

Minutes of Executive Committee meeting on 22 February 2022

Present

From the ExCom:

Agi Csonka, Chair
 Bettina Bach
 Juliane Marie Neiiendam
 Karen Faarbæk de Andrade Lima
 Kim Simonsen
 Sophie Rytter
 Ulla Næsby Tawiah
 Rahima Abdullah, observer, Chair of DFUNK

From the Secretariat:

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General
 Vibeke Bach Madsen, Committee Secretary
 Anne Mette Barfod, CFO, attended for agenda item 2
 Kenneth Flex, Director of DRC Integration, attended for agenda item 3

Apologies

Mette Fejfer
 Vagn Berthelsen

Agi Csonka, Chair, attended the meeting online, and Kim Simonsen, Deputy Chair, chaired the meeting.

Agenda

	Items		Content
	News from the field – in brief Charlotte Slente about the mission to Syria		
1)	Approval of agenda	Decision	Comments on the agenda
2)	Financial briefing / Anne Mette Barfod, CFO	Briefing	Follow-up on January-December 2021 budget and preliminary forecast for 2021. Material to be presented at meeting.
	BREAK		
3)	THEME DRC Integration Denmark / Kenneth Flex, Director of DRC Integration	Briefing	Annex 3.0 Cover note for theme on DRC Integration Annex 3.1 DRC Integration, brief presentation Annex 3.2 DRC Integration, profile magazine Briefing about DRC Integration's activities in Denmark: current situation and future prospects.
	BREAK		
4)	THEME DRC Governance / Agi Csonka	Discussion	The ExCom continues the discussions from the seminar last November on the balance between external governance requirements, the wish and need for professionalisation and the best possible

	Items		Content
			management of DRC as a major global humanitarian organisation.
5)	Draft agenda for Council meeting on 31 May 2022 / Kim Simonsen	Decision	Annex 5.0 Cover note for Council meeting Annex 5.1 Draft agenda for Council meeting on 31 May 2022 The ExCom must approve the draft agenda which is to be sent to the member organisations along with the notice convening the meeting no later than two months before the meeting.
6)	Announcements from the Chair	Briefing	
7)	Any other business		Annex 7 Programme for ExCom mission in the week beginning 7 March 2022.
	Recap after the meeting		ExCom ‘free time’ with the possibility to evaluate and recap the meeting.

News from the field – in brief

Charlotte Slente briefed the ExCom about her most recent mission to Syria.

The war in Syria is now in its 11th year – without any prospect of a solution. And the conflict continues to take its toll on the civilian population. Nothing can prepare you for the devastation in Syria. The extent of the devastation and the financial crisis alone leave millions of Syrians in a very difficult situation.

- 13.4 million people need humanitarian aid, a 21% increase on 2020.
- 12.4 million people are food insecure, a 60% increase on 2020.
- 6.7 million people are internally displaced, corresponding to one third of the entire population.

DRC is one of the major NGOs in Syria today, and we have been present in the country since 2008. Today, about 200 staff offer support within Economic Recovery, Protection, Shelter & Settlements, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and Mine Risk Education.

The 2022 budget totals USD 9.5 million and USD 8 million is in the pipeline.

We offer direct support to 37,500 people in Syria and indirect support to 1,353 million people.

Our activities were markedly reduced in 2020 because DRC’s bank at the time did not offer the opportunity to transfer funds to Syria. DRC has subsequently changed banks, and it is now possible for us to step up our activities in the country.

The mission also allowed time for meetings with authorities, donors and partners and, obviously, with DRC’s dedicated staff.

Re 1) Approval of agenda

Item 4 of the agenda was deferred to a future meeting.

The agenda was subsequently approved.

2) Financial briefing

Anne Mette Barfod, CFO, went through the preliminary budget for 2021.

No annex for the item had been sent to the participants as the bookkeeping of the operation closed by midnight on 21 February.

Accordingly, the oral briefing did not include revised figures and the figures may change as the work on the annual report progresses.

Income is slightly higher than the 2021 budget but somewhat lower than the 2021 forecast.

Result before investments largely meets the budget.

As mentioned earlier, losses have increased. This is due partly to fraud and partly to ineligible costs.

Management continues to make efforts to handle and prevent such losses, both at structural and operational level. Not least the dashboards of DRC Dynamics will support the country managers and senior management at large in gaining an overview and in the ongoing follow-up.

In addition, the clean-up of 2019 and 2020 will continue to be addressed and solved, and the data for 2021 fortunately seem to have improved.

Result after investments is expected to move into the black. The currency exposure remains uncertain as the final figures have not yet been computed. There are indications that it will end up in positive territory as far as the headquarters are concerned, but the final outcome will have to await information from the operation.

Overall, the 2021 result for the year is expected to end up close to zero.

⇒ **Recap:** *The ExCom expressed its thanks for the presentation and commended the very good work. It is impressive that we end up with reasonable financial results in difficult times. The entire team was praised.*

The Secretariat's efforts at both structural and operational level in the handling of losses was considered satisfactory, and it was recognised that the reality that DRC is currently faced with will provide challenges that might result in losses. It was considered a positive aspect that Dynamics can be used as a key tool.

Re 3) THEME: DRC Integration Denmark

The following annexes had been sent to the participants:

Annex 3.0 *Cover note for theme on DRC Integration*

Annex 3.1 *DRC Integration, brief presentation*

Annex 3.2 *DRC Integration, profile magazine*

Kenneth Flex, Director of DRC Integration, presented DRC Integration and reviewed the discontinuation of *Lærdansk* (language schools) and *Tolkeservice* (interpreting services) with particular focus on the continuing activities.

Lærdansk og Tolkeservice – the end of an era

The activities of *Lærdansk* and *Tolkeservice* were completely discontinued at end-2021. The discontinuation of the activities was managed properly in respect of staff, customers and, in the case of *Lærdansk*, the lessors and contractors who took over the activities from DRC.

The preparation of the financial statements for 2021 is in progress and the final financial results are in the pipeline.

Based on the preliminary data, *Lærdansk* will end up with a lower loss than expected, and *Tolkeservice* will end up with a small loss.

DRC Integration's targets and target groups

Our mission continues to be *To contribute to a successful reception of new refugees arriving in Denmark*

and not least integration of the many refugees and refugees reunified with family members who have already lived in Denmark for a long period, but the overall vision is *A dignified life for all displaced*.

DRC Integration will strive to achieve this vision by ensuring that more refugees in Denmark faster become capable of supporting themselves in becoming active and self-supporting citizens.

The target group is also the same: Newly arrived refugees and refugees reunified with family members who still face challenges due to being exiled despite having lived in Denmark for many years.

Obviously, DRC Integration is affected by several years’ decline in the number of tasks and resultant reductions.

The staff are characterised by great expertise, huge dedication and passion, a willingness to discover new synergies across the organisation and an impressive will to succeed.

DRC Integration – organisational structure and continuing activities

The DRC Integration organisation is much smaller today than it used to be – it has, in fact, been halved over the past few years.

DRC Integration is still renowned and respected for its integration efforts within: Employment, Children & Families, Knowledge & Development (including the Knowledge Centre for Vulnerable Refugees) and Volunter.

However, going forward, increasing efforts will be made to protect and maintain that knowledge, now that *Lærdansk* and *Tolkeservice* are no longer in-house activities and DRC Integration, therefore, does not ‘automatically’ pop up with partners as we used to do.

Accordingly, efforts have been made to clarify the narrative of DRC Integration externally towards customers and partners and internally to ensure a common overview of and insight into the entire range of services in order to support synergies across the organisation.

Market and conditions

The number of newly arrived refugees and refugees reunified with family members in Denmark has declined sharply.

The numbers speak for themselves and illustrate the challenge:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Refugees (refugee status)	10,783	7,444	2,706	1,621	1,737	577	1,092
Family reunification (to refugees)	8,092	4,312	3,265	1,136	781	910	583
Total	18,875	11,756	5,971	2,757	2,518	1,487	1,675

Both foundations and municipalities have exhibited waning focus and attention on and specialisation in refugees and integration and at the same time, competition from government authorities has increased due to the discontinued use of consultants combined with a wish to be suppliers (and not just authorities) when it comes to treatment/therapy, development of knowledge and methods, the facilitation of civil society efforts etc.

There is an ongoing discourse where employment ‘takes it all’. Occasionally, this makes it difficult to formulate and sell what we are *also* good at, such as trauma handling/therapy, efforts aimed at children and families, which more than ward off the ‘breakdown’ of families and holistic and cross-organisational efforts to ensure the wellbeing, the empowerment and a real opportunity to participate as citizens.

On the positive side, there is a renewed focus on refugees and refugees reunified with family members who have been in Denmark for many years, and refugees resettled through the Danish quota system (currently Congolese refugees from Rwanda) are now coming to Denmark again.

Tools and the way forward

The way forward is more than sales and growth.

Hence, there is strong focus on sales efforts, marketing and efforts in connection with the establishment of partnerships and alliances. To this should be added that the documentation of the work and efforts will be rethought in collaboration with customers and partners as well as an assessment of whether services and skills can be used by 'new' customers, such as cooperative housing societies, the business sector and educational institutions.

⇒ **Recap:** *The ExCom expressed its thanks for an interesting presentation. It takes a huge effort to safeguard DRC Integration and the effort is greatly respected.*

It will be interesting to see whether and how the synergies across DRC can offer support – both to the development of the international operations and to the operation in Denmark.

Re 4) THEME: DRC Governance

The item was deferred to a future meeting.

Re 5) Draft agenda for Council meeting on 31 May 2022

The following annexes for the agenda item had been sent to the participants:

Annex 5.0 *Cover note for Council meeting*

Annex 5.1 *Draft agenda for Council meeting on 31 May 2022*

The draft agenda will be sent to Council members along with the notice convening the meeting no later than two months before the meeting.

Elections

Kim Simonsen, Juliane Neiiendam and Bettina Bach (Peter Kellermann Brandorff's mandate) are up for election.

All three are eligible for re-election.

Moreover, the Chair is up for election.

Under Article 11(2) of the Statutes, 'The Deputy Chair shall invite nominations for Chair no later than two months before the Council meeting, allowing one month for submission of nominations'.

'The names of candidates for the Chairmanship shall be communicated to the members of the Council no later than 14 days before the Council meeting.'

Initial presentations

True to tradition, the annual Council meeting starts off with a theme and one or two speakers will give a presentation on a topic relevant to DRC.

In recent years, there has been focus on an introduction to DRC's work – in 2021 presentations were given on the externalisation of the responsibility of and the right to apply for asylum and the so-called push backs in the Balkans.

The ExCom discussed various topics for the Secretariat to develop.

⇒ **Decisions:** *The ExCom approved the draft agenda.*

As regards the preliminary suggestions for a theme, the ExCom considered Afghanistan and DRC's efforts in the country to be an extremely relevant topic.

The ExCom expressed a wish to make it possible to introduce the new DRC Strategy 2025 – preferably the short video which gives an exemplary, brief introduction to ambitions and efforts.

In addition, the ExCom would like and expressed the hope that Agi Csonka would stand for election as Chair of DCR for one more period.

Re 6) Announcements from the Chair

- **Danida.** A new strategic partnership agreement has been entered into with Danida for the 2022-2025 period.
DRC will receive DKK 179 million annually over the next four years, starting January 2022.
This amount is higher than under the former strategic partnership agreement.
The partnership agreement will provide a substantial boost to DRC's activities in many countries and will also contribute to a strengthening of its programming capacity in the priority areas outlined in the DRC Strategy 2025.
- **SIDA.** DRC has been invited as a partner for the humanitarian funding of SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) in 2022. This is based on a very thorough assessment of DRC's capacity at country and HQ level made by SIDA in 2021.
DRC's funding proposal of DKK 60 million for 2022 has been approved.
The funding proposal will comprise emergency response in five of our programme countries and will strengthen our method and capacity building related to the DRC 2025 Strategy.
The partnership is intended to last for several years, and DRC has embarked on its first year of the SIDA partnership.

Re 7) Any other business

- The agenda for the ExCom mission on 7-13 March 2022 had been appended and was briefly reviewed.
The mission was subsequently postponed to September 2022 due to COVID-19 infections among the participants making it impossible to comply with entry requirements.

ExCom meetings in 2022

FU/2 10 May 3.00-6.30 pm

FU/3 31 May 3.30-4.30 pm

FU/4 21 June 3.00-6.30 pm

ExCom mission 4-11 September

FU/5 13 September 3.00-6.30 pm

FU/6 Seminar from 17 November at 6.00 pm to 19 November at 6.00 pm

FU/7 6 December 3.00-6.30 pm