**Project Title:** Humanitarian Support to Syria through DRC  
**Timing of Evaluation:** April/May 2020  
**Evaluation Owner:** DRC Syria Country Director  
**Evaluation Manager:** DRC Syria MEAL Manager or Head of Programmes  
**Evaluation Team:** External evaluator or evaluation team  
**Type of evaluation:** Final evaluation  
**Evaluation Trigger:** DFID has funded DRC programmes in Syria since 2014, with the current grant cycle scheduled to end on 31st March 2020. DFID have made funds available as part of the programme to conduct a final evaluation. The evaluation is also motivated by DRC’s Minimum Operating Procedures for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, which requires an external evaluation for multi-year programmes valued above 2,000,000 USD.

1. **Introduction**

DRC works in Government of Syria (GoS) controlled areas, operating from its main office in Damascus and providing assistance across six governorates using community centre as hubs. DRC was one of the first organization to start operations and to be registered in Syria. Operations started in 2008 providing services for the Iraqi Refugees. Activities have been scaled up when the Syria crisis started in 2011 providing assistance for IDPs affected by the conflict.

The pathways of change are that Syrian affected crisis population will be benefitted by interventions aiming at improving the quality of education, restoring and creating livelihood opportunities, provisioning and rehabilitating of infrastructures, shelter, water and sanitation facilities and having access to protection and communities-based services.

Years of continuous conflict in Syria have created a highly fluid, unpredictable and insecure environment in which fighting and subsequent displacement have led to large numbers of hard-to-reach, underserved, and IDP-dense communities across the country. DRC’s DFID-funded programme - titled *Humanitarian Support to Syria through DRC* - began on 1 January 2017 and runs through 31 March 2020. It focuses on four key protection and resilience issues: 1) lack of access to information; 2) exposure to immediate risks of physical harm; 3) loss of income and social networks (family, community support, social protection); and 4) disruption of public services.

2. **Purpose of the Evaluation and Guiding Principles**

The final evaluation is intended to assess the performance of two components of the DFID-funded grant that are strategic for future DRC programming and have not been previously examined in depth: 1) early recovery interventions, specifically the small business development programme that has recently introduced support to agribusinesses; and 2) education interventions, specifically the Out of School Programme for students who have dropped out of formal education.

2.1 **Objectives**

The aim of this evaluation is to:

2.1.1 Assess the performance and results of the education and economic recovery components of the DFID grant in relation to project goals.

2.1.2 Assess the relevance, effectiveness efficiency and impact of the education and economic recovery components of the DFID grant.
2.1.3 Assess the extent to which the DFID grant developed local capacities and plans to ensure that the positive outcome of the education and economic recovery interventions can be sustained.

2.1.4 Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the education and economic recovery component of the grant with a focus on effectiveness of cost, beneficiaries targeting and business selection.

2.1.5 Assess the extent to which the programme addressed cross-cutting issues set out in the program strategy focusing on gender, age, or disability.

2.1.6 Re-examine the community centres that were reviewed as part of the MTR to assess progress and changes implemented in line with the recommendations from the MTR report.

2.1.7 Identify lessons and evidence-based recommendations on how to improve design and implementation of out of school program and small business development program especially on aspect of readiness to support rural programming in the future.

2.1.8 Disseminate the results of the evaluation to stakeholders to further promote learning and accountability.

In conducting the evaluation, the evaluator should ensure maximum adherence to key guiding principles. These are derived from DRC’s Global Evaluation Policy and Operating Procedures, as well as DFID’s Syria Evaluation Guidance Note. The methods proposed, data collection approach and analysis should specifically aim to maximize the independence, representativeness, usefulness, and transparency of the findings. The evaluation should take place through a gender-, conflict-, and disability-sensitive lens, which has been partly addressed through the evaluation questions.

3. Context and background to the programme

3.1 Background to the Syria Crisis

The final evaluation will focus on DRC’s DFID-funded response to the ongoing Syria crisis. After nine years of conflict, the scale and complexity of the Syrian crisis remain overwhelming. Major displacement has resulted from widespread military conflict mainly between Government of Syria forces and armed opposition groups (AOGs), and between AOG subgroups. Since 2011, over 6 million Syrians have moved outside Syria’s borders, an additional 6.2 million people are internally displaced.

Since 2018, a marked turning point in the conflict, the context has been characterized by territory increasingly consolidated under Government of Syria (GoS) control. As of November 2019, two humanitarian emergencies are ongoing in the northwest (Idlib) and northeast of the country, increasing displacements internally, although there is currently limited numbers entering GoS areas. Other governorates have experienced a steady uptick in IDPs and Refugees returns, both free as well as pushed from neighbouring countries. In absence of a sustained resolution to the social and political roots of the conflict, however a Constitutional Committee was established in October 2019 with the intent to draft a new constitution for the country.

While the emergency situation has generally been replaced by long-term development and psychosocial support needs in many governorates supported with DFID funds, the humanitarian needs across Syria remain vast. The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan states that 11.7 million people inside the country require humanitarian assistance, the majority of whom are in Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Idlib governorates. Nearly 1.6 million people were internally displaced in 2018. Men, women, boys and girls continue to have profound psychosocial support and individual protection needs. Against a backdrop of increasing economic hardship and widespread unemployment (it is estimated that half of Syrians are unemployed and 80% live below the poverty line), individuals and households resort to harmful coping strategies in terms of psychological and financial behaviors. Children have been at particular risk of dropping out of school to engage in early marriage, child labor and other forms of exploitation including forced begging.

1 Humanitarian Response Plan January-December 2019;
3 HNO 2019; DRC field visit reports; DRC FGDs with teachers and parents – 2018 and 2019.
Many children and youth remain without access to quality education, child friendly spaces, and safe forms of recreation – particularly those in isolated, rural, or hard-to-reach areas. Countrywide, 2.1 million children are estimated to be out of school with an additional 1.3 million at risk of dropping out. As many as 180,000 educational personnel have fled the country. As witnessed by DRC in Aleppo, Hama, and Homs, many displaced children are kept out of school and being exposed to child labour. Remaining schools operate double/triple shifts, affecting teaching quality and learning outcomes. According to the 2019 HNO: “As hostilities have reduced in many areas…needs relating to access to basic services and livelihood opportunities have grown. Consultations with communities have indicated that access to livelihood opportunities and basic services are among their primary concerns as affected people seek to rebuild their lives.”

3.2 Background to DRC’s Response to the Syria Crisis and Evidence Base

DRC began operations in Syria from 2007 responding to the needs of Iraqi refugees. In the subsequent 12 years, DRC has expanded its operations, both geographically and in scope. Through two of the remaining community centers, DRC is today able to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the crisis across the country. These strategic locations have allowed DRC greater reach in its response to a Level 3 humanitarian crisis.

DRC’s current response comprises shelter rehabilitations and upgrades, WASH infrastructure repairs, protection, education, and livelihoods assistance in GoS controlled areas in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar’a, Deir ez-Zour, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo governorates. Enabling these interventions are established memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and negotiated sub-MoUs with the Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), the Ministry of Education (MoE), and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Affairs (MoSAL).

Operating in areas subject to heavy presence of armed actors, including those which have recently shifted control, DRC’s humanitarian activities are often subject to heavy scrutiny by security actors. To safeguard the safety and wellbeing of beneficiaries and field staff, as well as the continuity of activities, DRC ensures that all necessary approvals are obtained from key stakeholders in the provision of humanitarian aid from Damascus – SARC, MoE, MoLA or MoSAL. Safety risks are evaluated and managed through use of DRC’s global Safety Risk Management System (SRMS) and application of the Minimum Operating Safety Standards (MOSS).

The primary source of evidence to support operational and strategic planning remains the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and its underlying data. Due to contextual restrictions in the collection of household level data, information on the needs and vulnerabilities of the target population is extremely limited. As a result, DRC and all other humanitarian actors operating out of the Damascus hub rely primarily on secondary data made available through the humanitarian coordination mechanisms, of which the HNO is the primary source. In an attempt to address this gap, DRC has begun conducting in-depth analysis of data collected through the programme cycle (at point of registration and through Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) exercises). While this provides some level of data on beneficiaries of DRC’s programmes, there still remains a gap in data covering the wider community and particularly any sub-groups excluded from humanitarian assistance.

To date, DRC has commissioned four external evaluations of its DFID-funded programmes in Syria. The first was conducted by an international consultant and consisted primarily of a secondary data review and key informant interviews with DRC staff. The evaluation was conducted remotely by the international consultant from Beirut as a result of delays in securing the appropriate authorisations from the Syrian authorities. The second evaluation was conducted by a Damascus-based consultancy firm and followed a methodology similar to the first evaluation as a result of delayed authorisations from the Syrian authorities. The third evaluation was conducted by the same Damascus-based consultancy firm; this iteration included some limited primary data collection with beneficiaries (however the data collection was conducted by DRC staff rather than the external partner due to operational restrictions).
The latest evaluation was a mid-term evaluation conducted in December 2018 focused on community centre services. An external consultant was hired to develop the methodology and tools in response to a ToR. The consultant conducted a training in Beirut to 15 DRC staff, who carried out focus group discussions with CC beneficiaries and whose work was overseen by the remotely-based consultant. The consultant further carried out a series of KIIIs with DRC staff and program stakeholders.

While previous evaluations have been characterised by methodological limitations, as the aforementioned summary demonstrates DRC has successfully strengthened the rigor, scope, and usefulness of evaluations through the four iterations.

3.3 DFID-Funded Programme “Humanitarian Support to Syria through DRC” and Theory of Change

The DFID-funded project started 1 January 2017 and runs through 31 March 2020. The project aims to support conflict affected Syrians, including women, children/youth and other vulnerable groups to meet their basic needs, have improved access to protection and community services, and improve their self-reliance and resilience to withstand shocks and stresses. Under the project's current theory of change (ToC) (Annex 2), DRC seeks to reduce or prevent threats to the safety, dignity, and well-being of individuals and communities. Interventions developed in support of the TOC build on the assumptions that the resilience of beneficiaries is strengthened through access to basic services including protection, education, housing and WASH infrastructure, and income generating opportunities.

The programme's social protection activities provide children, youth and adults with greater social skills, reduced levels of stress and strengthen resilience and wellbeing. Awareness sessions provide beneficiaries with key information on mitigating protection threats relevant throughout their lives and further disseminated amongst vulnerable communities by word-of-mouth. Document restorations provides beneficiaries with regularized legal statuses, aiding their ability to secure their rights within the Syrian Arab Republic legal framework and to access key services such as education. Psychosocial support equips beneficiaries with tools to process traumatic and difficult experiences, improving their long-term mental wellbeing.

DRC's education assistance builds community resilience by expanding the capacity of pre-existing educational structures. This provides necessary support to national and local education authorities in Syria as duty bearers of education and enables them to fulfill their responsibility, allowing for a phased and responsible handover of resources to the MoE and affected communities. DRC’s Out of School Programme targets children who are currently dropped out of school aiming to enable them to continue learning and prepare for the national exams ahead of the annual school registration. The participation in the programme does not offer the children certification but provides a path to reintegration to formal education. The OOSP is categorized as non-formal education in the Syrian education system for the children who have missed out on regular schooling. Classes run for three sessions (45-50 minutes each), three to five days a week, taking place in the afternoon after formal school hours. Classes are in Arabic, Mathematics, and English and are taught by fully qualified teachers registered with MoE over the course of three months. The teachers are recruited from the school in which the programme is hosted. After children have completed the full programme, they are supported to take the national placement test necessary to re-enter formal education.

The livelihoods component was implemented only during the second and fourth year of the project implementation. The interventions strive to equip vulnerable individuals unable to access livelihoods opportunities, or those unable to start-up/sustain a viable business due to lack of capital, with necessary trainings and tools to ultimately access sustainable livelihoods in line with market needs. This is done through asset replacement for microenterprises combined with business skills training and coaching. Beneficiaries from Homs, Hama, Rural Damascus, and Dara’a governorate who are selected through DRC’s vulnerability and suitability criteria will be provided with a five-day business development skill training on business planning and management. The training covers the topics such as, project formulation and management, market study, project SWOT analysis, marketing and promotion methods, project profit and loss.

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4 Given repeatedly communicated restrictions on external evaluations, DRC undertook a partially closed procurement process. The same approach is planned for the final evaluation.
calculation and pricing methods, etc. The trainings are held in the private training centers located in each governorate and are delivered by trainers who have relevant academic and/or professional background. Upon the completion of the training, each participant receives four hours of coaching over the course of a two-week period through home visits conducted by the trainers. Beneficiaries who complete the business development skills training with satisfactory attendance (minimum 80%) applies to receive a business start-up asset. Beneficiaries must submit a business plan which includes an overview of the project, target group, market study, financial study, risk analysis, and business implementation plan. This plan includes information on the relevant market dynamics, including key market actors, sustainability, and potential negative impacts their business may result in. The beneficiaries themselves identify which asset is the most beneficial which is then validated through the coaching sessions before final asset procurement approval is given by livelihoods management level staff after reviewing the finalized business plan. Livelihoods staff conducts monitoring and business coaching visits to the beneficiaries for the three months following the asset procurement.

4. Scope of the evaluation

The technical scope of the final evaluation covers the early recovery and education interventions conducted during the last year of the grant period. The evaluation has a particular focus on the two components that have not been evaluated in the past and that are strategical for DRC in terms of scale up and opportunities for future interventions. However, the protection component will be reconsidered and evaluate only if the only practical methodology to be used will be desk review. For the above reason, the evaluation team will have to re-examine the community centres intervention under output 3 “Provision of protection focused support and community services to vulnerable individuals, including psychosocial support, counselling, and legal assistance”, which component was reviewed during the Mid Term Evaluation (MTR) conducted in 2018. The final evaluation will assess the progress and changes implemented in line with the recommendations to re-align the existing Community Centres operation.

While the evaluation is intended to cover both vocational training, and asset replacement for microenterprises along with business skills training funded by DFID, the small business development (microgrant) programme is the priority intervention for which DRC seeks to build a better evidence base through this evaluation. DRC has a particular interest in exploring the quality, performance, and opportunities to improve support to agribusinesses. In the education portfolio, the focus of the evaluation is the Out of School Programme (OOSP), where DRC has identified opportunities to expand coverage. Ad hoc information obtained during field visits has also motivated certain evaluation questions related to the effectiveness of the programme. Headmasters interviewed routinely cited the persistence of learning gaps faced by students who were formerly out of school, partially due to the short time period of the OOSP.

DRC has developed the evaluation scope to generate evidence related to three thematic areas of inquiry (further detailed with core evaluation questions in Section 6):

- Extrapolating perceived and actual outcomes achieved, and comparison against targets, for the early recovery and education programmes
- Testing outcomes against the programme’s resilience objectives and assumptions in the TOC
- Understanding general quality of implementation and areas of improvement for the early recovery programme and the education programme

Education activities related to Out of School Programme are carried out in Hama and Aleppo governorates, while livelihood activities are implemented in Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus, Damascus and Daraa. However, the geographic scope of the evaluation is not intended to cover all governorates. The evaluator or evaluation team should propose governorates and specific locations to prioritize in collaboration with DRC based on objective criteria such as feasibility of access to implementation sites and availability of stakeholders.

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) conducted in December 2018 examined the community centre services component of DRC Syria’s protection portfolio. The results of the MTE have informed the strategic direction of the protection programme, resulting in a major recent restructuring of the CCs. The final evaluation should
complement the mid-term by examining the quality of services provided by DRC in other sectors funded by DFID, and the contribution of those services to the overall Theory of Change.

In the MTR the following recommendations were suggested:

- The ToC has a sound plan in the Causal Links that can be measured and should be operationalised to ensure that all levels of management and programme are working with the same vision. This will help to ‘erase’ the silos. See the appendices for a sample tool (Results Framework/Logical Framework/Detailed Implementation Plan). CC staff should be able to ‘see’ their activities within the Causal Links, and they will find ways to produce more linkages and add depth to the existing operations.
- Verify that data which populates the Logical Framework, serving as evidence of project accomplishments, is truly representative of persons who have a) attended courses, and b), completed a feedback form which attests to the assistance they received. Continue to enhance the Pre/post-test mechanism for the Parenting Programme, Children’s and Youth Programme to be more robust and yield results that can be used for programming and contribute to achieving the overall goals.
- Programme Management staff should be more responsive in making strategic adjustments to activity plans based on quarterly results. If targets are surpassed, this is a signal to go to another level or dimension of activity.
- The preliminary contact at data entry should be able to better filter and categorize the needs, expectations, and prospects for a beneficiary. In addition, this person may require training that aligns with the role of a social counsellor with a focus on interpersonal communication, listening skills, and teaming.
- SIGMA V2 rollout training should pay attention to the purpose of the system. Trainers should spend time with users to practice and manoeuvre through the system, as well as showing them various analytical products it can produce for improving their programming.
- Accelerate the plan to designate and train field-based M&E officers, who will strengthen the linkages as noted above.
- Information products (pre/post-test summaries, satisfaction survey summaries, etc.) should be shared with Supervisors for programme development.

The final evaluation intends to assess if recommendation were applied in the existing CCs operating under DFID project.

5. Risks and Challenges

5.1 Access

To date, DRC (along with other humanitarian actors) has faced restrictions on accessing beneficiaries directly for independent needs assessments, monitoring, or evaluations. Thus far, DRC’s main contact with beneficiaries has been within its community centres where the ability to make inquiries is relatively unhampered. Focus group discussions are held with students, parents, and teachers in the schools where DRC supports the Out of School Programme for dropped out students. Phone-based sample surveys have also been used frequently in 2019 to follow up with beneficiaries of early recovery interventions.

Due to the sensitivities around primary data collection, it is possible that beneficiaries, staff, and contractors interviewed for this evaluation may choose not to answer certain questions. The Evaluator should forgo questioning around certain sensitive issues that could expose interviewees to either physical or psychological risk, in line with a do no harm approach.

In order to access beneficiaries and programme sites directly for the evaluation, DRC would need to obtain approval from the Government of Syria (for the Evaluation team’s visas and travel), SARC for Livelihood activities and MoE approvals for Education activities. While DRC will make efforts to facilitate the visa for an external consultant, it cannot be guaranteed that the Evaluator will gain direct access to the programme sites and activities. It is also possible that the evaluation will need to be managed remotely should visas not be granted (as with the previous mid-term evaluation). DRC is prepared to facilitate data collection for the Evaluation team using internal programme staff who are either from other sectors or who have the necessary experience.

It is also possible that deterioration in the safety situation could prevent travel by DRC Syria programme staff
to programme sites across various governorates. If this is the case, DRC will liaise with the Evaluator to potentially postpone the evaluation or identify alternative sites for the evaluation.

5.2 Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 pandemic has further complicated both access and programming prospects with most programme activities partially suspended, staff partially working from home. Government has continued to reinforce stringent measures to contain the virus spread;

- Syria border closure, Lebanon (indefinitely) and Jordan (for 2 months)
- Curfew from 18:00 to 06:00 until further notice.
- All flights to and from Damascus remain suspended.
- Travel restriction between the country’s provinces until 16 April.
- DRC’s community centres will remain closed until 16 April.
- DRC program Activities have been suspended due to restrictions imposed by GoS; suspension of group activities (training, awareness sessions, workshop) and closure of community centres.
- Following DRC programmes are still ongoing. Protection (non-specialized services via phone). Wash (Water network rehabilitation, with no monitoring visits). Shelter (School rehabilitation with no monitoring visits)

As a definite timeframe for lifting these restrictions remains unknown, the evaluation will need to be managed remotely should the situation remain the same. DRC is prepared to facilitate data collection for the Evaluation team using internal programme staff who are either from other sectors or who have the necessary experience.

6. Key evaluation questions

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<th>OECD DAC Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Key Evaluation questions and sub-questions</th>
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| Relevance and appropriateness | 1. To what extent were the livelihood activities appropriately implemented to contribute to the resilience building of women and men?  
2. To what extent were the microbusinesses supported relevant and in line with the market demand?  
3. To what extent was the livelihoods project implementation aligned to the sector coordination requirements? If not, what can be done differently next time?  
4. To what extent was an integrated programming approach applied to livelihoods and protection project implementation? How differently can protection be integrated in microbusiness implementation to enhance outcome?  
5. To what extent did the project adapt itself to contextual changes within the various locations to ensure that it adequately responded to emerging needs/issues? How appropriate were the alternative solutions? |
| Effectiveness | 1. What are the main changes experienced by participants in the early recovery activities, and how do these relate to the anticipated changes under the programme Theory of Change?  
   a. What is the contribution of the small business development programme in increasing the disposable income of the targeted beneficiaries?  
   b. What is the contribution of the vocational training in increasing the disposable income and levels of employment of the targeted beneficiaries? |
c. What is the contribution of the early recovery portfolio in reducing negative coping mechanisms and strengthening food security of the targeted beneficiaries?

2. What evidence is available that the early recovery programme strengthened overall resilience of the targeted beneficiaries?

3. How do stakeholders of the Out of School Programme perceive the effectiveness of the programme in terms of:
   a. Readiness of students who complete the programme to continue formal education
   b. Addressing learning needs of students enrolled from all backgrounds, including girls, boys, and children with disabilities

4. What evidence is available that the Out of School Programme improved education readiness and resilience among the dropped out students?
   a. How can DRC strengthen the design and implementation of the Out of School Programme to reduce learning gaps and help formerly dropped out students succeed in formal education?

5. To what extent did activity implementation across the livelihoods and protection components of the project integrate or mainstream various aspects of inclusivity including gender, disability, cultural sensitivity and other vulnerabilities? Are there any key lessons relating to this?

6. How effective were the selection criteria across the various components of the project in terms of ensuring ownership and participation in the process of selection and ultimately reaching out to the most vulnerable populations?

7. How effective was the program MEAL System in contributing towards effective management and quality implementation of the program activities? How can this be strengthened further in the subsequent phase?

8. What was the quality of program coordination and collaboration with relevant coordination bodies in ensuring maximized coverage and service provision?
   a. Are there any challenges and lessons around coordination and complementarity initiatives that can be drawn to inform future interventions?

Efficiency

1. How efficient was DRC’s support in improving rural businesses? How can DRC improve the support provided to rural business owners under the early recovery portfolio?

2. How can DRC maximize the cost-effectiveness with regards to use of resources in the small business development programme in terms of:
   a. The approach of business skills training and coaching
   b. Types of businesses selected

3. What opportunities exist to strengthen integration and/or linkages between DRC’s early recovery and education programmes?

4. To what extent are there evident disparities in access to the early recovery services or the Out of School Programme based on gender, age, or disability?

5. Are there any key learnings and recommendations regarding the adequacy of program support systems in ensuring cost-efficient implementation?
| Sustainability | 1. To what extent has the program developed local capacities, linkages and plans for ensuring that the effects of the livelihoods and education interventions can be sustained and that the program interventions link to longer-term recovery and development needs of the targeted areas?  
2. To what extent was the Out of School Programme able to contribute to sustainable outcomes for students in terms of enrollment into formal education and mitigating repeat drop outs?  
3. Are the microbusinesses supported by the early recovery programme likely to continue? |
| Impact | 1. What changes (Intended/Un-intended, Positive or Negative) can be observed in relation to the livelihoods and education components of the Programme?  
2. What are the indirect effects on local markets (positive and negative) of the small business development programme?  
3. What do the beneficiaries and other stakeholders perceive to be the effect of the interventions on themselves?  
4. What are the major achievements attributable to the Programme; where are the gaps that need to be addressed?  
5. To what extent did the DFID project interventions complement that of the national and local authorities and other humanitarian organizations?  
6. To what extent has Covid-19 impacted on the achieved program results, what lessons can be learned? |

7. Evaluation deliverables

- Inception report (including methodology, data collection tools, evaluation communications plan)
- Draft report
- Datasets and any other relevant evaluation materials
- Workshop with DRC Syria staff to validate findings
- Final report (using template provided in the DFID Syria Evaluation Guidance Note) hard copy and soft copy with Annexes
- Power Point presentation to the donor
- DRC lessons learned note and evaluation summary
- Info graphics with main findings of the evaluation

The report must:
- Contain an executive summary;
- Be based on sound and explicit methodology and analysis;
- Be in accordance with DAC evaluation standards, clearly distinguishing between evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations;
- Be structured around issues and related findings/lessons learnt;
- Include conclusions, recommendations, and, outline how the success of DRC’s implementation of these recommendations could be measured at final evaluation stage.

Target Audience:

The main target audience for the evaluation will be:
- DRC staff (including those working on the Syria country mission and management staff at the Middle East regional office and headquarters)
- DFID – the donor of the programme under evaluation
Any circulation with entities beyond DRC and DFID will be considered and approved by DRC on a case-by-case basis. DFID will have unlimited access to all materials produced as a result of this evaluation. DRC will retain ownership of the materials distributed. Due to the risks inherent to the Syrian context, where the collection of primary data is sensitive, DRC will sign off on circulation of materials to third parties.

8. Methodology

The evaluation should focus on understanding the probable results obtained through the early recovery and education interventions in relation to the programme’s resilience-oriented Theory of Change. To this end, it is strongly recommended that the evaluator propose an evaluation methodology that encompasses mixed method techniques, including potentially household interviews, focus group discussions, phone surveys, and key informant interviews with programme stakeholders.

The overall evaluation methodology must be finalized by the evaluator or evaluation team as part of the inception report, based on preliminary discussions with the DRC Syria programme team. The inception report will be reviewed and validated by DRC Syria and DFID.

At minimum the evaluator must ensure:

- That the evaluation will apply the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria of Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability as relevant for a final performance and formative evaluation;
- That the guiding principles and values of usefulness; representativeness; gender, conflict, and disability sensitivity; accountability; and transparency are applied, in accordance with the DFID Syria Evaluation Guidance Note;
- That the people to be consulted during the evaluation are relevant to the focus of the evaluation;
- That mixed method(s) (quantitative, qualitative and participatory) approaches used will allow for triangulation of sources and findings;
- That the beneficiaries and other key stakeholders are consulted in an impartial manner;
- That collection of data that is not used and not relevant to the evaluation is avoided;
- That the method and approach chosen are ethically sound and contextually and culturally sensible;
- That the evaluation is undertaken with integrity and honesty, whereby commissioners, evaluation manager and evaluators respect human rights and differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs and practices of stakeholders;
- That the evaluators are mindful of gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the evaluation;
- That the confidentiality of evaluation participants and other beneficiaries is protected at all times.
- That necessary informed consent is sought during evaluation, and when minors are to participate in this evaluation, a notice of Active or Passive Consent must be sent to their parents or guardians.

Essential and potential interviewees/target groups are the following:

- DRC beneficiaries: The Evaluator may have access to beneficiaries within DRC offices / community centres, schools or via phone consultations. If direct access cannot be achieved, DRC Syria programme staff will be available to conduct interviews with these beneficiaries.
- DRC management staff with overall responsibility for programme implementation, and responsible for overall programme design and monitoring; including Programme Managers (MEAL Manager, Head of Programme, Economic Recovery Manager, and Education Manager); Head of Programmes; and Country Director.
- Field staff directly implementing activities at programme sites. Staff who should be interviewed include Economic Recovery Officers and Assistants, and Education Field Assistants.
- Potentially other strategic partners and stakeholders, including representatives of SARC, Ministry of Education, Departments of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and private business owners, pending approvals.
DFID considers essential to contact other donor and partner for the evaluation. Evaluator shall contact other donors / partners. Contact will be provided by DRC.

It is unlikely that interviewing a control group will be feasible under this evaluation due to access restrictions; DRC will likely be able to gain approvals for the evaluation team only for DRC beneficiaries. Approval to interview people who have not yet come into contact with DRC is unlikely to be given. DRC will provide feedback on the development of the methodology to ensure that it is feasible within the Syria context and collects sufficient information to produce a useful high quality report. DRC will sign off on the proposed methodology in consultation with DFID.

The responsibility for the quality assurance of the evaluation rests with the DRC manager commissioning the evaluation in consultation with DFID. DRC’s quality assurance will be ongoing throughout the evaluation cycle, especially at the design and inception phase, including when the Evaluation team provide/s response to the ToR. The second opportunity will be with the submission of the first draft of the report.

9. Recommended documentation

The following information, along with all relevant programme-related data, will be made available to the evaluation team:

- Programme proposal, programme documents, logical framework, Theory of Change and relevant monitoring data and reports for activities conducted under the programme. DRC has already conducted a number of assessments and activity monitoring under the DFID programme and for other donors. Examples of data that will be available to the Evaluator include: School needs assessment results; results of focus group discussions conducted with Education beneficiaries, including parents, students and teachers; pre- and post-assessment results from the Out of School Program; Economic Recovery program post-distribution monitoring reports; market assessments; business coaching reports; and all available programme activity curricula.
- Regional and Country Strategic Programme Document (SPD);
- DRC’s Operational Principles;
- DRC’s Programme Handbook chapter 2.3 (Mandate) and 5 (Assistance Framework);
- Reports from evaluations conducted on similar DRC programmes;
- Activity and outcome monitoring data and reports previously conducted by DRC under the DFID-funded programme;
- Open-source local and international datasets such as the Syrian Arab Republic HNO (2018);
- DRC’s datasets including Multi-Sector Needs Assessments (MSNA) of over 4,000 beneficiaries; school needs assessments covering schools across five governorates; and DRC’s Protection Monitoring reports.

10. Follow Up

As a minimum the evaluation mission and report should be followed up:

- By DRC Syria Country Director and the Head of Programmes. A signed management response will be shared with the evaluator and Head of Desk and Global Lead on Monitoring and Evaluation in DRC’s Operations and Policy Support Division.
- By the evaluator: An Evaluation Lessons Learned Note, which is sent to HQ: mel@drc.ngo

11. Expected Implementation of the Evaluation

The final evaluation should be completed over a period of maximum 37 working days (see the below tentative outline with one contingency day included). In this timeframe the external evaluator is expected to complete all deliverables.

All briefings and workshops may be done virtually or in person if a visa is successful. Primary data collection may be done through DRC Syria programme staff or the evaluator if permissions are received for travel. The evaluator is responsible for daily review and quality oversight of the data collected, including any remote
supervision of data collection. The evaluator may choose to manage the evaluation remotely from Beirut if it is not possible to travel to Damascus.

**Tentative timeline and deliverables**

1. **Preparation – 10 days**
   - Briefing with DRC MEAL manager, relevant sector managers and Head of programme;
   - Desk review;
   - Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology;
   - Draft inception report including communications plan and data collection tools;
   - Endorsement of methodology, communications plan, and data collection tools by DRC’s Head of Programme and sector managers;
   - Set the mission dates and prepare detailed mission programme, with support from DRC (DRC will organize the mission, arrange transportation for the consultant and translation/interpretation, when necessary).

2. **Mission to Syria (if possible) – 14 days**
   - Meet with DRC Country Director, Head of Programmes and Economic Recovery and Education PM;
   - Meet with key DRC field programme staff;
   - Visits to selected community centres and primary data collection with programme beneficiaries;
   - Consultative workshop with presentation of preliminary evaluation results to key programme stakeholders;
   - Debriefing with DRC Senior Management Team.

3. **Finalization of Report – 12 days**
   - Complete and submit draft evaluation report including a presentation for comments and suggestions;
   - Development of final report and recommendations based on feedback received on draft report and during workshop with DRC staff;
   - DRC provides management response and detailed workplan to address recommendations;
   - Finalisation of the report;
   - Dissemination to DFID and other stakeholders as defined in the communications plan;
   - Development of learning note and user-friendly evaluation summary products.

DRC Syria is looking for the following qualifications in the evaluator or evaluation team:

- Advanced degree, preferably PHD in development studies, social sciences or other relevant field.
- 8 year of experience in leading similar evaluations of humanitarian or development programming in Syria and in Middle East;
- Extensive previous experience with both early recovery and education focused humanitarian response, including good understanding and experience with gender issues;
- Knowledge of strategic and operational management of humanitarian programmes, and proven ability to provide strategic recommendations to key stakeholders.
- Extensive knowledge of current literature/practice on the delivery of early recovery and education programming in humanitarian response;
- Experience with formal qualitative analysis and access to relevant software strongly preferred;
- Familiarity with DRC and/or Damascus based humanitarian operations preferred;
- Ability to produce high quality analytical reports in English;
- Knowledge of Arabic preferred.

**Additional Annexes:**

1. Programme Logical Framework
2. Unpacked Theory of Change
3. DFID Evaluation Report Template

**Presentation of offer:**
Interested applicants should submit their letter of proposal, profiles and CVs together with technical and financial proposal to DRC Syria. The bid submitted by the bidder has to fully comply with the Terms of Reference (TOR) and must contain a brief technical and a financial part.

The proposal shall include:

1. Introduction of the evaluator: Name, country, summary of experience and background.
2. Introduction of the evaluation team: List of the evaluator team members and their CV.
3. Consultancy firm’s experience and portfolio.
4. Methodological proposal to conduct the evaluation, according to the Terms of References, including evaluation logical framework designed according to the evaluation’s questions.
5. Financial proposal: including consultancy fee, proposed person-days and rates, accommodation, data entry and analysis, stationery, printing, binding, and photocopying, taxes, etc.
6. DRC will cover the expenses relates to travel within the country during the period of field work. All other expenses related to the evaluation have to be incurred by the evaluators and shall be included in the financial proposal.
7. Any other relevant information as annex.

Proposal shall be submitted to george.torach@drc.ngo

**Need further information?**
For more details on this evaluation ToR please contact valeria.bacci@drc.ngo.

Please note that applications sent to this address will not be considered.