



International Conference on
Social Protection
in contexts of **Fragility & Forced Displacement**

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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Une vendeuse
en quête de survie

TESTIMONIES

"Je remercie l'UNICEF pour l'appui reçu. En effet, je suis veuve et mon mari m'a laissé avec plusieurs enfants. Je ne savais quoi faire pour payer leur scolarité et les nourrir. J'avais une vieille machine à coudre qui était en panne. Grâce à l'argent que l'UNICEF m'a donné dans ce projet, j'ai réussi à réparer ma machine, à coudre et à trouver de quoi payer l'école de mes enfants et les nourrir."

Beneficiary of UNICEF pilot cash transfer, financed by the EU

"Recevoir l'argent du PAM est une grande bénédiction parce qu'avec la somme reçue je peux maintenant acheter de la nourriture, des ustensiles de cuisine et de nouveaux vêtements pour mes enfants. Je fais librement le choix de ce dont nous avons besoin auprès des commerçants de la place. En trouvant refuge ici à Kanyabayonga, je ne croyais pas avoir de l'argent pour les besoins de ma famille. Mais grâce à cette assistance financière j'ai maintenant quelque chose à partager avec mes proches."

Beneficiary of WFP cash transfer for displaced persons in North Kivu

Le convoi alimentaire du PAM sur une route impraticable pour apporter l'assistance nécessaire aux personnes vulnérables dans les zones difficilement accessibles dans le Nord Kivu





BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

MAIN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

For more than two decades, the DRC has experienced a multifaceted humanitarian crisis: large-scale displacement due to armed conflicts (3.8 million internally displaced persons, with 621,711 DRC refugees residing in African countries); a deterioration in the socio-economic situation; violations of human rights; landslides and massive flooding over large cities; various epidemics (Ebola, polio, measles and cholera); and malnutrition.

Violence in the Kasai region has resulted in the displacement of around 1.4 million people, including 700,000 children, with more than 30,000 refugees from Kasai in Angola. Neighboring provinces have also been affected. Humanitarian actors are responding through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRMP), protection cluster monitoring, and other active clusters.

Ethnic conflict in Tanganyika Province resulted in the displacement of 433,700 people between July 2016 and March 2017; the number has more than doubled in the last 3 months. Military operations against foreign armed group such as FDLR and ADF-Nalu in the Kivus region also remain a concern, while the north of the country is affected by refugee influxes, internal displacement, and armed groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army and pastoralist nomads coming from Central African Republic.

THE NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION (SP) SYSTEM

The Safety Nets Review indicated that SP programs in the DRC are isolated and achieve low coverage. At the operational level, these programs are shared among several institutions and use distinct management, targeting, and monitoring-evaluation approaches and tools. Programs include: cash transfers, in-kind social safety nets, fee exemptions, public works, social assistance and social services. Stakeholders have begun discussions to harmonize diverse targeting mechanisms across programs.

A national strategy for SP, and its associated priority action plan, is being developed. A draft bill on social action is still pending, but a national program for SP was created to coordinate the interventions with a more comprehensive approach, but its financing remains a constraint.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Supervised by UNHCR, various humanitarian actors have adopted an out-of-camp policy using a variety of safety nets to strengthen self-reliance and resilience among internally displaced people and Burundian, Central African and South Sudanese refugees. A 2012 study estimated humanitarian assistance at US\$164 million for food security and basic emergency needs. The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the DRC 2017-2019 estimated it would take US\$812.6 million to respond to the needs of some 7.3 million people. As of 2017 only 25.6% was funded.

PROMISING PRACTICES

Cash transfers are increasingly used as efficient and effective tools to increase the resilience of targeted populations in the DRC and remain mainly linked to humanitarian efforts in the east and northwest of the country. Humanitarian actors can assist the government in scaling up cash-based safety nets.

- In 2010, UNICEF launched a humanitarian and transitional assistance program called "Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis (ARCC)" funded by UKAID. The ARCC piloted the use of cash transfers and cash equivalents (vouchers) in partnership with several NGOs, and aims to scale up the cash approach by partnering with the private sector (mobile phone companies, banking system, individual vendors).



- WFP has provided cash assistance in the DRC since 2010, and currently runs one of the country's largest cash-based programs. Around 80% of all food assistance to refugees in the DRC is now provided through WFP cash or value vouchers.
- UNHCR provides cash transfers to refugees to support housing, education, livelihoods and basic needs. Programs include cash allowances or in-kind support to parents of refugee primary school students to cover school fees, supplies and uniforms; and in-kind support, cash grants and vocational training for refugee households for income-generating activities.
- Labour-intensive public works programs also provide temporary work to vulnerable groups, increased access to food and health care, and improved infrastructure, especially in areas affected by the conflict. Under its Food Assistance for Assets programme, WFP implemented projects to improve food availability and market functioning, through lowland rehabilitation, reforestation, and road rehabilitation.

UNHCR, together with a national NGO health service provider, provides pays health premiums for all urban refugees and manages health centres, maternity clinics and hospitals.

The government also plans to implement a national school feeding program, and discussions are underway to build on WFP's experience with school feeding in conflict-affected areas in the east.

MAIN CHALLENGE(S) AHEAD AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- How to finance interventions for populations affected by different types of crises remains a challenge, especially in an unfavourable international environment;
- Weak state (national and provincial) institutions jeopardize responses to humanitarian crises and more generally to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable populations; and
- Weak accountability mechanisms in financial management and transparency remain a challenge.

NEXT STEPS:

- Assist the government in putting in place a SP policy framework based on good practices from national (social sectors) and international (EU, UNICEF, WB, WFP) actors;
- Ensure SP policies consider the situation of refugees;
- Create fiscal space, mobilize resources and find ways to finance the SP action plan and program with a transparent accountability structure;
- Develop an integrated approach within the national social protection policy, the national social protection strategy and its priority action plan and the National Social Protection Program to avoid disparate and small-scale approaches and promote harmonized targeting mechanisms and greater coherence across SP instruments.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[UNICEF's ARCC II programme](#)

[Revue des filets sociaux en RDC](#)

[Humanitarian response plan, DRC, 2017](#)

[Humanitarian cash transfers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2017](#)