

## Youth Committees Guidelines

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of its protection strategy for the 2014 response to the Syrian refugee crisis DRC is implementing activities based on a **community-based approach**. This approach aims at providing communities with an enhanced coping capacity to the crisis. The new approach includes establishing and working with more committees, support groups and in general being able to better link DRC activities into communities. In 2014 DRC will facilitate the conformation of 2 women committees, 2 girls committees, 2 youth committees and 2 elderly committees.

Two youth committees will be established and linked to community centers or safe spaces in each office. In order to boost the community based approach, DRC intends to set up 2 youth committees in order to assist adolescents (girls and boys) in rebuilding their future, using their creativity and at the same time organizing group discussions covering protection aspects such as risk of early marriage, child labor, child trafficking, exploitation, abuse, violence. The purpose is to capacitate those youth in building their resilience and at the same time informing them about protection concerns, facilitating their participation in their own protection and protection of other children and adolescents, and eventually identifying protection cases. The committees will be composed of boys and girls, 70 % Syrians and 30 % Lebanese. Activities will be chosen by each committee, which will develop its own plan under the supervision of the Child Protection Officer and child protection staff assigned to follow up on this activity.

### OBJECTIVES

Through the development of youth committees, DRC aims at strengthening community and individuals by facilitating social cohesion in the following ways:

- Empowering adolescents and reducing their vulnerability;
- Supporting children's and adolescents' participation in their own protection;
- Building capacity and providing resources to facilitate youth participation in their communities.
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These objectives can be done through several activities that include:

- ✓ Discussion and information sharing on relevant topics to children and adolescents (early marriage, child labor, child rights, etc.);
- ✓ Creative workshops (photography, mural painting, rap) to facilitate the creation of awareness materials for awareness campaigns;
- ✓ Skill and knowledge-building activities (life skills, leadership skills, etc.)
- ✓ Recreational activities (sports, drama, arts, craft, story-telling, etc.)

### CRITERIA

- The committees should be linked to the community centers or safe spaces
- The committees would be formed from people that live near the centers and in general are meant to be **volunteers** that help communities help each other and provide some networking and linkages
- Committee members should help mobilize youth in communities and also report cases, after training
- Committee members will receive capacity building on general protection and basic PSS activities in order to strengthen support networks, provision of basic response services (psychosocial support and referrals), and provision of information on available services and dissemination of key messages

- Committees are meant to come up with suggestions to small community activities that might benefit the groups, whether it be sports events, a garbage collection day, a day for more awareness on specific topic, etc.
- Activities will be chosen by each committee, which will develop its own plan under the supervision of the case worker or CP Assistant (as assigned)
- The protection assistants will support the case worker to build the capacity of the committees especially regarding identification of risk factors for youth

## **PARTICIPANTS**

- Youth committees: boys and girls (14-18), 70% Syrians and 30% Lebanese
- There is no perfect size for the committees, as reference each committee should be from 10 to 15 people.
- To form the committees, make sure to include people living in surrounding communities not just those who already attend the Community Centres

## **NEXT STEPS - ROAD MAP**

- Mobilize the communities in the areas around the centers and invite people to an **introductory meeting** or **activity day** (awareness session) to explain the objectives and work of the youth committees
- Form the committees only from the candidates that volunteer to be a member (**no “picking up”**)
- Support the committees to develop their own Terms of Reference and adapt a Code of Conduct
- Train committee members on identification, referral and psychosocial support, and do no harm. Be clear that committees should not take cases or discuss cases as a group, but after training on identification, confidential referral and referral pathways, can be involved in referral.
- Agree on activities to be conducted during the month by the committee through work plan or action plan
- Organize committee meeting with the case workers (who are facilitating the committees) at least once a week to plan activities, discuss issues or conduct training or awareness. Topics to be discussed should be proposed by the committee, not DRC staff. Could include: psychosocial issues, girls’ right to education, forced marriages, etc.

**Activities, topics of discussion and awareness should come directly from the Youth Committees. DRC’s role is to support and build capacity only.**