

ANNUAL REPORT 2016
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (GPA)
NMFA AND NORAD

1 Syria

1. Issues to address

The Syrian conflict is having a devastating and lasting impact both inside Syria and across the region. OCHA estimates that 13.5 million people in Syria require humanitarian assistance, including 4.9 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Over half of the population has been forced from their homes, and many have been displaced multiple times, further depleting their resources and increasing their vulnerabilities. The conflict and sanctions have resulted in degradation in assets, productive sectors, livelihoods and resilience. A political solution is considered unlikely in the short to medium-term, and further conflict, displacement and deterioration of humanitarian conditions is projected for 2017. A total of 5.8 million children and 2.7 million youth are in need of protection and in the 2015/2016 school year, 1.75 million Syrian children affected by the crisis were out of school and a further 1.35 million were at risk of dropping out. Conflict and displacement have resulted in limited access to water and sanitation, limited shelter availability and affordability, and very often occupancy in sub-standard and unsafe buildings with inadequate hygiene conditions. Lack of civil documentation was reported in 81% of assessed sub-districts (HNO:2017). At the same time, 80 % of households are struggling to cope with lack of food or sufficient funds to feed their families (OCHA:2017). Populations living inside Syria continue to face multiple, ongoing protection risks due to the immediate and indirect realities of the conflict such as indiscriminate attacks, besiegement, multiple and/or protracted displacement, armed conflict and human rights violations.

2. Overall Achievements

This project contributed significantly towards NRC Syria Response's strategic objective of ensuring that vulnerable conflict-affected people across Syria have access to timely and relevant humanitarian assistance. NRCs target groups include IDPs, returnees, refugees and host communities. Through this project, NRC was able to provide vulnerable, conflict affected persons with Shelter/NFI, WASH, Education, Food Assistance and ICLA support, in addition to mainstreaming advocacy and protection across its activities. The project reflects NRC's Whole of Syria approach and activities were implemented through the five Area Offices constituting NRC Syria Response, both through local humanitarian partners [REDACTED] and in direct implementation [REDACTED].

The extent of needs evident in some parts of Syria demands for innovative and courageous approaches in delivering humanitarian aid. Access to affected populations has been one of the most significant factors affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Syria due to a combination of political/military control, insecurity, bureaucratic impediments and border/regulatory restrictions. Despite this, NRC and its implementing partners have been able to provide vulnerable conflict affected populations with emergency response as well as interventions contributing to increased resilience.

NRC's intervention throughout 2016 was informed by a 'Do No Harm', gender, people with special needs and age analysis conducted in direct consultation with communities, drawing on the experience and knowledge of project staff, partners and other humanitarian responders, as well as taking into consideration relevant findings from other studies and research. All project data is gender disaggregated and, wherever possible/particularly relevant, also broken down by age group (i.e. 'children' under 18, 'youth' 15-24, and 'elderly' aged 60+). In those areas where NRC only recently gained access, need assessments were conducted only once a certain level of trust was obtained with local communities and power holders, ensuring that the exercise would not put NRC's beneficiaries, partners and/or staff at risk.

Shelter objective: Affected populations have access to adequate shelter; benefit from improved community infrastructure and are better able to meet immediate Shelter and NFI needs. NRC supported vulnerable conflict affected persons living in sub-standard conditions in collective shelters, camp/informal camp communities and damaged/unfinished buildings with shelter and basic NFIs or cash. While displaced populations were supported with Shelter and NFIs to cover basic and intermediate needs, NRC also supported host communities in [REDACTED] and Rif Damascus Governorates to ease their burden. This project also contributed to support a total of 1,000 families with emergency shelter [REDACTED]. Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys showed that the cash assistance helped the displaced families primarily with rent, weatherproofing and food expenses. Target communities were selected following NRC and/or implementing partner's assessment of needs, focusing on household-level vulnerabilities, such as female headed households (FHHs), especially those with no income, people living in open air or emergency shelter, households with family members with special needs, having a dependency ratio higher than 1/3 and/or population living under different degrees of encirclement. In addition, NRC supported schools with the rehabilitation of 696 classrooms in order to make learning spaces safe, student-friendly and to mitigate protection risks.

WASH objective: Affected populations have improved access and availability of safe water for drinking and domestic use; improved access to safe sanitation facilities and effective waste management; timely assistance to support safe hygiene practices. NRC supported [REDACTED] vulnerable conflict-affected persons with water and sanitation interventions. Vulnerable households were provided with access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, hygiene and dignity kits as well as waste management and hygiene promotion. WASH and Shelter activities were provided in an integrated package in order to best support the needs of the target groups. Examples of NRC integrated approach are evident in the interventions delivered in the schools in Damascus, where

classroom rehabilitation was accompanied by rehabilitation or upgrade of WASH facilities.

Education objective: Children develop and retain academic skills of basic education; sufficient supplies and materials for a supportive environment for education; education professionals have knowledge and skills to provide quality education. NRCs Education activities in Syria contributed to the promotion of quality, inclusive learning opportunities in safe and protective environments by supporting children and youth with education and psychosocial activities and capacity building of teachers. This was achieved by supporting children and youth with enabling and 'welcoming' learning environments. The education activities include integrated aspects of recreation, life skills and psychosocial support. Targeted and needs-based trainings designed to strengthen their capacity to deliver quality education to crisis affected children and youth of teachers, were also provided. Training and in-classroom support were provided in areas such as multi-grade teaching, principles of active learning, positive discipline and conflict-sensitive education. In addition, under this intervention, classrooms were rehabilitated and equipped to assure a more positive and protective environment conducive to learning.

Food Assistance objective: Affected populations benefit from improved food security. NRC supported vulnerable conflict affected persons with food assistance and unconditional cash to help beneficiaries meet basic food needs [REDACTED]. Among conflict affected populations with transitory food insecurity and limited access to cooking facilities, NRC worked with partners to provide ready-to-eat meals through the establishment of community kitchens. NRC also provided livestock, training and veterinary support to improve food availability and dietary diversity to households in besieged areas of Rural Damascus. These activities also contributed to increased self-reliance and the restoration of sustainable livelihood strategies. Due to access constraints and deterioration of the security situation, planned training activities could not be completed as planned. However, NRC supported farmers in Damascus and Rural Damascus with agricultural inputs such as seeds, provided livestock, training and awareness and veterinary support.

ICLA objective: Beneficiaries exercise Housing Land and Property and Legal Civil Documentation rights. The project allowed NRC to lay the foundation for the start-up of the ICLA programme, in response to civil documentation issues and Housing, Land and Property (HLP) concerns in Syria. Information to enable Syrian displaced and host community members to access and enjoy their HLP rights was provided to returnees' beneficiaries of the Shelter interventions in Hasahek governorate. However, the second stage of the ICLA programme, counselling services, were not provided due to the late start-up of the project.

Advocacy and Protection objective: Protection response systems are strengthened. Over the course of 2016 NRC continued to lead inter-agency advocacy and communications efforts aimed to increase beneficiary access to humanitarian assistance. NRC conducted several focus group discussions with women and girls to better understand their concerns and needs. NRC provided training to staff and partners on protection mainstreaming, alongside a series of consultation meetings conducted in the course of developing the protection mainstreaming strategy and action plan, which

contributed to strengthening protection response systems and to ensure protection is integrated across our programming.

3. Result Assessment Framework (RAF)

Annual Plan - Annex 1: Logframe for NMFA GPA 2016 Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – SHELTER

		INTERVENTION LOGIC	Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601		
RESULTS		IMPACT (Overall Objective)			
		People affected by the Syrian conflict have their basic needs met and their resilience improved		Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services	
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	
	1.	Affected populations have improved access to adequate shelter	1.a	% emergency shelters occupied within one month of handover (S100) Target: 80%; Achieved: 86%	Explanation: Target achieved.
	2.	Affected populations benefit from improved community infrastructure	2.a	% community members in target area report use of infrastructure provided on monthly basis (S101) Target: 70%; Achieved: 96%	Explanation: Target achieved.
	3.	Displaced and highly vulnerable populations are better able to meet their immediate Shelter and NFI needs.	3.a	% beneficiary HHs who report using cash/voucher to purchase goods (e.g. blankets, pots/pans, mattress, etc.) within 1 month time after cash/voucher distribution (S105) Target: 80% Achieved: 87%	Explanation: Target achieved.
	#	OUTPUT			
	1. 1	Beneficiaries receive shelter solution to provide physical protection and meet needs	1.1.a	# of shelters built or rehabilitated and handed over (S001) Target: 3,572-1,894 units Achieved: 2,386	Explanation: Estimated size of households was larger than expected. Market prices for construction materials were lower than anticipated.
			1.1.b	# of females and males receiving	Explanation:

			shelters (S002) Target: 9,470 individuals Achieved: 14,612	As above
2. 1	Community infrastructure is constructed or rehabilitated (including schools and educational infrastructure, community centres, livelihood infrastructure, etc.)	2.1.a	Estimated number of individuals in target population benefiting from community infrastructure (S006) <i>Note: Beneficiaries of school rehabilitation counted separately</i> Target: 24,000 3,500 individuals; Achieved: 25,307	Explanation: NRC overachieved on this target as there was identified a need to provide infrastructure such as community kitchens in [REDACTED]
		2.1.b	# of classrooms constructed/rehabilitated (S013) Target: 100 621 classrooms; Achieved: 625	Explanation: NRC slightly overachieved on this target due to increased needs [REDACTED]
		2.1.c	# of male and female learners using rehabilitated/constructed classrooms (S006) Target: 29,700 individuals; Achieved: 18,502	Explanation: There was an error in the target provided as part of the revision and the revised target should have been 17,450 which NRC achieved.
3. 1	Beneficiaries receive NFI or cash/voucher assistance to support basic living conditions	3.1.a	# of females and males receiving non-food items or cash/vouchers (S025) Target: 7,000 34,437 individuals; Achieved: 66,134	Explanation: NRC overachieved on this target as a result of the identified needs of the target population across Syria. For [REDACTED] the reason for the overachievement is the change of focus from WASH to winterisation assistance to displacement affected populations. In Damascus it was agreed to shift the focus of intervention away from shelter provision to providing basic NFI such as mattresses, blankets and clothes.

**Annual Plan - Annex 1: Annex 1: Logframe for NMFA GPA
2016 Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – WASH**

INTERVENTION LOGIC		Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601		
IMPACT (Overall Objective)		Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services		
#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	
4.	Affected populations have improved access and availability of safe water for drinking and domestic use	4.a	% change in average litres of water used by supported households for daily activities (e.g. drinking, cooking, domestic hygiene) (W100) Target: 50%; Achieved: 70%	Explanation: Target achieved.
5.	Affected populations have improved access to safe sanitation facilities and effective waste management	5.a	% of beneficiaries reporting access to safe and clean sanitation facilities (W105) Target: 80%; Achieved: 96%	Explanation: Target achieved.
6.	Vulnerable affected populations receive timely assistance to support safe hygiene practices.	6.a	% of beneficiary households who report/are observed using hygiene materials 1 month after distribution. (W107) Target: 80%; Achieved: 91%	Explanation: Target achieved.
#	OUTPUT			
4.1	Water systems or sources are constructed, rehabilitated, operated or maintained	4.1.a	# of water network systems constructed or rehabilitated (-) Target: 6-3 systems; Achieved: 2	Explanation: NRC was not able to achieve this target as this activity did not take place as planned in [REDACTED]
		4.1.b	# of individuals benefitting from water network systems constructed or rehabilitated (-) <i>Note: these are the beneficiaries of the systems described above</i> Target: 3,002 individuals Achieved: 1,446	Explanation: NRC was not able to achieve this target as this activity did not take place as planned [REDACTED]

		4.1.c	# of water points constructed or rehabilitated (including boreholes or shallow wells) (W002) Target: 8-33 water-points Achieved: 9	Explanation: Activity was not conducted [REDACTED] Syria and therefore the overall target of 33 water points was not met.
		4.1.d	# of individuals with access to water delivered via trucking (W007) Target: 27,000 individuals Achieved: 23,978	Explanation: Target not achieved as the target area population was smaller than anticipated, [REDACTED]
5.1	Sanitation and waste management systems are constructed, rehabilitated, operated or maintained	5.1.a	# of sanitation network systems constructed or rehabilitated (-) Target 7-4 systems; Achieved: 4	Explanation: This target was met. In addition, NRC in Damascus identified large WASH needs in target schools and decided to proceed with WASH upgrades in 22 schools to complement the school rehabilitation and education activities.
		5.1.b	# of individuals benefiting from sanitation network systems constructed or rehabilitated (-) <i>Note: these are the beneficiaries of the systems described above</i> Target: 9,902 individuals Achieved: 32,902 44,930	Explanation: This target is overachieved due to the target population benefitting from the sanitation services being higher than anticipated, especially [REDACTED]
		5.1.c	# of solid waste management systems supported (-) Target: 20 systems (settlements) Achieved: 19	Explanation: NRC had to cancel this planned activity [REDACTED] due to security concerns. [REDACTED] NRC supported two camp clusters [REDACTED] with waste management systems.
		5.1.d	# of individuals benefiting from solid waste management systems (-) <i>Note: these are the beneficiaries of the systems described above</i> Target: 40,000 individuals Achieved: 62,899	Explanation: While the target of solid waste systems not was achieved as noted above, the target populations which benefitted from the activities [REDACTED]

				<div></div> <p>were larger than anticipated</p> <div></div>
6.1	Displacement affected populations are provided with hygiene assistance.	6.1.a	<p># of hygiene NFI kits distributed (W021)</p> <p>Target: 500 kits</p> <p>Achieved: 1,548</p>	<p>Explanation: A gap in services was identified (provision of dignity kits) and NRC responded to the need by providing NFI and Dignity kits to the target population.</p>
		6.1.b	<p># of individuals receiving hygiene NFI kits/assistance (W022)</p> <p>Target: 2,500 individuals</p> <p>Achieved: 3,988</p>	<p>Explanation:</p> <p>As above</p>
6.2	Displacement affected populations are provided with Hygiene promotion or awareness raising initiatives	6.2.a	<p># of individuals receiving hygiene promotion training (W003)</p> <p>Target: 10,000 individuals</p> <p>Achieved: 8,715</p>	<p>Explanation:</p> <p>The target population in the targeted community</p> <div></div> <p>was smaller than initially estimated.</p>

Annual Plan - Annex 1: Logframe for NMFA GPA 2016
Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – EDUCATION

		INTERVENTION LOGIC	Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601	
		IMPACT (Overall Objective)		
		People affected by the Syrian conflict have their basic needs met and their resilience improved		Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS
RESULTS	7.	Children develop and retain academic skills of basic education	7.a	% of learners who pass end of year examination in supported schools (E100) Target: 60% Achieved: 89%
	8.	Sufficient supplies and materials for a supportive environment for education	8.a	% children in target schools who report receiving/experience teacher using kit materials (E108) Target: 60% Achieved: 97%
				Explanation: Target achieved.
				Explanation: According to Post Distribution Monitoring, 97% of students reported receiving the kit and 96% reported the quality being useful and relevant.

9	Education professionals have knowledge and skills to provide quality education	9.a	% of participants who can correctly replicate key (skills/methods) covered in training/outreach (E106) Target: 80% Achieved: 100%	Explanation: All teachers trained as part of this activity were later engaged by NRC as facilitators in NRCs education activities.
#	OUTPUT			
7.1	Children receive the opportunity to develop academic skills of basic education	7.1.a	# of male and female learners enrolled (E001) Target: 7,748 4,288 individuals; Achieved: 11,779	Explanation: NRC expanded its activities due to needs identified in camps ██████████ and in Damascus, resulting in the overachievement of the target.
8.1	Beneficiaries receive supplies and materials for a supportive environment for education	8.1.a	# of males and females receiving educational NFI kits (E010) Target: 1,600 9,000 individuals; Achieved: 16,003	Explanation: As above
9.1	Education professionals have knowledge and skills to provide quality education	9.1.b	# of male and female teachers trained (E005) Target: 116 teachers Achieved: 46	Explanation: Due to ongoing hostilities ██████████, NRC had to reduce the number of teachers targeted for this activity.

Annual Plan - Annex 1: Logframe for NMFA GPA 2016
Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – FOOD SECURITY

		INTERVENTION LOGIC	Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601		
		IMPACT (Overall Objective)			
		People affected by the Syrian conflict have their basic needs met and their resilience improved		Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services	
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	
RESULTS	10	Affected population benefit from improved food security	10.a	% beneficiaries who (report/are observed) consuming food distributed (F103) Target: 80% Achieved: 100%	Explanation: Target achieved.
			10.b	% beneficiaries who report/are observed using cash/voucher to	Explanation:

			cover food needs within 1 week after distribution (F103) Target: 80%; Achieved: 88%	Target achieved.
#	OUTPUT			
10.1	Beneficiaries receive food assistance	10.1 .a	# of males and females receiving food (F001) Target: 14,112 30,800 individuals; Achieved: 46,104	Explanation: This target is overachieved because of needs identified in rural Damascus community kitchens and [REDACTED] school feedings.
		10.1 .b	# of males and females receiving cash/vouchers (F004) Target: 2,500 2,550 individuals; Achieved: 3,260	Explanation: NRC in Damascus and Rural Damascus reduced the monthly cash amount to better reflect local prices/monthly needs and was therefore able to target additional beneficiaries. [REDACTED] governorate, NRC was not able to initiate Food Security activities as originally planned due to unsuccessful recruitment process.
10.2	Beneficiaries receive training to improve food security	10.2 .a	# of males and females receiving training (F007) Target: 82 3,000 individuals; Achieved: 86	Explanation: NRC was not able to reach the total target due to security and access constraints in Damascus and Rural Damascus.
10.3	Beneficiaries receive food production inputs to support food security	10.3 .a	# of males and females receiving food production inputs (F008) Target: 74 individuals; Achieved: 1,831	Explanation: Additional beneficiaries were reached with seeds distribution [REDACTED] outside of Damascus.
		10.3 .b	# of males and females receiving training <i>Note: relating to food production</i> Target: 82 74 Achieved: 86	Explanation: Target achieved.

Annual Plan - Annex 1: Logframe for NMFA GPA 2016
Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – ICLA

RESULTS		INTERVENTION LOGIC	Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601		
		IMPACT (Overall Objective)			
		People affected by the Syrian conflict have their basic needs met and their resilience improved		Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services	
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	
	11.	Beneficiaries exercise HLP rights	11. a	% beneficiary HH/individuals who report exercising HLP rights (GL-LB1) Target: 60%; Achieved: Target not achieved	Explanation: NRC was not able to achieve this outcome indicator due to the late start up of the ICLA programme
	#	OUTPUT			
	11.1	Beneficiaries receive information on HLP rights	11. 1.a	# of male and female beneficiaries who receive information services (GL-L1/H) Target: 100-0 individuals; Achieved: 180	Explanation: HLP rights information was provided to 180 beneficiaries of Shelter interventions
	11.2	Beneficiaries receive legal counselling on HLP rights	11. 2.a	# of females and males who received legal counselling (GL-L3/H) Target: 100-30 individuals; Achieved: 0	Explanation: NRC was not able to conduct counselling sessions as the activities was only initiated in December 2016.
	11.3	Partners local capacity on how to address HLP issues is increased	11. 3.a	# of HLP training services delivered (HLP) (GL-L9/H) Target: 2-0 trainings; Achieved: N/A	Explanation: Indicator removed at revision
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	
	12.	Beneficiaries exercise LCD rights	12. a	% beneficiary HH/individuals who report exercising LCD rights (GL-LB05) Target: 60%; Achieved: Target not achieved	Explanation: NRC was not able to achieve this outcome indicator due to the late start up of the ICLA programme in December 2016
	#	OUTPUT			
	12.1	Beneficiaries receive information on LCD rights	12. 1	# of male and female beneficiaries who receive information services (GL-L1/L) Target: 100-0 individuals; Achieved: 0	Explanation: Indicator removed at revision. NRC targeted shelter beneficiaries in with information provision.

12.2	Beneficiaries receive legal counselling on LCD rights	12.2	# of females and males who received legal counselling (GL-L1/L) Target: 100 individuals; Achieved:0	Explanation: NRC was not able to conduct counselling sessions as the activities were only initiated in December 2016.
12.3	Partners local capacity on how to address LCD rights is increased	12.3	# of training services delivered (HLP) (GL-L81/L) Target: 2-0 trainings; Achieved: 0	Explanation: Indicator removed at revision

Annual Plan - Annex 1: Logframe for- NMFA GPA 2016

Revision: NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) – PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

Note: Protection & Advocacy activities are main-streamed across all Core Competencies described above

		INTERVENTION LOGIC	Sub-project name: Whole of Syria Response Sub-project code: SYFM1601	
		IMPACT (Overall Objective)		
		People affected by the Syrian conflict have their basic needs met and their resilience improved	Syrian IDPs and conflict-affected persons have access to humanitarian assistance and essential services	
	#	OUTCOME (Specific Objective)	#	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS
	13	Protection response systems are strengthened	13	% of individuals referred accessing service delivery points Target: 80%;
	#	OUTPUT		
	13.1	Meaningful beneficiary engagement occurs throughout the project-cycle	13.1	Number of focus group discussions held in communities on protection concerns and existing coping strategies; (-) Target: 4 FGDs; Achieved: 16 FGDs
RESULTS				Explanation: Target not achieved
				Explanation: A total of 16 protection-related focus group discussions with women, girls, boys and men were conducted in camps █████ in June and October 2016.

13.2	Affected communities benefit from principled provision of assistance	13.2	Number of training sessions delivered to NRC staff, project partners and project stakeholders on principled humanitarian access, service provision and protection mainstreaming. (-) Target: 4 trainings; Achieved: 16 trainings	Explanation: Nine trainings for groups of NRC staff and seven for partners on principled humanitarian access and protection mainstreaming have been conducted, alongside a series of consultation meetings conducted in the course of developing the protection mainstreaming strategy and action plan.
13.3	NRC advocacy objectives are prioritised by other humanitarian actors.	13.3	Number of interagency products that reflect NRC advocacy priorities. Target: 2 Achieved: 4	Explanation: Over the course of 2016 NRC continued to lead interagency advocacy and communications efforts aimed to increase beneficiary access to humanitarian assistance: 1 +- NRC led drafting on an interagency letter to IASC principals in October 2016 on ensuring the humanitarian response was in line with humanitarian principles; 2 - an interagency press release on Aleppo and Daraya in July 2016; 3 - 10 point plan on access for the ISSG in August 2016 and 4: NRC was also able to get renewal of Security Council Resolution 2165 on cross-border humanitarian activities prioritised by other INGOs and Crisis Action, ensuring increased capacity for targeted lobbying in New York and with Security Council member States capitals.

4. Risk assessment and mitigation efforts taken

The conflict in Syria continues to provide humanitarian organisations with operational and ethical challenges in how to best support vulnerable conflict affected populations with the best possible protection and assistance.

Risks that impacted NRC programming:

- *Safety and security of NRC and partner staff is not compromised by project.* NRC's programming was impacted by the ongoing conflict resulting in implementation being halted and/or activities cancelled due to the safety and security concerns of NRC or implementing partner's staff. NRC and partners carefully selected the areas of intervention to mitigate possible risks to implementing staff, and developed early warning mechanisms and evacuation plans as mitigation efforts.
- *Capacity of implementing partner to conduct activity.* Working with implementing partners requires extremely close collaboration, capacity building and monitoring efforts to ensure activities are implemented as expected. NRC conducted in depth due diligence process with identified partners, highlighting capacity building priorities and made a capacity building plan before entering into Project Implementation Agreements (PIA). In instances of joint implementation together with partners, NRC complemented trainings and capacity building with on the job training of the partners' staff.
- *Border closures affected implementation.* The border between Turkey and Syria was closed between March and August 2016, which impacted the local markets in Syria, as well as the availability and price of goods and services. This had consequences on NRC programming and the response had to be adjusted accordingly.
- *Mitigate the risk of corruption and aid divergence.* Remote management requires solid monitoring procedures, which NRC has developed and continues to improve across Syria. Remote monitoring processes have been closely adapted to the project activities and post intervention beneficiary surveys have also been conducted to collect direct beneficiary feedback. When possible, third party monitoring has also been utilised to collect independent data and to directly document activities from the field. Where NRC implements directly, NRC staff provides anti-corruption trainings for staff, local partners and stakeholders involved in implementation. In addition, NRC established an internal whistle blowing mechanism where staff can report in instances of suspected corruption. Lastly, NRC held numerous meetings with contractors, partners and private sector explaining NRC's mandate as well as its zero corruption policy. All staff and partners are bound to a Code of Conduct (CoC), which explicitly prohibits any form of corruption. Refreshers and training on the CoC were integrated into staff and partner capacity development.

5. Coordination and cooperation

NRC's operational strategy for 2016 was coordinated within the wider humanitarian response and NRC SRO is actively engaged in multi-lateral coordination mechanisms with UN agencies and INGOs at both the Whole-of-Syria level and the three UN-led regional coordination hubs (central Syria – Damascus, ██████████ and southern Syria – Jordan). NRC co-leads several clusters at hub level, and is therefore able to make significant contributions to the coordination efforts. From Damascus, NRC coordinates and seeks grounds for coordination and cooperation with as many actors as possible. This includes dialogue with Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), UN agencies, INGOs, Local NGOs,

Community Based Initiatives and the private sector. NRC is an official member of the Humanitarian Country Team in Damascus and co-chair of the Damascus-based INGO forum.

Concerning this project specifically, NRC coordinated with other organisations to ensure there was no duplication of efforts and with local community leaders to ensure the activities and methodologies were appropriate and relevant and to build acceptance in the local communities.

Working through partners, both parties were central to the design of the appropriate response including the delivery mechanism or targeting criteria. Partners operating in Hard-to-Reach or besieged areas made sure to gain acceptance of their activities by the Armed Opposition Groups and coordinated with local authorities, including local relief committees in insuring assistance would not be duplicated and access would be maintained.

6. Lessons learned

- **Humanitarian aid causing tension between communities.** One of the unintended consequence of the emergency cash based response in Rural Damascus was reported tensions inside the community between host community/longer-term displaced population and recently displaced households perceived as favoured by NGOs. Monitoring data showed that 18% of the beneficiary population experienced problems within the community in a context of increased rent prices. Steps have therefore been taken to improve vulnerability analysis in the area and awareness on selection criteria to mitigate the tensions in the community. This issue has become more widespread, as overall levels of vulnerability, including to poverty, have increased across Syria. Combining multi-sectoral interventions that have community-wide impact (such as in education or WASH) is another way that can help mitigate tensions within communities where distributions target only the most vulnerable.
- **Alternative modalities should be considered in highly volatile environments.** NRC received beneficiary feedback that it should consider alternative modalities to programming when operating in highly volatile situations [REDACTED]. In one instance, a beneficiary household reported security concerns in reaching the community kitchen provided by NRC to receive food and preference for dry food items in order to be able to stock food in anticipation. For households not able to cook at home, complementary kitchen sets could be provided.
- **Understanding the relevant HLP issues of areas where NRC works is imperative.** NRC ICLA team works closely with Shelter, WASH and Education teams to understand the relevant HLP issues related to the areas of implementation. This is done to ensure there are no legal restrictions pertaining to the selected target area that may impact implementation.
- **Education to focus on building knowledge, skills and attitudes.** NRC has experienced that by working to develop the attitudes and practices of children, youth, parents, teachers and their peers in their approach to positive and safe learning environments in informal and formal learning environments, it is possible to mitigate the risk of drop out of formal schooling and by that increasing the number of children and youth who actively participate and remaining some form of learning.

- **Close monitoring through field presence.** Operating remotely into the dynamic context as Syria where access continues to change is challenging. Close monitoring through field missions, regular dialogue and exchanges with local authorities as well as decentralisation of operations are imperative in maintaining access.
- **Protection mainstreaming needs to be flexible yet context specific.** A key lesson learned in the area of protection mainstreaming has been the need for a flexible strategy that can take into account the need to build protection mainstreaming capacity building across both partners and staff, though materials pitched at a range of different levels and tailored to particular roles and contexts. Protection mainstreaming trainings work best when they are practically orientated and based on realistic scenarios that participate regularly face and which reflect their particular roles.
- **Coalition building** requires considerable time and effort in a dynamic context. More time needs to be factored in to ensure coalitions' impact equal the investment to the coalitions. The rapidly changing situation inside Syria results in priorities rapidly shifting with the possibility of issues losing built momentum.
- **Harmonized approach:** NRC's ability to negotiate with all levels of Government of Syria has ensured a solid and positive ongoing relationship, allowing for increased access. This component will need to be maintained and strengthened for future programming.
- **Data collection in a high risk environment can be challenging.** Data gathering and analysis constitute important challenges when designing and delivering programmes in Syria and NRC will continue to strengthen its Monitoring and Evaluation efforts across its Area Offices in 2017.

2 Photos

The Power of Roleplay- Rif Damascus, August 2016

In NRCs Summer School Program, Grade 5 children express how they feel through puppet-making and roleplay



Sewage system, [REDACTED]



Distribution of emergency shelter (tents) [REDACTED] after displacement of population due to conflict. December 2016. Photo by Ahmed Nhal –NRC Shelter&Wash team [REDACTED].



Playground in [REDACTED].

