

**DRC MENA Regional Livelihoods Approach
External Brief**

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| Livelihood Strategic Objective (3 years) | Members of displacement-affected communities strengthen the sustainability of their livelihood strategies and resilience to mitigate the consequences of displacement. |
| Immediate Objective (2015-2016) | Members of displacement-affected communities develop their capacities for self-reliance to reduce socioeconomic vulnerabilities. |

DRC MENA uses recognized standards for livelihoods programming, the two most important being:

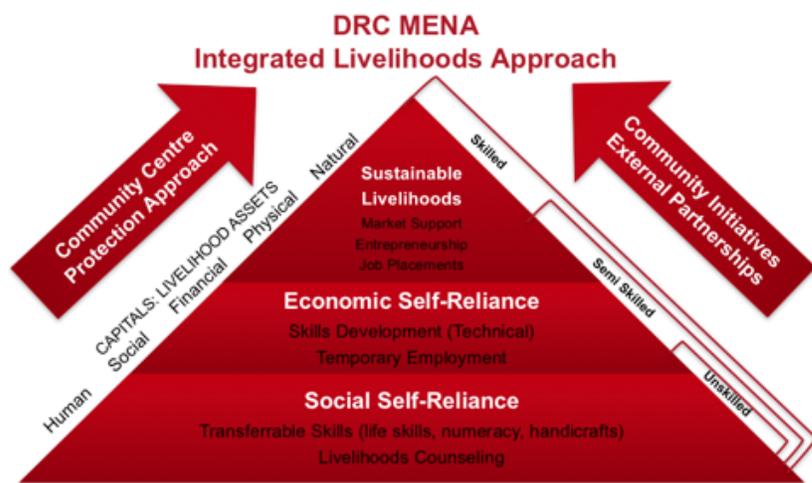
- DFID’s Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Human, Financial, Natural, Social, Physical Assets need to be built for sustainable livelihoods).
- UNHCR’s graduation model (Building up the asset base mentioned above, through a phased approach. This approach also allows us to meet people at the skills and capacities and match assistance accordingly).

The intended outcome is for HHs to progress out of their vulnerable status. DRC MENA measures this in three ways:

- **Achieve social self reliance:** Households that engage in unskilled labour can develop more marketable skills (through livelihoods counselling and training). *These households still require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs.*
- **Achieve economic self reliance:** Households that rely on humanitarian assistance and inconsistent income can access more stable sources of income (through temporary employment such as CfW, or/and specialised trainings). *These households, can start to meet their own basic needs however, would be unable to sustain a shock.*
- **Achieve sustainable livelihoods:** Households currently obliged to consume all of their income and assistance can break their cycle of economic vulnerability by saving and eventually investing in capital. *These households can meet their needs and sustain normal shocks.*

DRC’s approach is guided by three core and complementary operational modalities:

1. **Community centre/case management approach (link to protection):** These spaces can provide a key link between humanitarian protection services (counselling, case management, psychosocial support, etc.), and social self-reliance initiatives that build upon social networks and interaction skills, such as life skills or skills development courses. This allows DRC to balance vulnerability and business ‘viability’.
2. **Community initiatives (link to social cohesion):** Host communities are a key partner and entry point for DRC MENA’s livelihoods interventions. Using an area-based, participatory approach, DRC works with local authorities in displacement-affected communities to identify gaps, priorities, and innovative entry points for livelihoods opportunities and local economic development initiatives.
3. **External partnerships (link to resilience):** Other actors are often better positioned to provide technical livelihood-related services, whether in the public or private sector – DRC’s role is to connect displacement-affected people to these resources and ensure programme and protection standards are met. DRC MENA livelihood programmes strive to integrate displaced people and vulnerable host community members into existing services, whether available through the private sector, government programmes, or via other mechanisms. This is done not only through referrals, but also by partnering directly with service providers. For livelihoods programming, key partners in this approach are often from the private sector. This modality links the development and humanitarian divide which is necessary for sustainable programming.



DRC MENA Presence & Capacity for Livelihoods Programming

Wherever DRC is present in the MENA region, its country programme strives to integrate livelihood programming when possible in terms of government policies, DRC capacity and funding.

- **Social self-reliance** is the foundation of DRC's approach and is being rolled out across the region, with the livelihoods counselling and skills mapping components as standardised priorities.
- DRC MENA has engaged in **economic self-reliance** initiatives for several years using various approaches, which are now being consolidated and harmonised across protracted displacement and stability scenarios.
- While DRC has piloted **sustainable livelihoods** interventions in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, new projects in these countries as well as Jordan and Turkey are taking its initiatives to a larger scale.

Presence: DRC has been present in the MENA region since 2003, when it opened its first operation in southern Iraq. Since then, DRC has launched and developed operations chronologically in Lebanon (2004), Syria (2007), Tunisia and Libya (2011), Turkey and Jordan (2013). DRC is represented in 27 locations through main and sub-offices, employing more than 1,400 staff (including 90 international staff members) and implementing directly and indirectly (through partners) assistance operations worth 95 million USD in 2015. In 2015, livelihoods programming in the region constituted approximately 5 million USD.

Region: DRC has been regionalising its structure since 2013, with a regional office located in Amman providing a strategic framework, technical support and quality assurance to the 7 country programmes. In addition to country-based livelihoods specialists, DRC employs a Regional Livelihoods and Cash Advisor whose role is to provide technical guidance, ensure programme quality through assessments, monitoring, and operational support, and to frame regional strategic priorities.

Programme: Given the challenging contexts in MENA, DRC implements innovative livelihoods programming that transcends the traditional boundaries of humanitarian versus development programming to maximise benefits for displacement-affected populations. DRC MENA is committed to promoting transparent learning on processes and outcomes, often piloting initiatives and documenting lessons learned to demonstrate scalability and impact. Besides being a leading agency in emergency responses to the Syria and Iraqi crises, DRC's programmatic profile focuses on protection and livelihoods in an integrated manner and as a way to improve the resilience of displacement-affected populations. Each of the 8 DRC country programmes in the MENA region combines protection and livelihoods; the latter varies from social self-reliance (livelihoods counselling) to the delivery of grants for business creation, depending on the contexts and legal frameworks.

Coordination: DRC is an active member of the various relevant working groups and coordination mechanisms (including Livelihoods, Social Cohesion or Resilience, HCT) established at country and regional levels (3RP, Whole-Of-Syria).