



International Rescue Committee
IRC Chad: Dillon Henry Youth Centers Project
Interim Report Prepared for Jewish World Watch
June 2009

SUMMARY

From January 15 to May 15, 2009, the IRC oversaw the first phase of the Dillon Henry Youth Centers Project, a Jewish World Watch initiative to ensure that Sudanese refugee youth in Ouré Cassoni camp, eastern Chad, have access to safe, healthy, protective environments where they can learn and grow. During this time, generous support from Jewish World Watch not only allowed significant improvements in the physical structure and layout of youth centers, but also supported a wide variety of activities at the centers. These programs, which serve youth from all three of the camp's zones, provide productive, educational, enjoyable, and healing activities for children and youth living in one of the world's most remote and challenging landscapes.

The IRC is deeply grateful for the generosity and ongoing commitment of Jewish World Watch to the young people of Sudan and Chad. With your partnership, the IRC is working to give young people the tools to build healthier, safer communities.

SECURITY UPDATE

Despite confrontation between Chadian forces and rebels in the southeast of the country, the security situation in the area around Ouré Cassoni remained calm enough for programs to continue without disruption throughout the project period. Instability continues to threaten the region, however, and all workers and refugees are on a high level of alert.

The increasingly intense fighting between rebels and Sudanese troops over the border in Darfur is of particular concern. Increased recruitment by rebel groups has been linked to the disappearance of camp youth. The IRC has received troubling reports of full recruitment campaigns and meetings conducted in Ouré Cassoni in the evenings, when the humanitarian sector does not have access to the camp. We expect that the situation will improve somewhat in the coming months, as the rainy season limits mobility in the area.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

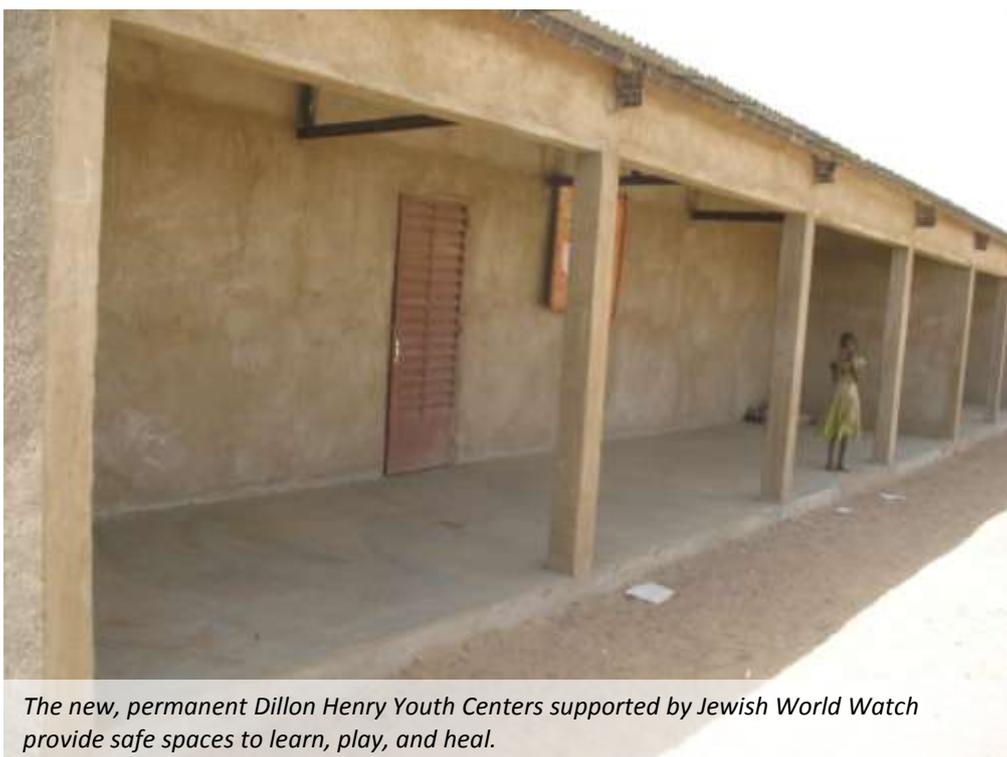
Youth Center Upgrades

All youth centers previously managed by the IRC have been upgraded. Previously, IRC youth programs were housed in small, impermanent, single-room structures covered in plastic sheeting. These structures were grouped together in three locations throughout the camp.



Previously, youth activities were housed in impermanent one-room structures built with plastic sheeting.

Today, with the generous support of Jewish World Watch, the IRC has consolidated our youth activities into three permanent structures of several rooms each, strategically erected at the three sites where previous impermanent structures were located. While we had originally proposed to upgrade from impermanent to semi-permanent structures, consolidation into multi-room centers has allowed the IRC to create permanent buildings dedicated specifically and entirely to young people. Each Dillon Henry Youth Center makes counseling services, training activities, and recreation easily accessible to children and youth from all areas of the camp.



The new, permanent Dillon Henry Youth Centers supported by Jewish World Watch provide safe spaces to learn, play, and heal.

The benefits of the new centers are already apparent. The consolidated centers attract more children than the previous system of impermanent single-room structures. Grouping activities in a single building reduces loss of materials due to misplacement or theft, ensures better protection for children and youth, increases efficiency and cost-effectiveness of program management, and reduces the stigma children face when they visit a separate social worker's office. In addition, consolidation allowed the IRC to erect permanent structures, rather than the semi-permanent building originally proposed. Permanent, durable structures provide longer-term stability and are an important asset for refugee communities who may be forced to remain in the region for some time.

The IRC is completing painting and furnishing of rooms and installation of fencing around the centers to provide a protective space for children and youth to play nearby. The IRC also plans to install painted "Dillon Henry Youth Center" signs shortly, once construction has been finalized.

Sports and Games Programming

In January, the IRC's Child and Youth Protection Team worked with the refugee Animators¹ who staff the youth centers and leaders of the refugee youth community to identify 30 young people to participate in a youth club. To encourage healthy socialization and communication between children from different camp groups, the club consists of an equal number of girls and boys, ages 15-24, from all three camp zones.

In addition to participation in youth center activities, the club will play an important role in representing the interests and voice of camp youth in IRC programming. Club members will work closely with the IRC team to develop and distribute information to camp youth about the youth centers, upcoming events, and other relevant topics. The club will also coordinate with IRC staff to ensure that the interests, opinions, and concerns of camp youth are communicated to various refugee community groups, including the leaders' committee, parents' committee, youth committee, and others.

In March, the IRC organized a series of "Inter-Zone Championship" soccer matches during the mid-term school vacation. Boys 8-12 years old, 12-15 years old, and 16-20 years old participated in matches over three days. The IRC designed team rosters to include children from all three camp zones, promoting cohesion and cooperation across the camp youth community.

To augment ongoing sports and games programming, in the coming months the IRC will hold special events to commemorate international celebrations including the Day of the African Child on June 16, International Refugees Day on June 20, and Universal Children's Day on November 20. For these occasions, the IRC will work with the camp community to organize awareness campaigns around children's issues and celebrations including theater performances and sports tournaments.

Trainings, Workshops, and Youth Newsletter

IRC staff provided a first aid training to refugee youth, refugee social workers, and youth Animators on topics including first response when accidents occur, working with youth (especially young girls) to increase knowledge of preventative care in early pregnancy, and protocol for assisting children who become sick while at the youth centers. An IRC midwife provided a supplementary follow-up training explaining pregnancy and associated risks for young girls.

The IRC also plans to offer various skills trainings for youth. These trainings build youths' confidence and create safe spaces for young people to share accomplishments and build community. In

¹ Youth Animators are refugee staff who facilitate activities at the centers.

addition, they provide valuable skills that are useful to the camp community as a whole and can help youth develop sustainable livelihoods. We are organizing a series of carpentry trainings scheduled to begin in June. Other trainings will include sessions on making hand creams from locally available products and an advanced drawing workshop.

The IRC has established a Youth Newsletter Committee composed of interested refugee youth. Participants are helping to organizing a journalism training and the launch of a quarterly newsletter. Due to difficulties in recruiting a qualified Chadian journalism trainer, training has not yet commenced. Should the IRC be unable to locate a suitable trainer, an IRC translator with journalism experience will fill the role. Training is scheduled to begin in July and the Committee plans to produce two quarterly newsletters by year's end.

Raising Community Awareness of the Needs of Children and Youth

IRC awareness raising activities increase the visibility of the needs of children and youth in Ouré Cassoni within the wider community. They also provide an opportunity for youth to give feedback about current services which will in turn help improve programming and increase community support.

The IRC organized four one-day workshops with young people to identify obstacles that prevent children and youth from participating in group activities at the camp. Youth participants identified barriers including ethnic prejudices, tensions between groups, lack of information about scheduling of activities, and difficulties for children with physical and mental disabilities. These discussions will inform the development of awareness raising materials to be distributed throughout the camp. Materials will focus on key topics for camp youth including protection concerns and available services to address those concerns.

In February, IRC staff held an awareness-raising workshop on "Safe Learning Environments" with youth aged 13-20. The workshop emphasized the right of all students to express their ideas and included a focus on non-violent conflict resolution. Fifty youth, including primary youth leaders from each camp zone, participated in the workshop.

The IRC supported camp youth to participate in celebrations for International Women's Day (March 8) and International Water Day (March 21). International Women's Day activities included a debate competition and a performance about freedom of expression and domestic violence. For International Water Day, the Youth Club put on a traditional dance performance and a smaller group participated in a drawing competition.

As detailed previously within the "Security Update" section of the report, youth recruitment by rebel groups continues to be a serious concern in Ouré Cassoni. The IRC has begun to open a dialogue with the refugee community about child recruitment, but because this issue is extremely sensitive we are proceeding carefully as we build trust and explore opportunities. Our initial activities to engage on this topic will be indirect, focusing on providing positive, engaging activities for youth who spend their free time at the camp market, where most recruitment efforts are concentrated.

CONCLUSION

We thank Jewish World Watch for its generosity and dedication to young people affected by the Darfur crisis. Your support continues to make a real, long-term difference in the lives of children and youth in Ouré Cassoni camp, eastern Chad. The new Dillon Henry Youth Centers are providing a safe, stable, and healing environment for vulnerable young people, allowing them to interact socially and

gather support from one another; participate in education, recreation, and skills building activities; and restore hope for brighter futures. In addition, the centers are a long-term asset to the refugee community, and will continue to nurture the youngest generation of refugee leadership for years to come. Thank you.

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT: JANUARY - APRIL 2009

Item	Budgeted Cost	Expense	Balance
Personnel*	\$40,196	0	40,196
Travel	750	0	750
Equipment	600	0	600
Supplies	47,725	27,423	20,302
Other	729	0	729
Total Direct Costs	90,000	27,423	62,577
Administration Fee @ 10%	10,000	3,047	6,953
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$100,000	\$30,470	\$69,530

*Due to cost sharing with a government grant for some aspects of this project, non-supply costs will be charged during the second half of the grant.