. Self-settled displaced negotiate access to services with local authorities and local communities
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- » *Security*: improved security but there could be risks arising from fresh outbreaks of violence and conflict, risk of infiltration from country of origin, possible harassment of host country security and law and order forces.

However, in most displacement situations, DRC interventions are dominated by remedial activities with a focus on the safeguarding, restoration and development of self-reliance capacity among displaced people and often also the affected host population. The purpose is not only to decrease dependence on humanitarian assistance, but also to help displaced people prepare for eventual durable solutions.

Activities focusing on institutional and organisational change are of relevance in this scenario in several respects. This may, for example, include advocating for the inclusion of displaced people in national planning frameworks, through creating direct linkages between DRC assistance and local, regional and national development plans, and through providing direct capacity support to institutions and organisations that assist displaced people. Of similar importance is to support the capacities within the target populations themselves with a view to self-empowerment. This may include creating and strengthening linkages between displaced people (including the Diaspora) and their places of origin.

Once durable solutions are possible


Achieving durable solutions for displaced people is the ultimate goal for DRC. Having said this, it is important to note that there are certain differences between durable solutions for refugees, on the one hand, and for IDPs on the other – as explained in the following boxes:

Durable Solutions for Refugees

For refugees, a durable solution is achieved if: “He/she receive full and effective protection of the State of nationality (citizens) or residence and enjoy all basic human rights and have equal access to social services and economic opportunities to the same extent as other permanent residents”.

Within the framework of this definition, refugees can achieve a durable solution in three different ways:

Through Voluntary Repatriation: means that, after reviewing all available information about conditions in their country of origin, refugees decide freely to return home. This may be organised (e.g. by UNHCR) or spontaneous. In all cases, return must be voluntary and take place under certain essential conditions, the most important of which are safety and dignity;



Through Local Integration: refers to a situation when refugees settle permanently in the country of asylum with the consent of the authorities. This could entail permanent residency status and eventually citizenship; and

Through Resettlement: refers to a situation when a refugee finds a permanent, legal home in a country other than the country of asylum or of origin. Typically, this is facilitated by UNHCR or by application to certain countries that have procedures in place for this, e.g. USA, Canada and Australia.

In this, there are some key points to note:


- » A durable solution entails an end to the suffering and uncertainty that displaced people go through – meaning also that there is no further need for international protection and humanitarian assistance.
 - » The role of the three types of durable solutions and their relative importance has changed over time
 - » DRC's international programmes are not focused on resettlement as a durable solution. However, DRC's Asylum Department plays a role in the resettlement of refugees in Denmark.
 - » For a more complete introduction to DRC's work with respect to durable solutions and with a particular focus on voluntary repatriation, please refer to Annex B31: DRC - Voluntary Repatriation, Return and Reintegration.
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Durable solutions for IDPs

As in the case of refugees, one can also talk of durable solutions for IDPs. These concepts draw upon the terminology from the refugee context but have slightly different perspectives since IDPs by definition do not cross an international boundary. Three types of durable solutions are recognized with respect to IDPs:

- » Return and reintegration in the place of origin;
- » Local integration in the areas in which IDPs initially seek refuge; and
- » Settlement in another part of the country

To determine whether and to what extent IDPs have found a durable solution, both the process through which solutions are found and the conditions of the returnees should be examined.

- » Annex H5 (the Brookings Institution report: Processes and Conditions for Durable Solutions for IDPs) outlines these conditions and processes.
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Generally, it is useful to consider the following questions when assessing solutions for IDPs:

- » Whether national authorities have established the conditions conducive to safe and dignified return or to settlement elsewhere;
- » Whether formerly displaced persons are able to assert their rights on the same basis as other nationals;
- » Whether international observers and other assistance actors are able to provide assistance and monitor the situation of the formerly displaced; and whether the durable solution is sustainable.

Determining when displacement ends is not a straight forward matter. Three approaches are used:

- » *Cause-based*: whether the cause that compelled flight has changed;
- » *Needs-focused*: whether IDPs still have needs arising from their displacement; and
- » *Solutions-based*: whether the displaced have returned, integrated locally or settled elsewhere in the country.

No single approach is adequate but the consensus is that a combination of needs-focused and solutions-based approaches should be used in making such determination. It should also be stressed that internal displacement does not end suddenly. Instead, it should be seen as a process through which there is a diminishing need for assistance and protection. In this regard, it is important to undertake an analysis of the displaced individual's access to rights (see Chapter 4).

- » **For further treatment of durable solutions for IDPs refer to the recently developed framework: *When Displacement Ends – A Framework for Durable Solutions*, May 2007. by The Brookings Institution – University of Bern, Project on Internal Displacement**

In a durable solutions context it has proven essential to focus on the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, no matter whether it is in support of returnees or of displaced people deciding to opt for local integration. This calls for the same focus on remedial activities as was the case in the displacement scenario – as reflected in the fact that this type of assistance usually continues to be extremely resource demanding.

Sometimes refugees and IDPs return to areas that remain highly fragile, resulting in at least some returnees facing deprived conditions for extended periods with

limited means and opportunities. In such situations, it may be necessary to provide these groups as well as “remainees” that are in similar conditions with responsive assistance, including relief, in particular during the initial stages following return.

Even though remedial activities continue to command the majority of resources and relief may continue to be necessary to save lives, activities focused on institutional and organisational change are usually of the greatest strategic importance. Key aspects include ensuring that (re)integration of conflict-affected people becomes an integral part of local and national development plans and that the capacity of responsible national institutions and organisations, including civil society, is strengthened, thereby promoting the sustainability of the durable solutions in question. However, it is of even greater significance that this type of assistance is crucial in supporting a lasting improvement in the respect for fundamental rights, hence reinforcing the sustainability of peace. Essentially, it involves the promotion of a public culture consistent with adherence to fundamental human rights principles and good governance – and the focus is therefore very much on both civil society and government institutions. It is for the same reasons that Good Governance, defined as ““The transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purpose of equitable and sustainable development, in the context of a political and institutional environment that upholds human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.” is of growing significance to DRC’s work in post-conflict situations.

» Annex B9 outlines some of the ways good governance can be taken into account in DRC’s programmes.


5.4. Conclusion

The DRC Assistance Framework provides a flexible and dynamic basis for conceptualising and planning assistance activities. The integration of a rights-based approach and a regionalized comprehensive approach to displacement are the key underlying elements. Additional elements of the Assistance Framework, namely, DRC programming modalities, are presented in Chapter 6.

Selected Reference Material

Tools for programmes during Acute Crisis

» [The SPHERE Handbook \(See Annex G1-G9\)](#)

- [Common standards](#)
 - [Minimum Standards for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion](#)
 - [Minimum Standards for Food Security, Nutrition and Food Aid](#)
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- Minimum Standards for Shelter, Settlements and Non-Food Items
- Minimum Standards for Health Services
- » MSEE standards (See Annex E10)
- » The UNHCR Emergency Handbook (See Annex D4)
 - Emergency Management
 - Community Services and Education
 - Population Estimation and Registration
 - Site Selection, Planning and Shelter
 - Commodity Distribution
 - Health
 - Food and Nutrition
 - Water
 - Environmental Sanitation
 - Supplies and Transport
 - Voluntary Repatriation
- » The WFP Handbook
- » The Camp Management Toolkit (by NRC, DRC, IRC, OCHA's Internal Displacement Unit and UNHCR) (See Annex H1)

Tools for programmes during Displacement

- » UNHCR Development Assistance to Refugees (DAR) guidelines, 2005 (See Annex D14)
- » UNHCR Handbook for Self-reliance, 2005 (See Annex D15)
- » Employment for Peace (ILO tools to rebuild conflict affected communities) (See Annex E6)

Tools for programmes during Durable Solutions

- » UNHCR Development through Local Integration (DLI) guidelines (not yet published, but the DAR Guidelines provide useful insight on DLI as well.)
 - » UNHCR Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities (4Rs) (See Annex D8)
 - » When Displacement Ends – A Framework For Durable Solutions, May 2007
- Refer also to Chapter 8 of the Handbook for DRC Specific Sector Overviews regarding Housing and Small-scale Infrastructure, Social Rehabilitation and Displacement-related Law and Information.