Afghan Women’s support group, New Delhi

Final Report, Stage 2
Beyond resettlement to sustainable solutions. Improving the protection of refugee women at girls at risk and other vulnerable groups in New Delhi, India

Centre for Refugee Research
University of New South Wales
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### Summary of Project Progress

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<th>Date Report Submitted</th>
<th>September 2013</th>
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| **Organisation**      | Centre for Refugee Research  
University of New South Wales |
| **Project Title**     | Beyond resettlement to sustainable solutions. Improving the protection of refugee women at girls at risk and other vulnerable groups. Trialing community involvement in the expanded use of the UNHCR Heightened Risk Identification Tool |
| **Project Location**  | New Delhi India |
| **Target population(s) of project** | The target population is Afghan and Somali refugees in New Delhi. The project will focus on particularly vulnerable groups including women and girl survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). |
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| **Implementing Agency and Implementing Partners** | UNHCR, New Delhi and UNHCR Community Development, Gender Equality and Children’s Services (CDGECS), Geneva. Additional informal support is provided by BOSCO New Delhi, UNHCR’s Implementing Partner |
| **Project Period**    | June 2011 till June 2013  
Project Duration: 2 years (DIAC funded to December 2012, External/CRR Funding to May 2013) |
| **Reporting Period**  | As at May 2013 |
| **Project funding and expenditure** |  
| Total project funding (including other sponsors) | $546,242 (Includes $226,622 in-kind and financial contributions from CRR) |
| Total DIAC funding provided | Project funding to be expended by December 2012: $319,620 |
| Total DIAC amount spent to date | $319,620  
(Jordan Stage 1 + Delhi Stage 2) |
| Total amount spent during this reporting period | $172,647  
(New Delhi Stage 2) |
BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The work of CRR has prompted significant advances in international law and social policy, notably new international law relating to the protection of refugee women and girls at risk. In October 2006, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees adopted a new ExCom Conclusion on Women and Girls at Risk, No. 105 (LVII) - 2006. Supplementing this work, CRR was instrumental in the development of UNHCR’s Heightened Risk Identification Tool.

In 2010, as a result of this work and close relationship with the UNHCR Community Development, Gender Equality and Children’s Services Section (CDGECS) in Geneva, the (then) UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Erika Feller, commissioned CRR to work with UNHCR to conduct Dialogues as part of the 60th Commemoration of the Refuge Convention: ‘Survivors, Protectors, Providers’ working with more than 1000 refugee and displaced women and 200 men in seven countries. In 2010, the Australian Government’s Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Displaced Persons Program (DPP) provided funding to CRR to develop and trial a Project using community based responses to the protection of women and girls at risk and other vulnerable refugee groups. Jordan was the UNHCR preferred site for this trial and Stage 1 was successfully completed there. However, due to political unrest in Jordan, Stage 2 could not take place there. At the invitation of UNHCR India and with the approval of the DPP, CRR returned to New Delhi to implement Stage 2, consisting of solutions put forward by the community at the Dialogues.

THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The central aim of this project was to develop and trial an innovative community based protection response to the protection of women and girls at risk and other vulnerable refugee groups. Central to the model that has been developed is its focus on utilising the knowledge, skills and capacity of the refugee population to enable them to plan and provide services for their own community. Within the framework of the Heightened Risk Identification Tool which the Centre for Research was instrumental in developing, the Project has focused on identifying and responding to the context specific risks in the Urban context of New Delhi. As mentioned above, Stage one of the project was undertaken in the Urban context of Arman in Jordan in 2010/2011 and the tools developed and lessons learned informed the development of the second stage of the project which commenced in New Delhi in February 2012. The Project in New Delhi was also informed by the findings of the UNHCR Regional Dialogue which CRR conducted in New Delhi in late 2010. In February 2012, CRR undertook extensive consultations to confirm program and training needs to inform the development of a holistic response to the protection needs of women and girls and other vulnerable groups. This included a particular focus on the factors which cause and contribute to heightened risks of sexual and gender based

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1 These groups match those identified within the framework of the recently updated Heightened Risk Identification Tool (HRIT).
violence (SGBV). These include the lack of safe livelihoods options, limited educational pathways, social isolation and adverse community attitudes. The result was the establishment of an innovative community based response, the Refugee Community Development Project (RCDP), which is staffed by refugees and supported by CRR, UNHCR and Implementing partners. Within the framework of this project, three community based projects were developed. These projects were supported throughout the first half of 2013 with additional financial and in-kind contributions from the Centre for Refugee Research. In the second half of 2013 they have been expanded and strengthened through the additional two year funded provided by the Displaced Person’s Program.

The Community Projects

The women’s safety and social support project incorporates outreach and centre based women’s support groups. The focus is on providing emotional support and social activities, and is currently providing bimonthly women’s groups of 15-40 women in each South Delhi and Wazirabad; outreach and phone support of up to 30 women per week; and centre support of 10-15 to women and families weekly. The greatest success has been park outings for women and children under 12 years of age, attracting 100-150 people each month.

The livelihoods project opened an Afghan Restaurant which served approximately 80 customers weekly during the busy winter season. Targeted marketing plans aim to steadily increase this number as the restaurant re-enters the high season in the cooler months. The restaurant vocational training program is due to commence in mid 2013.

The education project includes women’s literacy programs, Afghan and Somali language, and Afghan and Somali history and culture programs and maths classes. Almost 200 students participate in various classes (62% female students; 7% mature age female students).

This report details the development and impact of these unique projects in New Delhi.
Stage 2 Final Monitoring Report
The CRR team undertook the scheduled final project monitoring visit in early April 2013. During this visit feedback on the impact of the Project was collated from the Project’s key stakeholders in New Delhi. This included refugee community members who have been actively engaged in the activities; refugee community workers and the refugee committee; UNHCR; and Implementing Partner staff.

All quotations used in this report were drawn from consultations, focus groups and interviews conducted during this visit with the refugee community, community workers, UNHCR staff and service providers. Quotes selected for use are emblematic of many similar quotes, representing the common themes and findings that emerged. Most of the people who participated in this research speak languages other than English as their first language; many people also spoke through an interpreter. Their language and expression has not been ‘amended’ for this report, other than to edit for meaning. In keeping with the CRR’s ethical framework, and by agreement with the research participants, individual details or names or other identifying information is not included in this report. Quotes are attributed to the broad stakeholder group to which the participant belongs.

The consultations utilised a reciprocal research methodology, a component of which are storyboards that takes participants from issue identification through to suggested solutions. A selection of the storyboard pictures and quotations are used in this report.

Documenting the Model
As the Centre for Refugee Research has been awarded an additional two year’s funding for this Project, a comprehensive Project Evaluation and Good Practice Guidance Manual will be produced at the end of the project in 2015. This will be informed by the findings from the 2013 Monitoring visit which are reported below.
Deliverables and Activities

The Project’s stated Objectives are:

Utilising a community based approach, this Project will:

• Build on current good protection practices to enhance the capacity of UNHCR, key implementing partners and refugee community workers to utilise the HRIT to identify vulnerable refugees, including older refugees, children, refugees with a disability and with chronic health needs and in particular in particular women and girls at risk of sexual and gender based violence, survival sex and trafficking.
• Build on the existing capacities of refugee women, men and adolescents, utilising a community based approach underpinned by the Human Rights framework.
• Promote a range of skills and strategies including psychosocial and livelihoods support that target at risk individuals, families, groups and communities
• Work with refugee women and girls and refugee men and boys in the development of community based responses to women and girls and other individuals at risk.
• Use the framework of the HRIT, to construct and pilot a sustainable local model of support mechanisms and response tools which builds on the capacity and capabilities of refugee women, men and young people that is neither dependent on continuous input from external experts, nor reliant on high levels of government resources.
• Develop a series of comprehensive training packages for use in the trial and other refugee sites.
• Document the key current good practice initiatives underway in New Delhi to inform the further development of effective responses to women and girls at risk and other vulnerable groups in protracted urban contexts.
• In partnership with CDGECs, pilot a series of 9 core quantitative indicators designed to monitor the effectiveness of protection responses to women and girls
• In partnership with CDGECs, develop qualitative indicators/guidance materials to support effective reporting against the 9 core indicators.

A number of these objectives were completed in the first Stage of the Project conducted in Amman, Jordan and were reported in the Stage 1 report submitted by Associate Professor Eileen Pittaway in mid 2011.

Stage 2 Activities and Deliverables

The Project’s major Activities completed in Stage 2 in New Delhi, highlighting Deliverables and Achievements towards the Project Objectives are detailed in the table below. The Results section following highlights in more detail the achievements of the Project. As a result of significantly increased in-kind contributions from CRR these exceed the number of interviews and trainings outlined in the original project plan. The preliminary training modules developed in the first phase of the project in Jordan were adapted and retested in the New Delhi context and are currently all being further adapted to include more detailed training of trainers’ notes to enhance their utility for UNHCR and Partner staff. These will be delivered as TOT’s during the next phase of the Project during 2014 in order to build the capacity of UNHCR and Partner staff to expand their community development and community based protection activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and Deliverables</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishment of the Refugee Community Development Project (RCDP)</strong> Engaged Refugee Community Workers and support workers</td>
<td>• 10 workers: (5 full time; 2 part time and 3 on a per hour basis. 6 female; 4 male) • 4 restaurant workers • 10 social support volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Survey</strong> undertaken in March 2012 where the 3 priority areas were identified: • Women’s safety and social support • Livelihoods • Education</td>
<td>Number of community members surveyed: • 190 Afghan • 80 Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The women’s safety and social support project</strong> incorporates outreach and centre based women’s support groups. The focus is on providing emotional support and social activities.</td>
<td>• Bi monthly women’s group 15-40 women each group • Outreach support 10 – 15 cases monthly • Centre support 30-40 cases monthly 40% new cases monthly • Phone support 50-60 cases monthly • Disability or hospital visits appr. 10 cases monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picnics for women and children, including boys under the age of 12 years.</td>
<td>100-150 people at each of monthly picnics.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The livelihoods project</strong> opened an Afghan Restaurant which serves approximately 80 customers weekly in the winter months with targeted marketing aiming to steadily increase this number, as the restaurant re-enters the high season in the cooler months. The restaurant vocational training program is in the process of putting its first six trainees through. The project plan to establish a Beauty and Training Salon is ready to be implemented. The team continues to seek a suitable and safe location.</td>
<td>Afghan Restaurant serves appr. 80 customers per week.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The education project</strong> includes women’s literacy programs, Afghan and Somali language, and Afghan and Somali history and culture programs and maths classes.</td>
<td>Almost 200 students participate in various classes: • 62% female students • 7% mature age female students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot project monitoring visit including participatory evaluation.</td>
<td>In depth monitoring visit undertaken in April 2013.</td>
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<td>Trainings workshops (including in Community Consultations and Individual Interviews):</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community development, community projects: creating safe spaces for women x 3 day workshop February 2012</td>
<td>60 Afghan and Somali Refugee Participants, 10 x UNHCR, BOSCO and SLIC Staff and interpreters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Development and Interview Training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Accidental counseling and conflict resolution x 1 days April 2012</td>
<td>4 refugee community workers 12 refugee committee members 2 Interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accidental Counseling and responding to Vicarious trauma 2 day workshop 14th and 21st April 2012</td>
<td>20 UNHCR Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Livelihoods, project planning and community leadership x 5 days, May 2012</td>
<td>4 refugee community workers 12 refugee committee members 2 Interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with Interpreters x 1 day, May 2012</td>
<td>4 refugee community workers 12 refugee committee members 2 Interpreters</td>
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| • Intensive course on program planning and design x 5 days - May 2012  
A key outcome of this training was the detailed project plans for the education, livelihoods and social support projects. | 4 refugee community workers |
| • Project and Risk Management and budgeting x 3 days June 2012  
A key outcome of this training was the in-depth project implementation strategy and associated budgets for each of the 3 projects. | 4 refugee community workers |
| • SGBV and using the HRIT to identify risks for refugee women 1 day training September 2012 | 6 Refugee community Workers 12 refugee committee members 1 Interpreter |
| • 5 x Women and Men’s Human Rights Workshops x 2 day each with people from 3 locations in Delhi and Wazirabad November 2012 | 95 Afghan women 70 Somali women 50 Afghan men 45 Somali men 8 Interpreters |
| Identifying and Responding to Survival Sex – 6 day training Program - April 2013 | 45 Refugee women and men 20 UNHCR and Partner staff 3 Interpreters |
| Development of 5 Training Modules and Community Project Design | Modules will be finalised and retested during 2013. |
The Reciprocal Research training module which was developed and adapted in Phase 1 in Jordan in partnership with UNHCR (can be found at: [www.crr.unsw.edu.au/education-and-training-resources](http://www.crr.unsw.edu.au/education-and-training-resources)).
PROJECT RESULTS

Feedback from the Project stakeholders, highlighting how the Project is meeting its stated Objectives is covered in this section.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The approach to the project development and implementation is underpinned by the core principles of a participatory community development approach. Through this approach the refugee communities have been supported and empowered to be actively involved in assessing and analysing community needs, developing and designing the project’s responses and in implementing and managing the projects. The CRR team have played a critical role in building the community development and community management skills of the refugee community workers and the refugee committee. The support provided by the CRR team has included a range of targeted training programs which have build skills across a range of areas including in project design and management, research and report writing, accidental counselling and psychosocial support, woman and girls at risk and sexual and gender-based violence, communication and conflict resolution as well as gender and human rights. One of the strengths of the approach has been the combination of community development and community management approaches with the psychosocial support, encouragement and supervision provided by the CRR team.

The CRR staff team who have been actively involved in implementing and supporting the Project in New Delhi have extensive community development experience but also specialist skills in needs assessment, project design, group-work, gender-based violence, psychosocial/emotional support and trauma counselling. This combination of skills has provided the opportunity to attend to the range of capacity building needs which have emerged as the RCDP has developed in New Delhi. The CRR team have provided this support through regular field visits. In addition project management support and supervision have been provided via weekly Skype calls and the sharing of weekly and monthly RCDP activity reports. As the need for specialised counselling support has arisen, this has been provided as required by one of the team’s trained counsellors. The community based approach to refugee protection has enabled the CRR team to modify the projects activities and training programs based on the New Delhi context and to respond to risks and challenges as they have arisen.

Including men and boys

Early in the project, UNHCR Delhi expressed their concern that were the project to focus solely on refugee women and girls at risk that the potential for negative backlash from some men in the refugee community was quite high. As a result the project team ensured that where appropriate project activities and initiatives also targeted refugee men. For example the Afghan restaurant project which initially only focused on Afghan men was an important strategy to
positively engage men and to build key relationships of trust. It was only after initial trust was built with men in the community that the team began to implement trainings and activities which targeted women at risk of domestic and sexual violence. Initially these included women’s social support groups and picnics, followed by women’s human rights trainings in November 2012. In April 2013 after a number of incidents of women forced into survival sex surfaced, the CRR team developed and delivered a six day program on sexual violence and survival sex to 45 refugee participants and 20 UNHCR and partner staff. This training not only explored the risks but also explored negative community attitudes as well as positive community responses. It represented an important first step in bringing to the surface the extent of abuse faced by women and girls as well as some men and boys. The outcomes of this training have informed a stronger focus on community based protection strategies for women and girls in the areas of education and livelihoods in the second phase of the project which commenced in July 2013.
IMPACTS FOR THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY

The RCDP supported consultations and activities have provided the Afghan and Somali refugee communities a structured framework through which to share their experiences and ideas. The results highlight the diversity of skills, capacities and vulnerabilities as well as the strength and resilience demonstrated by the refugee communities in their daily lives in New Delhi.

Put yourself in our space. That you have knowledge, but you cannot use it. That you are big, but you are not strong. What would you do? [Afghan Youth]

WOMEN’S SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OUTREACH

RCDP show respect. [Committee member]

Key stakeholders including the community, UNHCR and Implementing Partners all highlighted the importance of contributions made by the RCDP social support team. The social support team provide a range of activities including women’s support groups, individual emotional support as well as recreational activities such as picnics and excursions for women and children. The value of providing outreach and emotional support in the women and girls own languages was highlighted as critical to building women trust and confidence.

...tell everything they did for me while I am in a situation of nowhere and I didn’t know where to go, I didn’t know who to tell. But [RCDP] was the source where that I got everything to whom to talk you know and you know share my problems. [Social Support participant]
In some way it upsets them that they are remembering back home trauma. In other way, it is relieving for them, you can feel it. ....... At the end this history you find them more happy telling you joke. It is like changing their minds in some way. [Community Worker]

The RCDP social support team also provide important outreach support to isolated women and girls.

You are doing a lot for them and you become closer to them. Then they request you to reach them again and again and say you are being helpful. You can see even the children in house. When you reach them they gather together when you get there they start talking to you. They are all talking together they become like a family a happy family for that time. [Community Worker]

Protection through Social support and friendship

One of the most important achievements is the part RCDP has played in linking people. There are strong community links in Delhi and the RCDP team have been able to build on these strengths and assist to making connections between people who don’t know each other or who have little opportunity to meet with others in their own community and in other refugee communities. Supporting and building on these community links aids protection.

Nobody listened before now. I’m ... thanking to all of the workers in the RCDP those who came to know and discovered my problems while I couldn’t reach them and didn’t know my sisters. [Social Support participant]

Help people to reach those people who are unreachable as there are a lot of women who are in the house that are not reachable. One day [social support worker] had a session here and she told me lady that came it is the first time she came here and the first time she came out from her house; so reaching isolated women. [Community Worker]

Picnics for Women and children

The RCDP team arranged an initial picnic early in RCDP’s establishment just for women and children as an exercise to reach out to the community to share the work of RCDP and the Social Support team. The initial picnic was attended by 154 people, 93 women, and the remainder children (including boys under 12 years of age). The women expressed the importance of this picnic because it was the first event that provided an opportunity for women to get together. The Afghani women explain that they felt “stuck, like in a jail” without the opportunities to
participate in activities with their children. The women stressed the importance of being able to enjoy this time with their children, so they are able to fully relax and participate in the activities. As a result, four further picnics were held in 2012, involving women and children from different locations in Delhi. At each picnic, between 100 and 150 women and children enjoyed the event.

One day of outings it will be like one year for us. [Social Support participant]

We went from life to another life so nobody wants to come back but we were forced to. [Social Support participant]

These are the practical help to bring community together. [Community Worker]

LIVELIHOODS AS PROTECTION

In 2012, the Indian government announced that all recognised refugees were permitted to apply for a residential permit, which importantly enables the holder to work legally in India. Once implemented this policy will enable registered refugees to work legally. The RCDP is working closely with UNHCR India, local police and government offices to assist refugees navigate the complicated process to attain these permits. The RCDP Livelihoods Projects team are also exploring new and innovative strategies in the area of vocational training in order to take advantage of this opportunity.

The critical role that access to training and the opportunity for work and livelihoods plays in refugee protection was a strong theme in both the 2011 Dialogues and subsequent consultations with the New Delhi refugee communities. Strong links were drawn by the community between Livelihoods and women’s safety through self reliance.

Whenever you are going to visit families they are complaining that we don’t have job, we don’t have economic programs like this. But when they are having the livelihood, problem is solved then I think everything will be solved. [Community Worker]

The establishment of the Afghan Restaurant has provided initial employment and hope for a small number of community members.
Those that started [the restaurant] got confidence of self reliance. Working in India is difficult but now they can think - ‘We started the restaurant. And maybe we can start something else’. [Implementing Partner]

**EDUCATION AS PROTECTION**

*I don’t ask for money, I just ask for education for my daughters.*

A unique feature of RCDP is that refugee community members are able to study in their own language. There are literacy classes for elder and isolated women. Also history and culture, and own language learning for younger people. In BOSCO a 16 year old boy and a 60 year old woman are in one class. The older woman is not confident to talk and question in class. RCDP have different classes for older women. [Committee member]

*Why do you think these Afghan girls are coming out now ... educating the girls, they aren’t doing anything, they want to earn money. They are not going to schools and colleges; forget about college; they aren’t going to schools. Also the boys are not making effort compared to the girls.* [Implementing Partner]

**IMPACTS FOR THE COMMUNITY WORKERS**

*No question of empowerment and building capacity. Gives standing and therefore dignity. This is crucial. They are not just talking; the value is that they are being paid.* [UNHCR]

A major benefit of the program is that it provides pathways for the RCDP team themselves. For a number of the Community Workers and Committee Members, it is their first form of employment in Delhi outside of BOSCO. The training, knowledge, skills, connections, self-esteem, confidence and expanded social and employment networks gained in their engagement with RCDP enhances their ability to engage in future opportunities. RCDP Community Workers and Committee Members value the opportunity for work, training and employment pathways.

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2 RCDP team refers in the main part to the RCDP Community Workers, and also incorporates the RCDP Committee Members views.
This was my first work I have done ever in my life as a team, coming to an office, work like that. So I have met different people, different culture, different languages. I have learnt how work with different people, different culture, different language. I’ve learnt how to respect each other. I’ve also learnt how you can make your time valuable. How you can fix your time and how you can have a work plan. Before I train at this job I don’t have any work plan in my life but now even when I’m at home I apply what I did here as the work plan, to also what I would with the weekend, what I would do when I’m not working! [Community Worker]

Building Confidence
Those involved also talked about the important contribution the project had made to their confidence and self-esteem.

That’s the big impact that we achieve: the trust of people, the community. Because in the beginning one of the risks was that can we get the trust of community and I can say that yes, we did it. And it’s the biggest problem that we solved. But I think we did it more than we thought. [Community Worker]

They have developed a lot of confidence …. All the problems that they’re facing as refugees in India, yet she knows how to put the things together [Implementing Partner]

Acquiring new work skills and local work experience as pathways to employment
Community Workers expressed a strong feeling of empowerment from working with RCDP. The program provides them with opportunities for learning new workplace skills, networking with UNHCR and implementing partners and the broader community, and expanding their knowledge of New Delhi systems.

First to become a community worker is amazing to me. ... And how big is to work with the community is, and work with these things and to kill your ego and it was a real challenge for me. To sacrifice for someone else. It was hard to me but lately I recognize my work is hard but I have to do it. Now I don’t care if someone is doing anything or saying anything. The hardest thing is to sacrifice for someone. And I did it. [Community Worker]

From being jobless it is much better…. being in India and being jobless it is worse. [Restaurant Worker]
IMPACTS FOR UNHCR

One has greater certainty that response meet needs as they have voiced their needs. [UNHCR]

Inviting CRR to trial the RCDP provided UNHCR the opportunity to revisit their own models of service deliver to the urban refugee population in New Delhi. Together with their Implementing Partners, this opportunity was welcome as part of UNHCR’s commitment to continuous improvement to the benefit of displaced populations.

UNHCR have welcomed RCDP and the benefits it has brought to UNHCR’s operations: highlighting gaps; highlighting an alternative methodology; and alternative structural implementation tools.

Methodological change

RCDP have shown a workable alternative of what is possible.

The most important aspect is the methodology. In terms and process and has given voice to the people. So one has greater certainly that response meet needs as they have voiced their needs. [UNHCR]

Interesting to see how you developed project. An issue was how the community would participate. Basically to get the community to talk about the problems, so identifying needs and basing the program on that. We have learnt from that. [UNHCR]

IMPACTS FOR UNHCR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

I am so happy and proud to be associated with the project, it is a learning experience for all of us. [Implementing Partner]

UNHCR’s Implementing Partners, share very positive views of RCDP. The Community Workers themselves often receive feedback from the Partners which encourages their sense of value and worth in undertaking their tasks. RCDP provide a strong and trusted conduit to the community for the Implementing Partners.

We are not in the field all the time because we are not dealing with those things we’re just doing. [Implementing Partner]

This is the positive. Positive is the involvement of refugees, to generate involvement; design the program; how to start; involved in the decision making. It was a good initiative because they share their experience. They have been in India for long time so they have experience. [Implementing Partner]
CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

The overwhelming evidence from this evaluation is that the RCDP is a very successful model for providing support to Afghan and Somali refugee communities currently residing in New Delhi, with flow-on benefits to Community Workers, Committee Members, UNHCR and Implementing Partners. However as with any program, there are challenges which need to be addressed. Some of the key challenges which arose and have been addressed are briefly discussed below.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

The psychological challenges facing each of the RCDP refugee community workers are significant. As refugees themselves they face a multiplicity of difficulties based both on their own past experiences and the challenges they face living as refugees in New Delhi. This is compounded as they navigate their dual roles as both refugees and refugee community workers.

There are two roles there ... for them and they are also working for others, so it could easily get mixed. [Implementing Partner]

In order to address these challenges the Project has taken a number of steps. The RCDP team conduct weekly team meetings that not only foster good team communication and program management, but provide the team the opportunity to debrief and to support each other emotionally. In addition, CRR has provided access to external counselling and support for the social support team and any other staff members who require it.

Don’t have solutions for everything

The overwhelming needs of the refugee communities in New Delhi inevitably mean that services, no matter how many and how good can never fulfil all the needs. The RCDP team struggle with this in the same way that UNHCR and the Implementing Partners do. The difficulties are compounded for the RCDP team for exactly the reasons they are successful, they are part of the refugee community so often there are higher expectations for them to deliver what others have not to date.

One challenge is when people expect more than you can do. They say to you impossible things even I cannot get. Some of them, ‘oh you work closely with that officer and you are not getting for us resettlement! What is wrong with you.’ Then I laugh, ‘do you think I am close with everybody. Do you imagine resettlement [is possible] and people are all [just] here.’ [Community Worker]
MOVING FORWARD

We would like to teach you how to fishing not how to eat fish.

[Elderly Afghan man]

LESSONS LEARNT TO DATE

The major lesson is the undeniable capacity that the refugee community have to identify needs and develop and manage community-based projects. This highlights the potential of appropriately skilled and supported refugees to contribute skills at the program design and management level. Having the opportunity to utilise external funding and facilitators to drive and support this project has assisted in its success.

One of most significant challenges for RCDP community workers is the broader environment in which they live and operate. RCDP are often asked to solve problems which are beyond their control and also outside the mandate and resources available to UNCHR and Implementing Partners. Particular challenges in the area relate to the high cost of housing, the lack emergency shelter options and the limited formal educational opportunities for teenagers.

To overcome this, all stakeholders agree that regular meetings are required. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss general issues, highlight individual cases, and discuss process issues to ensure there is no duplication but that all needs are covered. Such meetings also reinforce the social support and counselling referral process.
Changes instigated

The most significant change has been to readjust the role of the RCDP Social Support team from a primary focus on individual support and counselling to group work, social and emotional support, and recreation activities. This will involve the creation of self-sustaining women’s support groups across New Delhi, in the four major areas in which the Refugees from Afghanistan and Somalia live. One of the major reasons for this change was the high level of pressure that individual cases were placing on the refugee community workers along with concerns that the refugee workers engagement with individuals at heightened risk might raise unrealistic expectations in relation to their ability to assist with applications for resettlement. For this reason after an initial introductory training on the Heightened Risk Identification Tool it was decided to focus on the community risk mapping rather than the individual assessment aspects of the Tool. While the need for individual responses will not disappear, the RCDP team now encourage individuals in need of psychosocial and protection outreach support to make their own appointments directly with UNHCR and Partners, intervening to make a referral only in urgent or otherwise very vulnerable cases. RCDP and BOSCO are already meeting to clarify this referral process.

SUSTAINABILITY

RCDP is widely acknowledged as a cost effective and unique model of refugee led development using refugee skills. Having gained community trust and confidence, the Project is ready to move to move onto the next level of objectives and activities that have been outlined in the newly funded project which commenced in July 2013. The Centre for Refugee Research and the RCDP deeply appreciate the ongoing financial support of the Displaced Person’s Program for this important project.