



Alleviating poverty within the crisis affected population in Cameroon

Concept Note for: *Refugee and Host Community Graduation Approach Project*

Cameroon, Nigerian refugees in Far North region, Central African refugees in Adamaoua and East regions and Urban displaced in Yaoundé.

By Poverty Alleviation Coalition members: *Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Trickle Up.*

Date: *December 2019*

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Project Summary

FUNDING REQUEST AND OBJECTIVES

- > Total Program Value: \$7,750,000
- > Total Targeted Beneficiaries: 5000 HH, representing 25,000 individuals
- > Objective: Strengthening the resilience, self-reliance, and economic and social inclusion of Nigerian, Chadian and central Africa Republic refugee and host community households living in extreme poverty in Cameroon using the Graduation Approach.
- > Duration: 5 years

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- > Danish Refugee Council - DRC
- > Norwegian Refugee Council – NRC
- > Technical Services of the Cameroonian State: MINADER and MINEFOP

IMPLEMENTING LOCATIONS AND NUMBER OF RECIPIENT HOUSEHOLDS

- > Location 1: 2,500 HH in Adamaoua and East Regions
- > Location 2: 1,500 HH in Far-North Region
- > Location 3: 1,000 HH in Yaounde

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PARTNERS

- > Trickle Up



ACRONYMS

BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CAR	Central African Republic
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRM	Displacement Tracker Matrix (DTM)
ERMS	Economic Recovery and Market Systems
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FHH	Female-headed household
FSP	Financial Services Provider
GA	Graduation Approach
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GoC	Government of Cameroon
HH	Household
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
ICLA	Information, counselling and legal assistance
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generating Activity
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MINADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MINEFOP	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
NFI	Non Food Item
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSI	National Statistics Institute
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NWSW	Northwest and Southwest regions
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PAC	Poverty Alleviation Coalition
PNSA	National Program for Food Security
RSRI	Refugee Self-Reliance Index
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Program of the UN

General situation in Cameroon

Cameroon is caught in a triple crisis, facing the consequences of the CAR civil war on its eastern border (since 2013), the results of the Boko Haram crisis (since 2014) on its western border and an internal crisis in its NWSW (majority Anglophone) regions (since end 2016). Of the total 404,808¹ refugees within Cameroon reported as of 31 October 2019 there are 293,042 from Central African Republic and 108,164 from Nigeria. Additionally, there are 270,870 internally displaced Cameroonian in the Far-North region because of the recurrent insecurity. Lastly, over 540,000 people have been internally displaced in the NWSW regions because of the Anglophone crisis which has increased even more the humanitarian burden in Cameroon, placing this country has the most uncovered crisis in the West Africa region.

After years of basic needs assistance to the thousands of refugees in Cameroon, it has become obvious that finding long term solutions for refugees and affected host communities in Cameroon is paramount. At least eight million Cameroonians, nearly a third of the country's total population, live below the national poverty threshold according to figures from the National Statistics Institute (NSI) published at the end of the fourth Cameroon Household Survey (ECAM 4). In this context, finding sustainable long-term solution to integrate the extremely poor refugees' households and the most affected host communities is key to ensure a responsible exit strategy for all parties.

Situation in Far-North Cameroon

Among the ongoing crises, that of Lake Chad Basin continues to exacerbate the vulnerability of the population in the Far North of Cameroon. The displaced population in the Far-North region is estimated at 488,205 individuals including 106,761 Nigerian refugees (46,845 out of camp refugees), 270,870 IDPs and 110,574 returnees

Ongoing conflicts and insecurity continue to devastate livelihoods. According to DTM round 14.74% of unregistered refugees and internally displaced persons in Far-North do not currently want to resettle or return to their origin localities. This indicates the support efforts needs to be done essentially to these populations and those who host them.

Taking into account current uncertainties about the end of the crisis and how the events will take place in the long term, it is more important to start integrating recovery efforts into emergency programs as soon as possible. During this crisis, refugees and displaced persons have largely lost their livelihoods. The agricultural production was affected by the following shocks: late rains and drought, plant diseases and higher prices for agricultural inputs. In addition, extremely low yields were registered in 2019 according to an assessment conducted by NRC in August 2019. Local communities have little capacity to support refugees and displaced persons. Host communities also saw their livelihoods and access to basic services severely affected by the current crisis.

The Far North is the poorest and most fragile region of Cameroon. According to the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 74% of the population lives below the poverty line and according to the projection for the period from June to August 2020 of "Cadre Harmonisé", October 2019, 324,285 will in phase 3 and above representing 7% of the whole population of the Region. The Far North is the most vulnerable area with malnutrition; there is one severely malnourished child out of every two. In addition, one child over 10 is threatened with acute malnutrition².

In the region, assistance to refugees outside the camps remains largely inadequate given the scarcity of funds for the area because the crisis is less mediatized and then the limits of the interventions focused mainly on the camps. However, the imperative need to strengthen the resilience of refugees outside the camp is more than obvious.

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>

² Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019.

Situation in Eastern Cameroon

The eastern areas of Cameroon are impacted by recurrent crises in CAR, resulting in several waves of refugee arrivals, and by October 2019, 63,719 CAR refugees are registered in the Adamaoua region, and 183,755 in the East region³ where the economy is mainly based on agriculture and livestock farming. This leads to increasing pressure over scarce resources and resulting tensions (despite historical and ethnic affinities) between refugees and host communities, in a context where there are few livelihoods opportunities available (to hosts as well as refugees) and where the vast majority of refugees still depend on humanitarian assistance, despite some of them having been in Cameroon for over ten years. While the humanitarian crisis in this area is protracted, the relative stability in the area leads to a potential for a Graduation pilot program combining basic need assistance and for sustainable solutions.

According to UNHCR, 50% of CAR refugees are unemployed, and the three main economic activities for workers are agriculture, business, and daily labor, while when in CAR, refugees were mainly herders. Local villagers in the area largely cultivate banana plantations and other fruit trees. The low cash crop production can be explained by (i) lack of knowledge on techniques and farming inputs and tools; (ii) seasonality and the concentration of efforts on subsistence agriculture (cereals); and (iii) the fact that this is not a common practice for cultural reasons, especially for Bororo Fulani refugees, who are traditionally nomadic people. Some areas have high potential for business, agriculture and livestock thanks to (i) the proximity of the Ngaoundéré market to the CAR border for commercial trade; (ii) the long rainy season (March-October) particularly favorable to agriculture; and (iii) the presence of vast farmlands for harvesting and grazing. Despite these favorable conditions, these areas remain relatively under-exploited in an effort to meet basic food needs and generate revenue. Nevertheless, there are also drivers in these areas hindering economic development, including: (i) insecurity in CAR which affects activities and economic growth in the region; (ii) recurring conflicts over resources which affect economic activities and social cohesion; (iii) the worsening of the conditions of secondary communication axes, limiting access to markets; and (iv) the regular price fluctuations on staple goods. Available financial and social resources are utilized day-to-day and, as a result, are not available for use in income generating activities, skills training or service access. Consequently, the Eastern regions of Cameroon are in a protracted situation requiring at the same time emergency assistance and more sustainable solutions.

Situation in Yaounde

According to refugee statistics and asylum seekers in urban areas, Yaounde town host 14,716 refugees and 4,410⁴ asylum seekers specially from Nigeria, Chad and Central Africa. These refugees face legal constraints that limit access to income generating activities, living below the poverty line. These households, many who have been in Cameroon for nearly a decade, live in precarious conditions, with little/no ability to withstand shocks, requiring frequent use of negative coping strategies, such as early marriage, skipping meals, child labor or working under unsafe or exploitative conditions. The urban refugees in Yaounde live in extreme poverty lack the ability to cover their basic needs, including food, water, shelter and clothing, as well as access to improved sanitation, education and healthcare. The precarious living situation of those in extreme poverty without the ability to consistently meet their basic, often precludes their ability to escape the poverty circle. They are sometimes forced to do casual work to the detriment of their dignity to meet basic needs. There is little/no resilience to shocks, preventing households from taking any risks necessary to escape extreme poverty. The intersection of available time and available resources, coupled with the lack of clear prospects for future income generation opportunities is a similar poverty trap as outlined above. Again, taking risks, such as vocational training that doesn't result in improved income generation may relegate the household into extreme poverty, practically ensuring that households would opt

³ UNHCR-Factsheet, October 2019

⁴ <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/71447>

to meet their needs on unpredictable income instead of gambling with the overall well-being of their families.

In addition, limited social capital, in the form of formal and informal support networks and/or protection/legal services, prevents households in extreme poverty from leveraging external resources or support to improve their resilience and well-being. As a result, many such households rely on the income generated within the households and/or support provided by others in extreme poverty themselves. In the absence of stable support networks or access to external services outside of their limited sphere, households lack the capital (financial or otherwise) necessary to sustainably gain traction on activities designed to improve resilience and well-being.

Due to no formal registration, those refugees do not have access to financial institutions. Access to loans for subsistence activities is very difficult. At present, no microfinance institution has the structural willingness to provide loans to refugees. These microfinance institutions do business only with those who have a valid national identity card or passport and not refugee cards. Lack of livelihood opportunities also leads to despair and idleness, and some refugees face these challenges by consuming alcohol, drugs or developing other negative coping mechanisms. Households living in extreme poverty are often both unbanked and possessing limited financial literacy. As a result, what savings they may accumulate are often not utilized in the most effective or secure manner, preventing the household from taking proper advantage of available resources.

Project Operating Model

PROJECT GOAL

The proposed action aims at strengthening the resilience, self-reliance, and economic and social inclusion of Nigerian, Chadian and central Africa Republic refugee and host community households living in extreme poverty in Cameroon using the Graduation Approach (GA), which shows strong results in making households self-reliant at the end of the graduation intervention. The action will contribute towards sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance of 5,000 Households of refugees and host communities in three key areas of Cameroon. This will be achieved by facilitating to graduate out of extreme poverty and humanitarian assistance through accessing to sustainable structures and self-help mechanisms.

The program will utilize Ultra Poor Graduation Model that have been utilized globally, the graduation model, was first pioneered by Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC) in Bangladesh and is now being used to sustainably improve livelihoods in more than 20 countries with use by several INGOs and governments. The program with further build off of Trickle Up's experiences working closely with UNHCR and other INGOs to adapt the GA for refugees and host communities, As the GA has not yet been applied fully to the Cameroonian context, this program offers an excellent opportunity for learning. The proposed action offers to NRC and DRC in Cameroon a new way of working or adapting its livelihoods programming in complex contexts where the reality necessitates both humanitarian and development approaches to be followed. The GA is a pure application of the "nexus" approach and it will be implemented both rural and urban areas. There are a number of learning objectives that are specifically appropriate for Cameroon, including defining poverty beyond economic indicators; identifying specific markets or relevance for the extremely poor; and mapping out pathways for integrating the graduation approach into social protection systems (e.g., World Bank, UNHCR, WFP).

This operation model will provide robust, household level support focused on increasing resilience by building households social, financial, physical, and human capital. The process is structured and sequential, but through continuous coaching support, program staff are able to identify household-level constraints and quickly make program adjustments and provide additional support. It will support vulnerable households to access savings services, skills training, and asset transfer to increase incomes. With increased income and sustainable businesses, households (HH) will in time to transition being able to access other areas such as microfinance and microcredit to sustainably increase their livelihoods and invest in business opportunities. HH will be able to continue supporting, growing, and improving their livelihoods,



ensuring sustainability after the program ends. The approach has been found to be an efficient methodology to sustainably reduce poverty in the most underdeveloped countries in the world especially in delivering sustainable development livelihood opportunities for the most marginalized and ultra-poor who - without the asset transfers (cash or in-kind assets) – might not have the resources to engage in traditional livelihood programming as their basic needs are not being met or stabilized.

PROJECT APPROACH

Thus, the program will be built around the following components of the GA adapted to the Cameroonian context:

- I. **Inception phase:** The project will encompass an inception phase aiming at assessments, contextualizing the project design Trickle Up will technically support the assessment of capabilities, needs and resources to design the exact project contextualized for the specific participants and areas of intervention. This will enable the refinement of the project planning. Based on this, TU will provide the training of staff by setting up appropriate trainings tools, resources and SOPs.

- II. **Mentoring and Coaching:** DRC and NRC will ensure a close mentorship of participants throughout the process in a way that develops their self-confidence and support their economic activity. This important package component aims to support program participants to meet their goals, encourage positive behavior change and offer guidance on how to address specific problems they face. This often includes further training on life skills such as communication, negotiation, leadership, confidence and motivation building drawn from success stories. Continuous coaching and mentoring will be provided to the refugees and host communities throughout the entire program engagement and beyond. Mentors and coaches will be recruited to provide special coaching services to program participants through weekly visit to monitor the progress of activities and support in addressing problems that may arise. It will also be enforced during the household's visits by the mentors and will include, household budgeting, helping participants to write and read, refer to psychosocial support counselling, and continuous encouragement/support of participants. Mentors/Coaches will also be responsible for promoting health and nutrition messages and encouraging positive behavioral changes along the way. DRC and NRC will also explore the use of 'competent' refugees to act as case managers. Key skilled refugees that have gone through the path of graduation will be in the best position to act as a Team Leader to guide the case management work to be as adapted as possible to the specific needs of refugees. Case managers will be instrumental to monitor and assess the graduation process (using simple way of assessing the graduation indicators) and providing advice or referral services to the beneficiary households for enhancing livelihoods activities/enterprises as well as reporting to the M&E unit of the program. Adequate training will be provided to the case managers for understanding and use of a common framework for case management and graduation monitoring.

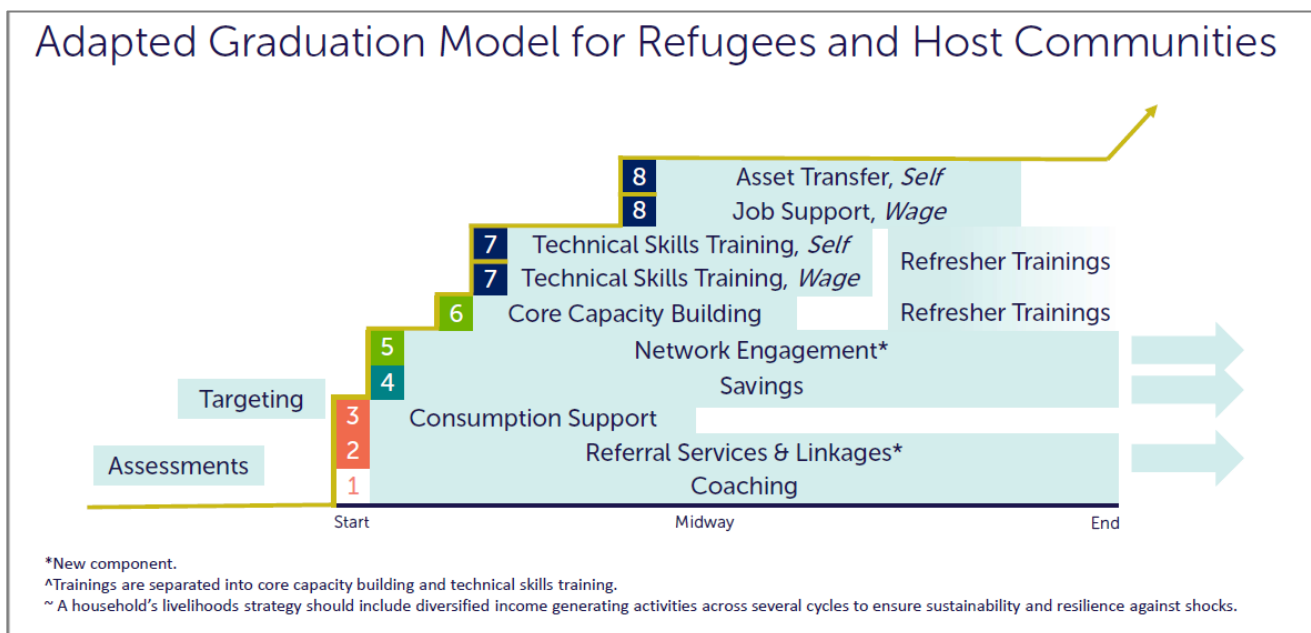
- III. **Consumption Support:** Continue providing a regular and time-bound cash and voucher assistance (CVA) to enable the ultra-poor refugee and host-communities HH to meet basic needs will be an essential step of this program. Duration of the consumption support may vary from 6-12 months after joining the program depending on income generating activity selected by each HH and the thus the timeline of potential revenues generated by their supported livelihood. The partners are aiming at providing the consumption support through CVA to allow beneficiaries to adapt to their most urgent basic needs and food consumption preferences. For the host community members, linkage will be made with the government to leverage the social cash transfer program for supporting the consumption needs of the selected beneficiaries from the host community.

- IV. **Financial education:** Develop the ability of the ultra-poor HH to save money is a tool to build resilience and a key stone of the GA. Savings to build assets and instill financial discipline leads to access to formal financial services. Formation of Village Saving and Loans Association (VSLA) groups on common objectives with clear rules of business based on lessons from ongoing/past initiatives in Cameroon will be at the core of the financial education component of the program. In order to sustain the action, the consortium will facilitate engaging with finance institutions and signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with them to ensure the beneficiaries are able to access the financial products and

services. The project will support the capital to cater for the needs of the beneficiaries. The formed VSLA that have stabilized and proven to have sound and efficient financial practices will be linked to financial service providers to be able to access financial services to increase their opportunities for improved livelihood.

- V. Basic skills and Technical trainings:** DRC and NRC will built participants capacities on core entrepreneurial skills through a series of entrepreneurship trainings, general life skills and employable skills trainings. Specialized technical trainings will be provided based on the technical skills required for each Income Generating Activities (IGA) selected by the beneficiaries. They will learn how to care for their assets and run a business. Trainings will be conducted individually or in group formats depending on the modules and specific needs of beneficiaries, however, the social development and life skills module is generally more effective through group and peer learning approach. This may include training on value-chain based trade or farming (preferably offered by the private sector partner/out grower companies and relevant government dept.), business entrepreneurship alongside basic literacy and numeracy, where applicable. The market assessment and survey of the potential employer should inform the type of jobs and self-employment to be targeted as part of the training package to increase the chance of getting a job or starting up a new business (self-employment).
- VI. Livelihood support:** Following rigorous market assessment and household capacity, DRC and NRC will help the beneficiary identifying appropriate productive assets/business enterprises at the beginning of the program. Transferring an asset to help extreme poor households jump-start a sustainable economic activity will be a critical element of the graduation model. While the initial costs of this are high, transferring assets to ultra-poor households sustainably will improve economic outcomes for the most vulnerable such as female headed households and landless farmers. Combination of large-scale asset transfers and skills training will provide the ultra-poor with access to self-employment and increases earnings. Once the improvements and stabilization on food security is observed immediate, changes in earnings, consumption, and savings gains will be sustained or increased. When HH food security and access to capital stabilizes, the program in cooperation with the education and economic sector will seek to diversify the income generation of beneficiaries by promoting further approaches such as entrepreneurship and vocational training for employment/self-employment, especially for households that may have lost their assets and lands during displacement. For pilot purposes, there will be an allocation of approximately 500 USD free grant subject to choice of enterprises –which could be 1 or more +any inflationary adjustment in the subsequent years, for each beneficiary household for the livelihoods enterprises/productive assets. The amount will be set during the design phase following socio-economic survey findings, available data from secondary sources on living cost, market assessment etc.

VII. Social integration and social cohesion: As there are growing tensions between refugees who have been living for years in Cameroon and their host communities, the program will promote social integration and cohesion. This will be done by supporting employment creation and income generation that will benefit both communities, by creating dialog platform between refugees and their hosting population and supporting mutual co-existence. This dialog will be fostered through Community Protection Committees that are elected by the different communities. They will be trained in conflict resolution and will have a key role in addressing the different social conflict that may arise during the program and after. This approach will enable the two communities to jointly address any hostilities that



they may face. Social cohesion activities among the communities will be proposed on a regular basis to strengthen their social link and create acceptance.



Project Impact and Sustainability

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 3: Logical Framework

Strengthening the resilience, self-reliance, and economic and social inclusion of Nigerian, Chadian and central Africa Republic refugee and host community households living in extreme poverty in Cameroon using the Graduation Approach (GA).		
Outcome and Outputs	Activities	Indicative Indicators
Outcome 1: Food security of the ultra-poor refugees and host communities affected by the recurrent crisis in Cameroon is improved.		KOI Indicator 1: % of individuals with improved food security
Output 1: Timely Consumption support is provided to address food needs.	Activity 1.1: Identification of the extremely-poor refugees and host communities HH. Activity 1.2: Support Food Consumption through CVA for the extremely-poor.	Indicator 1.1: # of people assisted through consumption support Indicator 1.2: # of average days per month in which people are supported with consumption support.
Outcome 2: Economic resilience of extremely-poor refugees and host communities is enhanced through savings and access to financial services.		KOI Indicator 2: % of participants with enhanced economic resilience through savings and access to financial services
Output 2: Participants have access to financial inclusion and savings trainings.	Activity 2.1: Training on establishment of Saving and Loan Associations. Activity 2.2: Financial literacy sessions conducted. Activity 2.3: Equitable linkages to financial institutions established.	Indicator 3.1: % of VSLA groups where Savings and Lending procedures are orderly and complete Indicator 3.2: # of HH that assess credit Indicator 3.3: % of VSLAs where passbook savings records are complete and accurate Indicator 3.4: % of households who can access financial credit if required
Outcome 3: Economic well-being of ultra-poor refugees and host communities is strengthen through livelihood opportunity and market inclusion.		KOI Indicator 3: % of participants with increased and stable revenue able to cover all their basic needs to live in dignity
Output 3: Participants are self-employed and have access to trainings, income, and markets.	Activity 3.1: Vocational skills training. Activity 3.2: Business skills training. Activity 3.3: Market linkages developed. Activity 3.4: Business/Economic support to develop IGA.	Indicator 3.1: No. of beneficiaries trained in specific income generation activities (IGA). Indicator 3.2: % of business skills participants who are practicing basic business skills principals. Indicator 3.3: Number of participants provided with business asset transfer (or employability support). Indicator 3.4: % of participants who have strong links within their value chain sector.
Outcome 4: Behavior change, social inclusion and social cohesion is reinforced through awareness raising and life skills.		KOI Indicator 4: % of participants who feel better socially integrated in the community and living in a protective environment.
Output 4: Communities are addressing conflicts peacefully and social cohesion is strengthened.	Activity 4.1: Coaching for mentoring and counselling Activity 4.2: Life skills training conducted Activity 4.3: Protection Committee strengthened and trained on conflict resolution and mediation Activity 4.4: Information, counselling and legal assistance – ICLA	Indicator 4.1: Key coaching messages recalled Indicator 4.2: % beneficiaries that have attended all trainings in the past 3 months Indicator 4.3: # of conflicts mitigated through the Protection Committees Indicator 4.4: # of participants assisted with ICLA

Project Management and Governance

COALITION ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Partner 1 - Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

Recognizing that urgent needs matching DRC mandate, vision and area of expertise exist in Cameroon and seeing a potential for development of cross border programming, DRC conducted a scoping mission in May 2017 in the Adamaoua region which led to a decision to focus DRC's response on the Eastern region of Adamaoua, as the important humanitarian needs in this area do not attract adequate attention and response. DRC established its mission in Cameroon in October 2017. Since then, DRC is implementing protection driven interventions that include protection information collection, verification and analysis of trends, and provision of targeted individual protection assistance for the most vulnerable people in the Adamaoua region. Since its arrival, DRC has conducted a comprehensive Conflict Sensitive Analysis in the Adamaoua and Northern regions as well as an in-depth assessment related to durable solutions and return intention of refugees. Both assessments, and the data gathered and analyzed by the protection teams, have constituted the basis to inform the basis for an evidence-based program strategy.

In 2018, based on these assessments, DRC has extended its scope of intervention to provide a more comprehensive response to CAR refugees and support sustainable solutions to displaced and host communities. Thus, DRC is implementing a comprehensive program strategy in Adamaoua to *Support durable solutions for refugees in Adamaoua communities and support refugee and host communities' resilience and empowerment*. This strategy encompasses (i) Immediate assistance to protect and uphold refugees and hosts' basic needs, safety and dignity, (ii) longer-term assistance to enable durable solutions for refugees and hosts and to prevent further degradation of the situation in terms of social cohesion. DRC pursues this strategy through an integrated and comprehensive results-based approach with protection at its core. The proposed intervention will be fully integrated in DRC's strategy in Adamaoua and aims to address residual emergency needs while supporting the transition towards more durable solutions, thus contributing towards enhanced social cohesion among vulnerable communities. Thus, the global objective of the proposed project is perfectly in line with DRC objective to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable refugees and host communities to meet their basic food needs and support their economic recovery through livelihood activities. 'Economic recovery' refers to DRC's activities that support conflict and displacement-affected people in regaining their economic wellbeing following a crisis or shock: from meeting basic needs in emergency contexts to recovering and/or strengthening sustainable and resilient livelihoods; and with a strong focus on scaling up the use of cash and voucher assistance in support of these outcomes.

Partner 2 - Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

NRC started its operations in Cameroon in April 2017 to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin and has continued to expand into the most affected and hard to reach areas and has extensive human resources and geographical reach covering Far North, East and Northwest and Southwest. NRC has a Country office based in Yaounde and area office in the Far North (Maroua) and South West region (Buea) and a field office in the Far North (Kousseri), North West Region (Bamenda), East (Batouri) which continues to facilitate humanitarian operations and the emergency support to displaced populations in the area.

NRC has also increased on its partnership with local NGOs and GoC sector that have good capacities and better access to hard to reach areas in these regions. NRC has also been able to gain access and acceptance for both direct implementation and through local partners. NRC has strong capacities and core competencies in legal assistance and counselling, Education, WASH, shelter, Food security and livelihood. Although NRC Cameroon does not have significant experience in specific graduation approach, NRC is implementing similar keys

components such provision of CVA, provision of productivity asset, building the employability of youth etc. tailored on the context needs analysis.

NRC will add value to the project by sharing its expertise and knowledge in promoting youth vocational training experience through the vocational training (VT). This experience of implementing informal vocational training and support for business establishment for build self-reliant and fending for their own livelihoods. The action will utilize NRC youth program training services to provide tailored training on- and off-farm entrepreneurship. The youth program within NRC is well established and aims to support skill development and knowledge amongst youth and young adults in particular women. Youth participating in the project will gain technical vocational training and education through dedicated centres, apprenticeships with established handcraft or local business enterprises if existing as well as supported to transition to meaningful employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities. A social and behaviour change strategy will unpack key drivers of change that can improve the confidence and motivation of young people. NRC has implemented emergency multipurpose cash since 2017 in Far North Cameroon in partnership with financial services provider. This partnership and experience will support the planned project in ensuring the household consumption needs are covered by so doing allowing for cost-effective implementation of the livelihoods and resilience activities to take place.

NRC Cameroon also benefits from technical support from the Central and West Africa Regional Office based in Dakar and global support from the head office based in Oslo, Norway to contribute to ensuring program quality, compliance with SPHERE standards and donor rules and regulations.

Partner 3 – Trickle Up

Since its founding in 1979, Trickle Up (TU) has been dedicated to the economic empowerment of marginalized populations that face multiple levels of exclusion due to gender, ethnicity, religion, displacement and disability. One of TU's chief assets is its expertise to empower members of these groups who live in extreme poverty through the Graduation Approach, an economic development methodology proven to sustainably improve household income, savings, food security, and access to health and social services. TU has also deepened its focus on marginalized populations, developing significant expertise to empower those that live in extreme poverty and face multiple levels of exclusion such as refugee status or gender. TU has therefore directly adapted and contextualized Graduation in about twenty countries with diverse target populations, always seeking to reach the underserved and extreme poor. Over the past decade, TU has become a pioneer in the development and global adoption of the Graduation Approach and is now partnering with governments and INGOs to scale its impact. Beginning in 2012, TU has worked with actors focused on populations affected by displacement, including refugees and host communities. Trickle Up has been providing technical assistance to the UNHCR and INGOs working with forcibly displaced people to design, implement, and adapt the Graduation Approach for camp, rural, and urban contexts in more than a dozen countries. This innovative approach to refugee and humanitarian programming promotes resilience and self-sufficiency, effectively breaking dependence on external humanitarian assistance and funding and enabling them to support local markets in their host country.

Trickle Up's technical assistance role starts early on in the planning for a Graduation project and continues throughout the process. In the inception phase, Trickle Up supports implementing partners as they design and build their capacity for Graduation through various touchpoints: a feasibility study, targeting and selection support, design missions, remote assistance to adjust project design, training of coaches, and remote launch support. Throughout implementation, Trickle Up provides technical assistance both through a full time based Graduation Expert on the ground but also remotely and through additional missions as needed to build capacity and strengthen programming. These various touch points and continuous technical assistance allow for adaptations and learnings that can inform necessary changes to a Graduation pilot and inform a project's path to scale.

BROADER PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

The consortium will foster good working relationships with local authorities and stakeholders, UN Agencies, INGOs and NGOs. The project will endeavor to develop a comprehensive partnerships strategy with relevant traditional and non-traditional stakeholders in all its activities and improve cost-efficiency and effectiveness. The consortium also recognizes that building strong partnerships within communities is essential to ensuring local ownership, transfer of knowledge and long-term sustainability of activities. In this regard, it shall partner with relevant local authorities, community structures and local leaders during implementation of activities. This approach helps to refine interventions to address critical community needs. The project believes that communities are the drivers of their own development and as such wants to ensure that they take the lead at every stage of the project cycle in a manner that interventions become more effective, responsive and durable, producing better outcomes.

Thus, the preidentified partners are:

- Government Ministries and Technical Services: Technical Services and local Administrations will be fully implicated in this project to provide technical support for the skill training and coaching/mentoring activities and ensure sustainability on the long term.
- CBO's: Protection Community Committees, Youth and Women grass-root association, VSLA groups, Farm cooperatives, etc.
- INGOs through coordination forum such as technical working groups in Yaounde and in the Regions.
- Private sector partners such as Financial service providers, Markets actors, etc.



Monitoring and Evaluation

MONITORING

The project will establish a monitoring and evaluation plan based on the logical framework which will be based on the PAC and RSRI global standard M&E system. Monitoring progress is a key success factor on graduation approach project model programming. Aggregated information will be used to track progress towards achieving the overall goals, program reporting, financial management, and compliance. Building the monitoring system during the planning phase will ensure that the project and household plans can be kept on track, and that any issues are identified and addressed early. Household level monitoring will be used by field staff to track the progress of each participant towards their progression attributes, economic and social goals. Tracking participation in intervention packages according to the recommended sequence is key to understanding project effectiveness.

Challenges arising during project monitoring visits will be addressed immediately through direct on-site support by project staff and/or pending security risks, targeted remote management and supervision. Regular grants opening, review, and closing meetings will help ensure proper monitoring and quality implementation of the project. In order to track the project progress and performance, the project will produce regular field monitoring reports and project staff will lead direct observations, as well as cross-check distribution and training lists, registries, post-distribution reports, spot-checks, supportive supervision, and post-construction monitoring reports. Lessons learned will be shared and used for improvement of project implementation and future programming. Operational monitoring data will be collected by Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) team in the field through focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), regular field site visits (security permitting), surveys, and other tools. Data will be triangulated with other actors working in the areas of intervention in the different areas, and more widely throughout the country in order to improve accuracy and share lessons learned.

EVALUATION

Additionally, NRC and DRC will work with Trickle Up to develop appropriate Graduation Criteria that will be used by program participants and coaches to ensure that they stay on track to progressing out of extreme poverty. These context-specific measurable thresholds that indicate the conditions necessary for a participant to move out of poverty and into sustainable livelihoods (“Success”). Graduation Criteria should be simple, meaningful, measurable, and include a participant perspective. Typically, criteria are developed on 1) Food security, 2) Sustainable, stabilized income, and productive assets, 3) Savings and assets, 4) Self-confidence/agency, 5) Access to networks and services, and 6) Other criteria developed by participants.

To generate information for the project partners to apply knowledge gained from evidence gathering to inform decisions and improve the project outcomes while ensuring accountability, the consortium will conduct evaluation exercises including, baseline, middle line, end line and After Action Review. A **baseline assessment** will be conducted within the first 6 months of implementation to serve as a benchmark for examining what change is triggered by the intervention. Baseline and subsequent monitoring will maintain similar standards, tools and techniques in such a way that the same type of data can be collected during and after the intervention, for meaningful comparison of results and assess the extent of change, or lack thereof. A realist **mid-term evaluation** approach will be conducted half-way through the project life. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) will ascertain project progress, to reveal whether there are emerging patterns on what works, has not worked and how can be improved. In order to learn, and demonstrate impact of the graduation approach, **an independent end of project evaluation** will be conducted to provide good learning and evidence on economic strengthening, resilient livelihoods and self-reliance. The project will conduct an **After Action Review** during the last year of the project. The After Action Review will offer the opportunity to assess the integrated approach of the project, draw successes and learning which will be used to strengthen/improve on its future programming in the Far North region. The AAR will be conducted by the NRC’s team.

Project Budget

BUDGET PER PARTNER AND REGION

Estimated budget of the intervention

Part of the intervention	HH beneficiaries	DRC	NRC	Trickle Up
Adamaoua	1,000 HH	\$1,400,000		
East	1,500 HH	\$2,100,000		
Far-North	1,500 HH		\$2,100,000	
Yaounde	1, 000 HH		\$1,400,000	
Technical Assistance	--			\$750,000
Total Budget	5,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$750,000