

The Danish Refugee Council's 2020 Strategy

Introduction

The world is currently facing historic refugee and migration challenges in relation to its 65 million refugees and more than 240 million migrants. There is no reason to believe that this situation will change for the better in the years ahead – on the contrary, we must expect the number of displaced people to increase. This is due to numerous factors and challenges, primarily including long-term complex conflicts, climate change, global poverty and projected population growth. The world is experiencing a paradigm shift according to which a growing imbalance between increasing numbers of displaced in the world and reductions in the international community's willingness and resources allocated to provide protection and a dignified life for those displaced has become a major global challenge.

These challenges have put conventions under pressure, and international responsibility sharing and solidarity are crumbling. This situation applies to both neighbouring countries to refugees' countries of origin and in Europe.

In an attempt to control the flows and entry of refugees and migrants, many countries have tightened their border controls and made cutbacks affecting the conditions and rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, frequently explaining the introduction of such measures as a response to security problems and fear of terrorism. In many respects, these restrictive policies continue to have unfortunate consequences for integration processes. Deteriorating financial conditions and prolonged waiting times for family reunification, for example, make it more difficult for refugees to become integrated in their host communities.

These refugee and migration challenges will continue to affect all parts of DRC, and the need for our experience, skills, operational assistance and advocacy efforts has never been greater. This applies to the world's hotspots and neighbouring countries, but also in Europe, including Denmark.

DRC holds a strong position relative to these challenges because we have a major operational platform and highly qualified employees.

We have a significant geographical presence in many conflict-affected countries, their neighbouring areas and regions, as well as along European transit routes and in Denmark. We assist displaced people, refugees and host communities, and we safeguard refugees' and migrants basic human rights. The scope of our professional services is broad. It ranges from our integration efforts in Denmark and addressing asylum issues in Denmark and the EU to providing assistance to displaced people and host communities in more than 35. Our assistance in these countries includes providing immediate humanitarian life-saving emergency aid and seeking to secure long-term, sustainable solutions aimed at ensuring a dignified life for displaced people.

This position obligates us to contribute in the best possible way to realising sustainable solutions for displaced people and to protecting and advocating their basic human rights. We must acknowledge that displacement can no longer be viewed as a humanitarian challenge alone, but increasingly as a developmental challenge as well. In recognition of this, DRC is widening the scope of its activities to transcend traditional distinctions between humanitarian and development work.

Displacement and migration flows, both inside and outside Europe, are posing unprecedented global challenges. However, these challenges are manageable and should be viewed as such. DRC supports a targeted effort towards addressing them and a shift towards a more positive discourse on refugees and migrants.

In the spring of 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit produced the commitment to “Leave no one behind” while in the autumn of 2016 the UN General Assembly adopted the so-called *New York Declarations for Refugees and Migrants* in which UN Member States expressed their political willingness to protect refugees’ and migrants’ rights, to save lives, and to share the responsibility for the large-scale population movements at the global level.

Referring to individuals as “illegal” and population movements as “overwhelming” is counter-productive to finding solutions for displaced people. It is necessary to acknowledge the positive contributions to growth and development that refugees and displaced people can make locally. We must strive to make the discourse on refugees and migrants more positive in order to promote and better ensure acceptance, protection and respect.

As a kick-off for our 2020 Strategy, we have revised our Mission and Vision.

DRC’s Mission and Vision

As a private humanitarian organisation, DRC’s work covers all aspects of refugee issues based on humanitarian principles and human rights. Our overarching mission is to assist and protect refugees and to empower them towards a better future.

We strive to provide sustainable solutions for refugees, displaced people and host communities coupled with the objective of enabling those we assist to live dignified lives.

DRC’s Mission:

We assist refugees and the displaced, protect their rights and empower them towards a better future

DRC’s Vision:

A dignified life for all displaced

The Danish Refugee Council’s 2020 Strategy

DRC’s overarching strategic objective is to position itself as an organisation that undertakes and engages in a broad spectrum of humanitarian, development and integration initiatives related to displacement and its effects. We participate in national and international fora to create the best possible solutions for refugees, displacement-affected people and communities, and our advocacy efforts cover refugees’ rights as well as the basic human rights of irregular migrants and rejected asylum-seekers. We contribute to the public debate with knowledge, objectivity and empathy to give populations a broadened view and more nuanced attitude to refugees and displaced people.

As described in the introduction, DRC is uniquely positioned to address today’s global displacement challenges. Our services cover the “Complete Circle” of the displacement cycle because “*We are there*” in conflict-affected countries, their neighbouring areas and broader regions, as well as in Europe, including Denmark, and along European transit routes, and we also assist refugees in connection with their repatriation and return when these options are available.

Overarching Strategic Objectives

DRC's overarching strategic objectives until 2020 are to provide:

- Better assistance to more displaced people – *through growth and innovation*
- More influence – *on solutions*
- Stronger advocacy – *for the rights of refugees and displaced people*

To succeed in achieving our overarching strategic objectives, we must:

1. Strengthen our cooperation and partnerships
2. Provide long-term, sustainable, cohesive solutions
3. Retain and strengthen our values and corporate culture among employees and managers
4. Secure resources for the development and growth of DRC's activities
5. Ensure that our global organisation is efficient, agile and adaptable

1. Strengthen cooperation and partnerships

By 2020 DRC aims to have strengthened its efforts to protect the rights of refugees and displaced people and to have contributed to relevant solutions for refugees, displaced people and host communities through active dialogue with national and international organisations, private and public actors, civil societies, NGOs and INGOs and other relevant partnerships

Global challenges call for joint solutions. The refugee and migration challenges facing the world today are so massive that no single country or organisation can solve them alone. Therefore, we need to strengthen the international institutions by which we can collectively identify the necessary strategies and solutions.

- DRC will address the need for international solidarity and responsibility sharing and actively contribute to a public understanding that we must all – including Denmark – live up to our international obligations and safeguard international legal standards.
- DRC will advocate that cooperation within the UN should be strengthened and founded on the fulfilment of the international community's obligations as laid down in current conventions.
- DRC will also advocate strengthened cooperation within the EU, so that the EU can uphold its responsibility for the refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and reinforce humanitarian efforts in conflict-affected parts of the world. The EU's approach should be based on the underlying principles of solidarity and unity.

Through an active dialogue with the UN system, the EU and other international communities, we can strengthen the efforts to protect the rights of refugees and displaced people and seek to influence solutions forwarded by the international community.

- Therefore, we will continue and reinforce our efforts in Geneva and Brussels and aim to build a presence in Washington as well.
- We can and will improve the quality of work performed by international institutions by sharing our experience and knowledge more intensively and by cooperating in strategic partnerships.

The need for and our commitment to strengthening cooperation and partnerships relates not only to international institutions, but to our own work as well. To provide better assistance to more displaced people, we need to cooperate with other solutions-oriented actors, take a leading role when appropriate, and learn from our collective experience. Doing so will positively impact our interventions and contribute to developing innovative and effective solutions.

We will therefore strengthen our strategic partnerships in the period ahead.

- In Denmark we will participate in and contribute to solutions in cooperation with private, public actors and volunteer organisations.
- In our international operations we intend to strengthen our cooperation with authorities, decision-makers, civil societies, local organisations and other actors in host communities.
- We will invite the business community to participate in strategic partnerships aimed at developing and implementing solutions to some of the challenges facing displaced people.
- We will find new partners – educational institutions, think tanks, etc.

All cooperation must be based on a clear and transparent distribution of responsibility and allocation of resources.

2. Provide long-term, sustainable, cohesive solutions

By 2020 DRC will be globally recognised as an organisation that works with long-term, sustainable and cohesive solutions and provides services spanning from immediate humanitarian emergency aid to development-oriented efforts, and as an organisation that focuses on the mixed flows of refugees and migrants.

Many refugee and migration crises today are long-term, with protracted refugee crises lasting more than 20 years on average. Such crises are typically deep-rooted and highly complex, which places a particular strong burden on their prospects for resolution. There is therefore a crucial need for not only aid in response to acute humanitarian crises but solutions that address their root causes and provide long-term and sustainable solutions for both displaced people and host communities.

In the period ahead DRC intends to focus particularly on **sustainability** and the **long-term** perspective of its efforts.

Keywords describing our activities:

- Focus on root causes
- Development-oriented efforts
- Integration-oriented efforts
- Situation-specific efforts
- Inclusive and popularly backed efforts
- Predictable financing

Cohesive efforts are pivotal to solving the global challenges facing the world. Cohesive solutions mean that resources must be deployed in several areas at the same time and over a long period through solidarity and joint action.

This means that DRC will work towards the following goals:

- Respect for international legal standards, including the Refugee Convention
- Stabilisation and conflict resolution
- Humanitarian aid in acute crises
- Strengthened development-oriented support for displaced people, refugees and the host communities affected
- Resettlement programmes and solidarity-based responsibility sharing
- Protection-sensitive EU external borders
- Fair and efficient EU asylum procedures and common standards
- Strengthened integration programmes
- Sustainable and dignified return and reintegration assistance in home countries

This means that DRC must cooperate internally across departments to ensure the quality of the organisation's solutions. The existing cooperation between the Asylum & Repatriation Department and the International Department as well as the collaborative efforts between language centres, integration programmes and volunteer activities are good examples of a cross-organisational approach that is to be further developed.

The cohesive organisation where all departments cooperate and pool their resources is an important prerequisite for DRC's continued success.

3. Retain and strengthen our values and corporate culture among employees and managers

"We are our employees". By 2020 DRC will have further developed and strengthened its distinctive values and corporate culture, characterised by a spirit of mutual trust between managers and employees and the ability to cooperate internally and externally. This is an essential part of our efforts to reach our growth targets, while also providing job satisfaction and maintaining high-quality job performance.

DRC's growth and good reputation are based on solid values and the ability to communicate these values to all employees in the organisation. So far we have succeeded in communicating and living up to our special values and Scandinavian approach globally. In fact, we have been so successful that our donors are confident in us precisely because of this approach and our Scandinavian management style characterised by a fundamental trust between managers, employees and colleagues. This mutual trust leads to good internal cooperation and also means that DRC's employees are not afraid to be honest about their successes and failures and about what we can and cannot do.

Therefore, we must retain and further develop these fundamental values throughout the organisation, more specifically by taking the requisite action and ensuring that we do not upset the balance between trust and control.

Value compass

We continue to base our work on the following five core values:

- a humanitarian approach
- respect

- independence and neutrality
- inclusion
- honesty and transparency

Core competencies

We have developed and work from a platform of relevant core competencies that we roll out and use actively in the organisation when performing our tasks, but particularly when recruiting and developing our human resources.

We must exercise great care when recruiting and developing employees to ensure that they are able to use the right mix of DRC's core competencies in practice.

The five core competencies are:

- striving for excellence
- collaborating
- taking the lead
- communicating
- demonstrating integrity

Leadership concept

Leadership is a core element in strengthening our corporate culture and values. Therefore, we intend to develop a leadership concept that underpins the unique cultural characteristics of DRC's management. This concept will be based on our value compass and our core competencies, and will consist of the features and actions most characteristic of the Scandinavian approach and management style. We wish to have a management that, in spirit and action, shows trust, co-creates and takes responsibility.

By upholding and developing the values and culture among our employees and managers, we will be able to retain our donors' and partners' trust and maintain our image as a reliable and preferred partner that provides high-quality services. In addition, we will offer our numerous existing and new employees an attractive workplace.

4. Secure resources for the development and growth of DRC's activities

By 2020 DRC will have further expanded its activities for the benefit of refugees, displaced people and the host communities affected. The organisation will have to be prepared to handle continued rapid development and growth.

DRC's business model is designed in a way that means the foundation for the organisation's operational efforts and growth rests on our ability to raise free capital – that is, our own resources that are free for disposal at our discretion.

Our own resources are essential in the international arena in terms of building and developing both our international capacity and the financing required for activities directly targeting displaced people and host communities.

In Denmark, our own resources are essential for financing the activities of the Integration Department, as these activities require investments for, among other things, their establishment and business development. For our asylum and repatriation activities, which are basically funded

under the Danish Finance Act, our own resources are required for a large number of advocacy tasks.

Moreover, we need our own resources to further develop our organisation and ensure that our organisational infrastructure is strong enough to sustain future growth. Our organisational infrastructure must have a capacity that guarantees the highest possible value and lowest possible costs, to which end we must optimise our processes and have the necessary expert skills, systems and tools in place.

Therefore, it is vital that we focus strongly on our organisation's ability to generate its own resources, while paying constant attention to process optimisation and the right cost level. Accordingly, we must:

- Raise more of our own resources
- Increase our return
- Optimise the use of our resources

5. Ensure that our global organisation is efficient, agile and adaptable

By 2020 DRC will have an efficient, agile and adaptable global organisation. An organisation where our support and operational functions work in partnership to create the highest possible value for the whole organisation (Business Partnering), and where the organisation has the authority, skills and tools to ensure high capacity to manage our work as close as possible to where the job is done.

In the same way that DRC's values are pivotal to our work, our ability to carry on operations professionally is also crucial.

As an organisation, DRC must:

- Have a focus that promotes business and supports innovation
- Handle the risks to which the organisation is exposed
- Be agile and flexible
- Support the decentralised decision-making powers and ensure central expert support
- Ensure short decision-making lines and a clear hierarchy of responsibility
- Continue to learn from our experience (the learning organisation, feedback and evaluation culture)

Moving towards 2020 the organisation will place special focus on:

- Continued investment in support functions
Investments must continuously be made in building the capacity of support functions so that they can provide high-quality, coordinated, structured and systematic work to underpin the organisation. In this way they will create more added value and benefit the operational departments, thus eliminating the need for parallel job functions in the organisation.

The changes being introduced in the Finance, HR and IT Departments are to be completed, and the organisation is to implement the Business Partnering model and ensure that the ongoing decentralisation and regionalisation processes are implemented.

- **Digitisation and IT support for the organisation**
A crucial challenge and a key priority for DRC in the period ahead will be to develop and implement the necessary digitisation and IT support for the organisation. In particular, the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will ensure that the organisation can provide relevant, high-quality solutions for the world's refugees and displaced people – while ensuring necessary compliance with the requirements applicable to a global organisation (licence to operate).
- **Internal and external communications**
We must continue to systematise and improve the efficiency of communication across the organisation. This must be done both to ensure the successful implementation of the major change and development projects facing us and to continue strengthening the organisation's external position, impact and fundraising ability.