



Gives refugees
a future

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

SYRIA

newsletter

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION

DRC launches activities in Syria

Since April 2008, Danish Refugee Council has been assisting Iraqi refugees and the Syrian communities to cope with the Iraqi crisis. Schools have been rehabilitated and refugees were provided counseling and psycho social support in 8 community centers located in Damascus.

DRC was accredited in March 2008 by the Syrian government as one of the 3 first international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to operate in Syria. DRC took over in spring 2008 **six community centers** previously established by UNHCR, co-managed with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and situated in the 4 Damascus suburbs of Sayeda Zeinab, Mazaken Barzeh, Jaramana and Qudsaya where Iraqi displaced have found refuge.

The objective of the centre is three-fold: provide the Iraqi families with information on how to better access basic services and available assistance (in health, education, financial support, relief assistance, legal...), facilitate a psycho-socio-economic support (via recreational and educational activities), identify / refer the most vulnerable families so that they are provided with the urgent needed assistance.

Since April 2008, DRC has been reinforcing the centers' structures and involving more Iraqis in their management (90 volunteers). New activities have been added



CAPTION: Insert caption of photograph here.

(like alphabetization, and psycho social group counseling) and 2 news centers were established in order to expand the space available. In 7 months of operations, DRC has recorded **more than 175,000 visits**.

In addition, DRC has engaged activities in the Education sector by **rehabilitating 7 primary and secondary schools** in the Damascus suburban areas of Dwelaa and Kabbas. Funded by the Danish government

through UNHCR, the project is being implemented by DRC in close partnership with the Syrian Ministry of Education who has been involved in the whole process. The 7 schools were selected based on 2 main criteria: the presence of a significant caseload of Iraqi refugees, and the needs of renovation. Those schools do accommodate around **7,000 children among which 1,000 Iraqis**.

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DRC Syria - January 2009

- **Beneficiaries:** 40,000 people and 7 schools,
- **Network:** 8 community centres,
- **Location:** Damascus and rural Damascus,
- **Structure:** 90 volunteers, 17 national and 3 international staff,
- **2 local counterparts:** the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE),
- **2 main partners:** Danish government (DANIDA) and UNHCR



Facilitate the Community Development



COMMUNITY SERVICES

After School program

Since the beginning of the recent Iraqi displacement to Syria, the Syrian authorities have been facilitating access of Syrian public schools for Iraqi children. However the greatly limited Syrian absorption capacity has been seriously strained by the heavy refugee wave.

Although Syrian public schools are accessible to all Arab nationals and primary education is free and compulsory, a significant proportion (never defined) of Iraqi children is not enrolled in school. Some do not have the resources to buy uniforms and school materials, while others experience difficulties integrating.

The most serious problem stems from the fact that many poor households rely on the income of one or more children who resort to (selling cigarettes, cleaning shops, begging and even working in construction sites)

Other groups of children have been out of school for a period of one to three years. Reasons for drop-out include difficulty in adapting to the Syrian curriculum and children having to work to contribute to families' revenues. Another reason is the loss of documentation stating that they have completed a certain grade.

UN Agencies and INGOs have been working with the MOE and SARC in order to create space for Iraqi children by supporting the construction of new schools and rehabilitation of existing schools, providing school uniforms and stationary through SARC. Remedial and accelerated classes have been conducted both in public and private schools by different actors.

Through the community centers DRC has developed a school tuition program aimed at supporting the education of Iraqi children and youths in their communities. During 2008 the schools tuition program was implemented in three community centers: Ma-

saken barzeh 1, masaken barzeh 2, and sayedah zeinab. More than 1,000 children and youths have been registered in the program, while almost 700 were the monthly attendees.

Twenty volunteer teachers—mainly Iraqi but Somali and Syrian as well—have assisted pupils from 1st to 12th grade with their home-works. Particular focus has been done in three main subjects: Arabic, mathematics and sciences.

However, starting in October, English, French and computer courses have been organized as well.

In the framework of the school tuition program recreational activities have been organized once a week during the whole duration of the project in the three above-mentioned centers.

-Three Iraqi clown volunteers have been recruited to perform shows in DRC community centers once a week. The shows are designed in a way to provide children and their parents with key messages such as the importance of education, environment, and sanitation.

- In addition, a dance class has been organized in the Masaken

barzeh 1 community center. A room has been set aside solely for dance instruction purposes where the children are taking basic dance classes under a professional dancer.

Furthermore, as a part of the summer camp program, outdoor activities have been organized such as picnics, visits to the national museum, visits to the fun fair.



Community services program

Between May and June 2008, DRC took over from UNHCR and SARC six community centers located in Sayeda Zeinab, Jaramana, Mazaken Barzeh and Qudsaya, four areas in Damascus suburbs with the highest concentration of Iraqi refugees. From September 2008 two new centers were established bringing the number of centers up to eight.

The centers offer a variety of services and activities to refugees and their vulnerable hosts to promote refugee participation with the aim to enhancing their psychosocial-well-being to cope with daily challenges.

Literacy classes for adolescents and adults: English, computer, French, Arabic courses are set up in the centers.

Skill development opportunities such as sewing and hairdressing courses,

After school program for children and youth from the 1st to the 12th grade. In the framework of this program recreational/sport/social/cultural activities are performed regularly.

Library service: The centers are provided with a small library with publications, materials, educational books (both for children and adults) in English and Arabic. Information and counseling are also offered to refugees in cooperation with UNHCR: social, legal, educational and psychosocial. Some of the services provided on a weekly basis.

A Community based approach characterizes the center organization: activities are discussed, agreed and implemented by refugees. About 100 volunteers are involved in the different centers' activities. Quick Impact Projects are also part of the CS programme. Two sanitation trucks are going to be purchased and donated through SARC to the Municipalities of Sayeda zainab and Jaramana.

“The DRC community centers welcome refugees and their hosts to experience education and participation...”



Promote Education and Learning Opportunities

SUPPORT TO EDUCATION

School Rehabilitation

In 2008, DRC has been one of the first INGOs to start intervening in the Education sector. Seven schools were selected in mid-2008 in the Great Damascus and refurbished.

Dwellaa and Kabbas are two poor and crowded areas located in the south-eastern Damascus, where Iraqis have found refuge as housing and the living costs are cheaper.



The project, funded by the Danish government through UNHCR, aimed at improving the studying conditions of the 7 schools accommodating 7,000 children out of which

1,000 Iraqis. The schools were in urgent need of renovation (inside and outside) and expansion. 2 contractors were chosen and works lasted up to early January 2009. New classrooms were built to increase the enrollment capacity. Rehabilitation works included



indoor works (electrical, painting, sanitation, openings...) and outdoor works (toilets, washrooms, sunshades, front face painting...). The learning environment has also been made more positive by planting trees and green areas in the yards. Equipment, mainly consisting of benches, has been supplied and allow children to better study.

DRC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Ministry Of Education?

DRC interviewed the Manager of Planning and Statistics Abdul Salam Salameh. He remarked that DRC did a very good job in rehabilitation of the schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MOE), where the Iraqi and Syrian students study together.



“DRC could rehabilitate the school to a very good quality and in perfect time ,” he said.

Mr. Salameh continued by stating, “This organization showed us the meaning of good work during a time of strong need, and MOE hopes to continue this cooperation with DRC to reach a bigger number of beneficiaries.”

Furthermore we think that the Danish refugee council will continue to rehabilitate a bigger number of schools where the Iraqi and Syrian students can study together ,also possibility exist to build new schools .

We want to allow this organization to work according to priorities of the ministry of education in building a big campus for education in order to alleviate the problem of half performance in the areas where there are a huge numbers of students .

We hope to improve the cooperation between the DRC and the Danish government to participate with other projects of the ministry of education for example:

Building a national academy to train and assist in capacity building for the teachers on an international standard .

The participation of DRC in this kind of project will vastly improve the skills of the educational staff in Syria to cope with the improvement of the curriculum and the school environment according to the inter-

The vocational training is a component of the Education project of DRC in Syria. It provides, through experienced centers (UNRWA DTC and New Horizon) a high quality training for vulnerable Iraqis and Syrians motivated to develop their skills.

DRC interviewed beneficiaries from the vocational training program.

“The VT program is one of the most important programs for the Iraqi refugees

Walid attended an accounting courses and explained that this training will give him a good job and good experience. He said, “We have hope in life when we learn.

We thank DRC for his opportunity”.

Asil Sami is the only girl applied for the computer maintenance training, she said:

We thank DRC for giving us the opportunity to participate in this training.



Many of the beneficiaries mentioned the psychological effect of the training on their selves

Ebtehal Ltif is a student in the Executive secretary training, she said:

This training has its positive psychological effect on us , in addition to shifting us to the world of new technology , and to the skills we gained in this field which we had



never known before.

■ DRC INTERNATIONAL

Danish Refugee Council is a private, independent, non-profit organisation (NGO), devoted, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights in general, to securing the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and to promoting long term solutions to the problems of forced displacement.

Internationally, DRC participates actively in the efforts of the international community to promote solutions for conflict affected populations.

The support and capacity building of local and national authorities and NGOs form an integrated part of DRC's work.

DRC is currently working in 25 countries primarily in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, Horn of Africa, West Africa, Afghanistan and the Middle East and had a total turnover in 2007 of 60 million EUR.

■ DRC SYRIA

DRC Syria was established in April 2008 in partnership with the UNHCR and The Syrian Arab red crescent "SARC".

DRC Syria is committed to responding to the assistance and protection needs of Iraqi refugees .

Since its establishment , DRC Syria has been assisting Iraqi refugees and the Syrian communities to cope with the Iraqi crisis .

Schools have been rehabilitated and refugees were provided counseling and psychosocial support in 8 community centers located in Damascus.

DRC Syria will continue to assist the needs of the Iraqi refugees through the existing community centers and will continue with more rehabilitation and construction for schools in Sayedah zeinab and other locations .

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DRC SYRIA

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ACCOUNTABILITY

DRC is HAP CERTIFIED

With the objective of improving the quality of its assistance to refugees and displaced people, DRC has subscribed to organizational and operational principles recognized internationally.

The Humanitarian and Accountability Principles define rules and values which guide DRC interventions worldwide and its relations with beneficiaries and partners.

DRC was certified under the HAP 2007 standards on the 24th of April 2007, and was the first INGO to be certified under the HAP, which gathers more than 20 INGOs.

The main HAP principles are the following ones:

1. Compliance with financial accountability requirements,
2. Information of and reporting to beneficiaries, partners and donors.

3. Participation of beneficiaries in programming.
4. Maintain skilled personnel to ensure quality management,

5. Establish and manage complaint procedures accessible to beneficiaries,

6. Establish, maintain and improve the Humanitarian Quality management System.

Mr. Andreas KAMM, Secretary-General of DRC ,said about the HAP certification:



tion:

"Focusing on accountability to our beneficiaries not only ensures that we provide the best aid here and now, it keeps us on our toes in our efforts to learn from our faults and thus learn to work even better".

Syria - plans for 2009

In the last quarter of 2008, DRC has been designed its 2009 program with its 2 local counterparts (Ministry of Education and SARC) and international donors.

The 2009 program is likely to look like the following ones:

1. Consolidation of Community Services:

- Development of activities in the 8 existing centers of Damascus,
- Establishment/development of 2 new centers in 2 locations outside Damascus in partnership with SARC,
- Psycho social program supervised by a Syrian expert.

2. Expansion of the Education program:

- Construction of 2 new schools in Sayeda Zeinab,
- Rehabilitation of 20 schools in Damascus (Sayeda Zeinab, Dwellaa) and outside Damascus,
- Education survey: 20 - 25 schools to

be surveyed in order to assess the needs of the population, impact of the Iraqi influx, reasons for dropping out, and wishes for construction/rehabilitation,

- Soft education: remedial classes, extra-curriculum activities, awareness campaign, social support....
- ### 3. Launching a livelihood support program:
- Vocational training for women at risks as a way out from prostitution, and other gender based violence,
 - Vocational training for young males at risk, who are forgotten segment of the assisted population.

Both projects are being discussed with UNRWA and ILO as potential implementing partners.

The DRC Syria team is being expanded and trained locally in order to achieve those ambitious objectives.

THE DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL THANKS VERY MUCH:

ITS 2 LOCAL COUNTERPARTS: SARC and the Ministry of Education



and ITS 2 DONORS: Danish government and UNHCR