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## Routes-based migration response programme

### Supporting social cohesion in the urban centre of Khartoum



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

In Khartoum, multi-faceted needs are often faced by refugees, asylum seekers and other migrant groups, including gaps in access to basic services, limited access to information on services that are available, and frequent marginalization from mainstream socio-economic systems. To improve safety and wellbeing of these vulnerable communities, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has been operating in partnership with the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) since 2018 to deliver humanitarian assistance to some of the most vulnerable groups. The '*Routes-based migration response programme*' provides direct and immediate aid to underserved communities seeking safety in the urban center of Sudan's capital, and has also developed mechanisms to foster integration and inclusion for mixed migrant populations in order to support individuals in rebuilding their lives. By working in close collaboration with refugees, asylum seekers, mixed migrants, and local Sudanese populations in four neighborhoods of Khartoum, DRC has been able to introduce social cohesion initiatives that foster exchange, connection, and relationship-building opportunities between the various communities.

In 2020 and 2021, DRC co-designed social cohesion initiatives with members of these communities, providing opportunities for mixed migrant and host community group representatives to identify and address key challenges to integration. The exercise culminated in a string of activities and events, aimed to break barriers and build bridges between social groups, and thereby contributing to safety and wellbeing of vulnerable displaced and migrant persons. Events and activities included provision of Arabic classes, vocational training courses for improved psychosocial health in the face of lacking access to livelihoods, and facilitating sporting events between youth groups.

Most recently, DRC hosted a cultural exchange event between Sudanese and Ethiopian communities on 11 July 2021, providing opportunity to share heritage and traditions, both as an exchange between the respective nationalities as well as with other communities. Youth participated by organizing fashion shows, adorning traditional clothing that celebrates

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The Danish Refugee Council is a leading, international humanitarian displacement organisation, supporting refugees and internally displaced persons during displacement, in exile, when settling and integrating in a new place, or upon return. We provide protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance. We support displaced persons in becoming self-reliant and included into hosting societies - and we work with communities, civil society and responsible authorities to promote protection of rights and peaceful coexistence. Founded in Denmark in 1956, 9,000 staff, 7,500 volunteers.

heritage, alongside performing in traditional dance. These events provide an easy social atmosphere for the coming together of persons from diverse backgrounds, enabling access to platforms for exchange, learning, and forming connections.

*“When Sudanese people know more about us and our culture, and we get to know more about theirs, it brings us closer.”*

Mibrahato, Ethiopian residing in Sudan

Among the attendants to the event was Mibrahato, a 49-year-old man originally from Ethiopia and arriving in Sudan at the age of 9, and who has lived in Khartoum since 1996. He lives with his family, including four daughters and one son, who were born in Sudan. Despite living in Sudan since a young age he has been unable to regularize his status, and without his legal documentation, also his children are unable to gain their own statuses despite being born in Sudan, posing barriers to enrolling in public services including University. Mibrahato notes that having lived in Sudan most of his life it is easier for him than for other new arrivals, however barriers to inclusion continue to affect him and his children. The importance of building bridges between social groups to support formation and belonging of communities is present for Mibrahato. Commenting on the cultural exchange event he says that *“when Sudanese people know more about us and our culture, and we get to know more about theirs, it brings us closer”*.



Rahwa, a mother of one, has lived in Khartoum since 2017 after leaving Eritrea in search of a better future for her and her daughter. While Khartoum has provided a better life, Rahwa still faces challenges in making ends meet and to cater for her and her daughter’s needs living in the urban center. She has been engaged in the *Routes-based migration response programme*, both as a beneficiary receiving relief, but also as a community mobilizer conducting outreach to vulnerable groups. She attended the social cohesion event with strong enthusiasm for the dance segments, enjoying the performance as a member of the audience. She appreciated the event for its diversity, noting how many persons from different backgrounds and ethnicities were present, and how comfortable she felt among them and taking part in the day.



*“This kind of thing brings people together”*

Rahwa, Eritrean residing in Sudan

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